

NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2024

Welcome to our newsletter December!

With Christmas on the minds of our service users at this time of year, we aim to make sure that even the most vulnerable get to celebrate the season with us.

As well as our two, main service user parties, we host parties for our volunteers, volunteer ESOL teachers, and our amazing and dedicated staff team.

We will give away approximately 500 Christmas presents to vulnerable children this year. Thank you for the very kind donations from Barratts, Dunelm, Toys4Birmingham, Lightwoods House and all of the local schools and churches who support us throughout the year.

Many thanks also to the team of volunteer elves from Barratts (pictured below) who have donated their time to wrap these gifts and build our grotto!

However you celebrate the festive period, we wish you all a wonderful holiday.

The Brushstrokes Team

CONTACT



253 HIGH STREET, SMETHWICK B66 3NJ



<https://www.brushstrokessandwell.org.uk/>

0121 565 2234



Samba Beats

SERVICE USERS
ENJOYED AN AMAZING
SAMBA DRUMMING
WORKSHOP WITH THE
LOVELY TEAM FROM
BIRMINGHAM'S
RENOWNED "OYA
SAMBATICA SAMBA
BAND" IN NOVEMBER.



Brushstrokes
Community Project



SAMBA DRUMMING
DE BRUSHSTROKES
É OYA BATACUDA SAMBA BAND



FRIDAY 22ND NOVEMBER

1:30PM-3PM, MAIN HALL (AFTER CAFÉ)
COME ALONG AND SHAKE YOUR MARACAS
TO THE LATIN BEATS





See your favourite brands
donate to us whenever you
spend with them



Find out more



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LEWIS

ebay

Argos

U switch

BT

Booking.com

M&S

BODEN

sky

ASOS

Uber Eats

currys

8,000+ online
brands

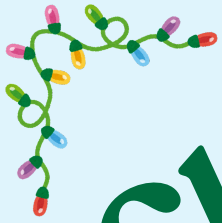
Did you know that whenever you buy anything online – from your weekly shop to your annual holiday – you could be raising free donations for Brushstrokes with easyfundraising? There are over 8,000 retailers on board ready to make a donation – including eBay, Argos, John Lewis & Partners, ASOS, Booking.com and M&S – and it won't cost you a penny extra to help us raise funds. All you need to do is:

1. Go to <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/promote-my-cause/add-to-your-website/> and join for free.
2. Every time you shop online, go to easyfundraising first to find the site you want and start shopping.

3. After you've checked out, the retailer will make a donation to Brushstrokes Community Project at no extra cost to you whatsoever! There are no catches or hidden charges and Brushstrokes Community Project will be really grateful for your donations.

Thank you for your support.

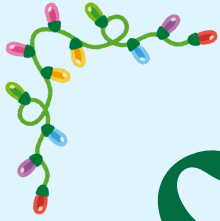




Christmas Parties

106 service users and their families attended our Service User Christmas Parties this year. There was food, crafts, games, music and everybody got a present from Santa. Thanks again to all organisations who donated Christmas presents this year, we had a bumper year and a lot of vulnerable children have had their days brightened by these gifts. Thank you!





Christmas Café



At our final Christmas Café of the year, service users treated us to a lovely musical performance and we gave away a further 50 rowan, cherry and birch trees to lucky service users.





HFU Christmas Party

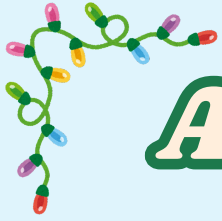


This year's Homes For Ukraine festivities took us to the magical Cadbury World in Birmingham, where the joy of the season mixed perfectly with the excitement of chocolate filled adventures.

The event was a delightful experience for both children and adults alike. From the moment we arrived, the air was filled with anticipation and cheer. Our guests enjoyed a range of activities from touring the fascinating chocolate making process to indulging in sweet treats and exploring the interactive exhibits. The festive decorations, combined with the aroma of rich chocolate, made for a perfect holiday atmosphere.

Thank you to everyone who joined us and made the day so special. We wish all our clients and their families a warm, joyful, and peaceful holiday season! Here's to a fantastic year ahead.





Allotment Open Day

On the 13th December, we had an open day at our allotment and gave away 100 cherry, birch and rowan trees, courtesy of the West Midlands Combined Authority. As the before and after shots below show, it was a huge success!

