



SPRING NEWS

Our volunteer run organisation provides friendship and assistance to Asylum Seekers, Refugees and non EEC migrants with no recourse to public funds (NRPF)

PO Box 2474, Watford, WD18 1XT
Tel – 01923 252 434

WTRRP.ORG.UK

HELP US TO IMPROVE THE LIVES OF OUR CLIENTS

While some of our clients are single adults, most have travelled here with their families. WTRRP has organised a series of outings over the past 18 months, aimed at supporting children and young adults during their transition to life in the UK and enabling them to meet others who may be facing similar challenges.

Most recently (on the 13th of May), 21 children and 8 volunteers set off from Watford underground station on route to Wembley Stadium. The occasion - Spurs against Leicester on the final day of this year's Premier League season. It was an awe-inspiring event for those who had been to Wembley before, but for those seeing the stadium and witnessing the crowds for the first time, it was a truly incredible experience.

The next outing planned is a trip to the Lee Valley White Water Centre this summer to try out the huge range of activities on offer there. We need further contributions to pay for transport and refreshments for the children. Can you help?

£10 would pay for drinks for 10 children
£25 would provide food for 7 children
£50 would pay for the minibus to transport 15 children and volunteers

You can make a donation online (see below). If you prefer to donate by post, you can send us a completed Giving and Gift Aid Form, or a cheque to: WTRRP PO Box 2474, Watford, WD18 1XT.



YOU ARE INVITED

TO OUR ANNUAL GARDEN PARTY AT CHESLYN GARDENS

Sunday 24th June
2.30pm - 4.30pm

Cheslyn Gardens
Nascot Wood Road
WD17 4SL

Do come and enjoy a 'get-together' for clients, supporters and volunteers with refreshments & cream teas, and a beautiful garden to explore.

PLEASE SUPPORT US

To make a one off or recurring donation (and to download paper forms) visit our website – www.wtrrp.org.uk/donations

CLIENTS SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCES AT AGM

A highlight of this year's AGM in March was a session led by Sara Barratt, chair of the Case Review Committee, during which some of the charity's clients shared their experiences.

The discussion was an important reminder of the numerous challenges faced by our clients who are striving to make a better life for themselves and their families in an unfamiliar country. We were also mindful of their courage, both in terms of the difficulties they face and speaking about them in a public arena. We are grateful to them for helping us to understand something of what it is like for them.

AMINA

Amina was forced to flee her home country without her family. She was alone for two and a half years before her family was able to join her and her health suffered as a result of the stress.

'To start with, I just needed someone to listen to me' she said. 'I'm really thankful to WTRRP for doing that'.

Amina is happy that she now has her family with her, but life is still tough. Her three children were bullied at school, returning home every day in tears. Amina

was worried that complaining to the school would make matters worse. Her husband is struggling with learning English but is persevering. He hopes to find work but at the moment Amina is the only wage earner, working long hours on low wages to help her family survive. She said: 'It's still not easy but we are coping'.

ABEBE

Abebe achieved her 'status' as a refugee in 2016. Soon afterwards, she decided to go to college to undertake an access to nursing course, improving her employment prospects and allowing her to support her three young children.

Having almost completed her course, she plans to apply for a university place this summer to continue her studies if she can secure sponsorship. It's been hard work and she has also been anxious to ensure that her children are happy, having coped well with changes and the difficulties that arise from financial pressures. 'To god be the glory' said Abebe, 'It's not easy to be a mother and a student'.

WTRRP has contributed towards initial college fees and helped the family move to more appropriate accommodation.

Clients' names changed

A LITTLE BUSINESS...

The main governance issues discussed at our AGM on the 19th of March were as follows:

- Those in attendance voted unanimously in favour of re-electing the committee for the next 12 months: Paul Shaw (treasurer), Dorothy Knightley (secretary), Marie-Jo Churchill (volunteer coordinator), Andrea Hudson (ESOL lead), Sara Barratt (case review officer), Tony Rindl and Tim Whittaker (chair).
- The constitution currently states that the AGM should be held in February. This is now impractical as a result of the charity's growth (given that financial accounts need to be prepared ahead of the meeting). The constitution will therefore be amended to specify that the AGM must be held in the first half of every year.
- We have updated our Privacy Policy, effective from 25 May for all our volunteers, clients and supporters. A full explanation of how we use your information, including your choices, rights, and controls, is on our website at www.wtrrp.org.uk/privacy. We will summarise this policy in a future newsletter.
- An amended version of the constitution will be circulated and published on the website in the coming months and will be approved at the 2019 AGM.

THE WTRRP WOMEN'S GROUP

Last year, one of our volunteers, Seema, had the idea to set up a women's group. This is open to our female clients along with their children plus their befrienders who often encourage them to attend and sometimes offer transport. It is held from **10.00 – 12.00 on the second Saturday of each month at St Mary's church, Watford**. It's a very relaxed occasion - an opportunity to meet, chat and perhaps improve spoken English, while having tea, coffee and cake and doing some activities such as embroidery and cake decorating



JOY HOBBS - MANY THANKS!



As many of you will know by now, Joy Hobbs, sadly, stood down from WTRRP in March.

Joy joined WTRRP in 2009 and soon after became a member of the Committee, under the Chairmanship of Richard Kendall. Joy gradually took over the work of WTRRP's effective founder Lawrie Coe, who wanted to retire and who – despite the label of Honorary Secretary – in fact conducted much of the then Project's work, particularly with clients.

