

AUTUMN 2009

# ALM Newsletter

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## Remembering Refugee Week 15 - 21 June 2009

Refugee Week, although rapidly fading in the memory, was a thoroughly enjoyable affair, with more collaborative work with other organisations than we've seen before. We helped out with the catering and organisation at the Refugee Support Network's bash on the Monday. The day was attended by around 250 people and had stalls, food, football, DJs, dancing, acupuncture and Eritrean coffee ceremonies.....phew.



Wednesday was a gentler affair, with a visit to the Tam O'Shanter Farm in Bidston again. As ever, Nick the ranger looked after us and



we had 2 rather damp but cheerful walks across the hill as well as a scoot around the Farm. A big thanks goes to Caroline Tod who helped fund the day as well as to the volunteers who travelled to meet us.



Thursday was an extremely busy day at the centre with around 30 organisations visiting to provide advice and information on health related issues. Once again a big thank you goes to Afrah and Kate from the Mental Health CDW team for organising everyone. We had kick boxercise, yoga, acupuncture and massage as well as representatives from Merseycare, the Social Inclusion Team and a host of others. The end of the week was wrapped up with the BBQ and a visit from the National Youth Theatre.

All the carnivores were well catered for and the theatre group doing the 'Fruit Basket Upset' (for which I will be happy to provide the rules) had a whale of a time. There was even room for a sing song. Thanks to all the people who gave their time and effort to make Refugee Week 2009 such a great experience for the people visiting our centre. Ewan Roberts, Head of Chaos



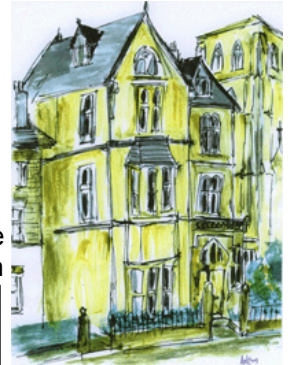
## Reflections of a Student - Kathleen Fitzpatrick

As a student social worker, I was given a 6 month placement at Asylum Link in January 2009. This was my first placement, so I did not

know what to expect. I was also ignorant about many of the issues that asylum seekers and refugees face.

I found out very quickly that Asylum Link is an amazing place to work, and felt lucky to be given the opportunity to get involved in radical projects, such as campaign work to prevent a deportation, and I was able to assist the Eritreans with their demonstration outside the Home Office. I witnessed the restrictive and exclusionary effect that government immigration policies have on those who attend the centre. One of the most pertinent issues that I focused on was the injustice suffered by age-disputed unaccompanied asylum seeking children. This group finds it extremely difficult to access services as they cannot be classified as either adults or children, and therefore face a deadlock with regard to service provision. In contrast to this, I was inspired by the steadfast dedication of the staff at Asylum Link, and their commitment to challenging these oppressive societal and political structures.

The time spent at Asylum Link has changed my life. I have met so many strong and inspiring people, and I was made to feel so welcome. The influence this placement has had on me will form the foundations for my future career as a social work practitioner. You have all taught me that we can all make a difference in fighting oppression and discrimination, even if the odds appear to be stacked against us. Thank you for everything.



WITH THIS ISSUE:

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Acceptance by Home Office

## Asylum Link Merseyside

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Phone: 0151 709 1713  
Fax: 0151 709 1734  
e-mail:  
[info@asylumlink.org.uk](mailto:info@asylumlink.org.uk)

- Offering practical support  
and friendship to refugees  
and asylum seekers -

Asylum Link is an organisation  
dedicated to assisting  
asylum seekers and refugees  
and to raising public  
awareness around refugee  
issues.

We run a drop-in centre for all  
asylum seekers and refugees  
providing friendship, help and  
advice.

Asylum Link encourages the  
participation of asylum  
seekers  
and refugees in the services we  
provide.

We are on the Web!  
[www.asylumlink.org.uk](http://www.asylumlink.org.uk)  
Copies of previous  
Newsletters are  
available on our Website.

If you would prefer  
to receive this  
newsletter as an e-mail  
register with Illa at  
[info@asylumlink.org](mailto:info@asylumlink.org).

## The ALM Allotments - Peter invites ...



**T**hanks to the hard work of those who come to the garden there has been a good crop of fresh fruit and vegetables this year. Those who volunteer to work in the kitchen have been able to use the produce to provide a plentiful supply of delicious soups for all to enjoy and any surplus distributed to those in need - fantastic!

Albeit this is work without pay, being able to escape to a peaceful and green environment is more than compensation. Without doubt the most rewarding aspect is the friendship which has grown amongst those who come. Quite apart from doing something of real value for everyone in the Asylum Link community by growing the food we share, above all we laugh and have great fun whilst doing it!

Peter Crowe, who heads up the garden project usually comes to Asylum Link on Thursdays between 12.00 – 12.30pm to take anyone who wants to take part and Paul O'Byrne on Mondays at the same time. Free transport is provided.

*"To all Asylum Seekers, why not make a point to look out for us! We usually work for about 3 hours before returning to Asylum Link. Come and join us. It really does beat playing ping-pong, table football or staring at a blank wall. Help others to help ourselves."*

Written by: Peter Crowe, ALM Volunteer



## Destitution Roadshow

The Roadshow is now into its second 6 months and, so far, has been seen by 315 people. Almost everyone who experiences it is surprised by what they find out. The Roadshow is now delivered as part of Liverpool City Council's Community Cohesion strategy and is helping to inform local communities about why Asylum Seekers come to the UK and about how they are treated during the Asylum process. A major part of the show is the personal testimony from Refugees taking part in the project and Grace, Anne Marie and Marcus have put in a lot of hard work to ensure the Roadshow's success. If you are part of a group that would be interested in seeing the Roadshow please get in touch with Ben Kamara through our main office.

### Good News for some .....

We are happy to be able to tell you that Jannatul Chowdhury, her son, Ishtiaque and daughter, Nazifa, have received permission from the Home Office to remain in the UK. Permission to remain has also been granted to Ahmed Karim, Balen Kader Said, Ali Anwar Samad, Dr Jamshed Shinwari, Zebiba Osman and Ronnie Lwanga. This is a huge hurdle to clear but it is often only the beginning of a struggle to find suitable accommodation and employment.

We wish each one well for their future in the UK.

As winter approaches, we are always grateful for good warm clothing, especially for young men.



Thank you for the clothes received as well as the much appreciated food and toiletries. As our numbers increase these donations are so important. Cheers.