13TH DECEMBER,
11AM-3PM

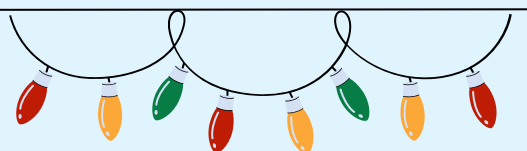


ALLOTMENT OPEN DAY AND TREE GIVEAWAY

Located two minutes away from Brushstrokes, behind Smethwick Council House on the High Street come and visit our new, expanded allotment space.



We'll be giving away 100 birch, cherry and rowan trees to takeaway and plant in your garden or home and to add to the West Midlands Virtual Forest.



The Christmas Story



Some two thousand years ago, there was a powerful empire, governed by the ruler of Rome, Caesar Augustus. His power reached from the British Isles to Red Sea shores, from Carpathian Mountains to the sands of Sahara. Hundreds of thousands were his subjects, legions of soldiers protected the boundaries of his realm – and his riches.

Once he decided to make a census in all his domains, among all the people living under his rule. All who dwelt in any but their original homes were forced to go back to the place of their birth – to be registered just there.

Among those who had to move from their actual homes was a young carpenter named Joseph. His family came from a little town of Bethlehem, so he had to take his young pregnant wife and to set on a painful journey. And just after that travel Joseph's wife Mary gave birth to her son – in a very poor and miserable situation of not welcomed people, just in the stable somewhere behind the town. Not even a cradle was there for the new-born baby-boy; just a manger where animals used to be fed...

Nothing special, one would say; just a couple of ordinary, rather marginalized people without their own shelter; an event at the border of the Empire and the border of the interests. And yet – only Mary and Joseph knew that the baby, the new-born son was someone very special, whom generations and generations had expected – someone through whom God would say his very Word. So, they gave him a name with a special meaning: "Jesus" – which means "God rescues". And up to our days, Jesus is known as well with an ancient title of kings, priests, and prophets: Christ, that is "Anointed one" (as kings, priests, and prophets used to be anointed with a precious oil). And believe it or not, it is this very title which gave Christmas the name.

Shepherds from the neighbouring hills, the poorest among the poor came to see baby Jesus. Even some extraordinary strangers, wise men from Orient, probably astronomers arrived from lands afar to honour the new-born child and to give him royal gifts. However, this attracted the attention of a mad local ruler who decided to kill Jesus as a threat for the dynasty... Fortunately, Joseph managed to take Mary and the child and to flee just in time. So once again traveling, once again on the road, once again without any safety.

We in Brushstrokes Community Project are really moved by this true story of a true man. We do believe that people looking for home, for safety, for basic things to survive need our special care and we try to offer them what we can. To recall the original Christmas story, we give one another some Christmas gifts, as in his time Jesus received, seeing him in everyone in need. And those of us who are Christians (and therefore bear the name of Christ as well) do believe that serving our friends of human race we serve God who in Jesus became human. Christmas gifts are for us a sign of the greatest gift of all: that God gave himself to us in his Son, Jesus Christ.

So merry Christmas to all of you! And as the angels sang in Bethlehem in those times, glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to people, for they are God's beloved children.

Zdeněk Drštka, Brushstrokes volunteer, novice from the Society of Jesus





A Christmas Message from Dave Newall, Project Manager.

Each year we continue to be humbled by the generosity of so many. The donations of food, clothing, finance and the giving of peoples' time through volunteering to provide welcome and support those who are most in need, who have nowhere else to turn, continues to show that many people do care and by their actions do not support the hostile narratives around migration. Through the provision of language classes, practice support, specialist advice, health and wellbeing and social activities , we are helping to prevent homelessness, secure immigration status, move people into employment, resettle refugees , teach people English and improve digital skills, increase understanding and access of health and wellbeing services and provide opportunities for individuals to develop new skills. We want to express our thanks to our funders, schools and parishes, organisations who we have worked with this year and to all who have supported Brushstrokes in 2024. You all help make the work of Brushstrokes possible, enabling us to support over 7600 people this year and provide help and advice to over 1300 families. We wish you all a Happy Christmas and look forward to continuing to work alongside you to build a community of welcome and hope in 2025.





Donate to Brushstrokes How Can You HELP??

We are reaching out to you for support through donations to help those in need. Every contribution you make will create a significant impact.

Your generosity can change lives.

We are raising funds to continue the level of support our community requires.

Please donate today and help us
www.justgiving.com/campaign/Brushstrokes

No amount is too small—every contribution counts.
Thank you for your support!

Types of Donations

- Cash Donations
- Gently Used Clothing
- Non-Perishable Food Items
- School Supplies
- Household/ Kitchen Items



Contact Us



OUR WORK IS MADE POSSIBLE BY THE CONTINUED SUPPORT OF OUR WONDERFUL PARTNERS.