She and her late husband Tony initially took on the task of placing our administration and record keeping on to a firm footing, and Joy set up the befriending scheme that forms the core of our service to our clients today. Joy was also aware that our clients could be very alone – often having moved to the area without aid of friends or other support – and in October 2009,

held the first WTRRP party in her own back garden. This has of course become the basis of the three to four parties and other social activities that we now hold every year, and Joy was a vigorous and enthusiastic organiser of these for many years.

At various times Joy has taken the roles of volunteer recruiter, Volunteer Coordinator and most recently Casework Coordinator. For a considerable period, she and Tony did all the packing and distribution of the food that WTRRP supplies to its clients, with Joy eventually negotiating and helping implement our partnership with the Watford Foodbank.

Joy's enthusiastic and energetic casework sets the example by which we still try to run WTRRP. Under her leadership, we started to help our clients financially with application fees: not least because the sums of money required were hiked significantly by a series of governments, pushing application well out of reach of the average WTRRP client. She attended hearings of the then UK Border Agency as applicant's 'friend,' but actually provided strong advocacy in many cases. This was also true of her many negotiations with Social Services: in many case WTRRP clients' only income is

statutory child benefit, and in many cases this has to be fought for – especially in these times of government austerity. On one notable occasion Joy arranged for and accompanied two clients and a number of children by train to attend an appeal hearing in Birmingham. As a retired and very experienced Health Visitor she had and still has a deep love of children.

The Drop-In Centre was also effectively implemented by Joy. Starting as an idea at a Committee brainstorming day, Joy was the one to find a venue and make this happen, including finding a solicitor to provide initial advice, and organising a Drop-In Coordinator and other roles there.

Finally, Joy was a vociferous advocate for WTRRP to anyone and everyone – 'gossip the Project' was her very appropriate phrase!

As you may have heard, Joy was very ill last year, requiring a course of painful and debilitating treatments. Undeterred, she continued to support others to whom her multiple roles had been assigned, and we owe her a great debt of gratitude:

Without Joy, WTRRP might well not have survived to become the robust organisation it is today.

A home or business collecting box is an easy way to help raise money for WTRRP. Your small change can make a real difference to our work.

Put your loose change to good use by ordering your collection box from Etta and John Lazarus our WTRRP volunteers who supervise the scheme. Contact them by phone or email.

email john.etta@btinternet.com
phone 01923 824607



CHRISTMAS PARTY

. Our very first Christmas party took place on Saturday the 16th of December, bringing together 130 clients and 38 volunteers.

This was our biggest party yet and our first collaboration with Edge Grove School in Aldenham. In this short interview, Edge Grove party mastermind **Alex Evans** discusses her motivations for supporting the charity and the special moments which showed her that the months of planning had paid off.

● Tell us a little bit about yourself and how you heard about WTRRP?

I've been at Edge Grove School since 2012 - my husband is head teacher there. Before Edge Grove I studied environmental science and worked on water and sanitation projects in developing countries around the world.

I first heard about WTRRP when another teacher suggested that we give our harvest festival donations to the charity, which we did. Then I came along to your AGM last year and was inspired by the stories of the people the charity is helping.

● Fast forward to the 16th of December - what were your feelings when 160 people arrived on your doorstep?

We were ready! Our original plan was to do just the Santa's grotto - to keep it small and simple. But then we thought 'why not have some games in the sports hall?', and then we thought 'we've got to have food' so it grew and grew! All the planning meant we were well prepared when everyone arrived.

It was slightly nerve-wracking on the day as the heating didn't come on and it was a little nippy... Then the maintenance

team came in, sorted it and we were good to go!

● What was the most rewarding thing about organising the party?

Seeing all the children playing with each other and witnessing their excitement at going into Santa's grotto for a story and a gift.

As there were so many volunteers there, we were able to give some of the parents a rest! I remember seeing one mother whose two young children were charging around the sports hall. She was following them and looked thoroughly exhausted! So I said 'do you want someone to help'?

Our deputy head went off and played with her children giving her time to chat to the other adults and have a rest. That was a special moment for me.

FEB FAMILY FUN

There's no better way to spend a rainy Saturday in February than at one of our client parties! More than 85 clients came together at St Luke's Church on the 10th of February, where the youngsters were entertained by the lovely Lisa from Toddlers Dance.

For the first time we also had entertainers for the older children - which was a huge hit! Our sincere thanks to David and Aaron from the Wellsprings Church Youth team who volunteered their time to be with us. Having the children so well entertained left the adults time to mingle, chat and reconnect with friends old and make new ones.

READ MORE NEWS INCLUDING
THE STORY OF OUR AGM SPEAKER
DAVE SMITH OF BOAZ TRUST
ON OUR WEBSITE
WWW.WTRRP.ORG.UK

FOOD DONATIONS NEEDED

WTRRP is continuing its relationship with Watford Food Bank, which helps us meet the monthly needs of our clients if we are unable to do so through donations to WTRRP alone.

For example, between the 3rd of April 2017 and the 19th of March 2018, we distributed almost 10.6 tonnes of food to our clients. Of that total, 5.6 tonnes came from food donations to WTRRP, and the remainder was provided by the Food Bank. The Food Bank also allows WTRRP use its warehouse to pack and store our own food donations.

The Food Bank is currently facing a serious shortage, caused by a combination of factors including the severe weather over the winter and changes to the benefits system. We're determined not to deplete the Food Bank's supplies any further and this is where you can help.

We're most in need of the following items:

- Small packets of rice
- Tinned meat
- Tinned peas and carrots
- Tinned tomatoes
- Tinned fruit
- Jam
- Coffee
- Milk, squash & fruit juices

If you'd like to donate food, please contact **Mick and Jeanette Hayter**, our food coordinators:

tel 01923 262781
mob 07875 668569
email michael.htr@gmail.com