



FRIENDS OF THE DROP-IN

Newsletter



ISSUE NUMBER SEVEN | NOVEMBER 2015



F.O.D.I. officially began on 30/11/2011 when its constitution was signed. It was the vision of a group of people who had supported the Drop-In for many years and wished to expand on the work already done there by opening new funding opportunities which would allow more activities to take place. These activities would be chosen by the membership (attendees of the Drop-In). We hope this newsletter will show a little of what has been achieved.

F.O.D.I. achieved charitable status in 2013 and our registered charity number is 1153057

F.O.D.I. Mission Statement:

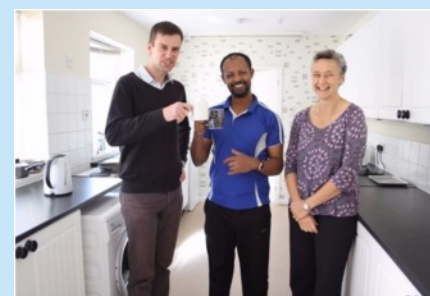
To improve the mental health and well-being of the asylum-seeking and refugee community of Sunderland, lessening their social isolation and promoting their integration into the wider community, by supporting and extending the activities of the Drop-In currently run on Wednesday afternoons.

Objectives:

1. To provide opportunities for the clients of the Drop-In to participate in wider societal activities of a suitable nature.
2. To foster closer links into the wider community, providing opportunities for clients to link into this.
3. To work in partnership with other local organisations/groups to further this aim.

Our contact email is :
fodi.sunderland@outlook.com

we were joined by Michelle Cooper from Northstar Ventures (who is managing our grant from Northern Rock Foundation Fresh Ideas fund) who also met our new residents. Michelle commented on the project "I am delighted to have seen Action Foundation's first house in Sunderland for myself and hear the difference it is making for their residents. Their use of the Fresh Idea's Fund has enabled the charity to become more sustainable to be able to help more people in need like this in the future. Well done!"



Michelle Cooper and Julian Prior share a cuppa with our first resident in Sunderland

One of our residents (above) said "living here has been 100% helpful. It has given me the stability to be able to find work and I am now on an apprenticeship with Nissan"

We are very excited about the prospect of expanding further into Sunderland and are planning on opening three further properties in the area in the next two months to support asylum seekers and refugees at risk of homelessness.

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A Success Story



Thanks to Funders and Partners



First House in Sunderland

We are very pleased to announce that after 18 months of fundraising, networking and organising we opened our first house in Sunderland offering supported accommodation to vulnerable refugees in September. We had an official opening on Thursday 8th October where

HOT FOOD AT THE DROP-IN

Now that the weather is colder, we have started to cook hot food every other week at the Drop-In. Many thanks to Salah, Reda and Dawda for their cooking of very tasty meals.

FODI CHRISTMAS PARTY

We are holding our party for Asylum Seekers and Refugees in Sunderland on Wednesday 16th December, from 2.30 to 6pm, in the parish hall.

We will have a halal meal, Santa, entertainment and gifts.

There will not be a Drop-In before on that day.

Entry will be by ticket only. Numbers are limited. Tickets will be available at the Drop-In on 25th November, 2nd December and 9th December if any are left.

We wish to thank Durham Quakers, Brar & Co and Morrisons for their kind donations to help us with the party.

FODI Annual General Meeting

This was held on 2nd September and was very well attended. Thanks to everyone who helped to organise it, especially those of you who translated documents and to everyone who attended.



Ahmed's Walk

On Sunday the 20th of September 2015, Ahmed one of our FODI volunteers took part with many Sunderland residents in the Sunderland Big Walk, which started at the National Glass Centre and finished At the Washington Wetlands Centre. After completing the 6.5 mile walk, Ahmed received a medal and this photo shows him with the mayor and mayoress of Sunderland



Injera



This meal, consisting of [injera](#) and several kinds of [wat](#) (stew), is typical of [Ethiopian](#) cuisine.

Above is a picture of a typical Ethiopian meal : Injera (which is a kind of sourdough pancake) and several kinds of other dishes served on top of the Injera bread, and all is then eaten by hand..

We have been lucky enough to have received a donation of several kilos of Teff flour (the main ingredient of Injera shown above) from Suma Wholefoods, who sent it to us free of charge. They delivered to a local café in Cleadon called Happy Organics, who held the flour for us until we could get across to pick it up.

Injera is, apparently, quite time-consuming to make, as it has to be fermented, but is said to taste delicious!

This has been distributed to some of the Ethiopians and Eritreans in Sunderland, who have been delighted to have a little taste of home. Many thanks to our friends at Suma and to Happy Organics, who acted as part of the supply chain!

Refugee Support Event 23rd September 2015

Following on from a successful march through town in support of "Refugees are welcome here", we provided support and entertainment to the Sunderland People's Assembly who ran a fund-raising event at the Bangladeshi Centre.

Our drummers – pictured here – played some lively music, despite not being able to get together to practice, and helped produce an entertaining evening.

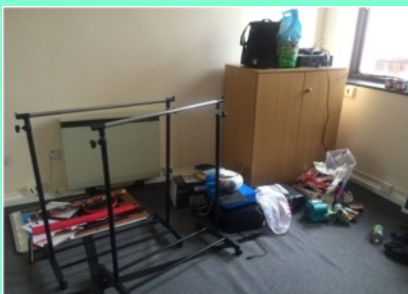
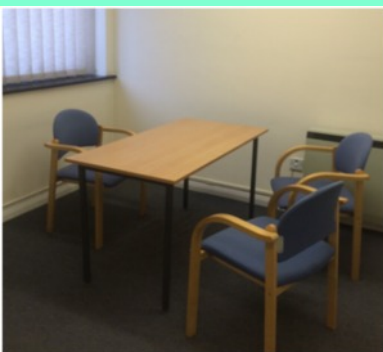
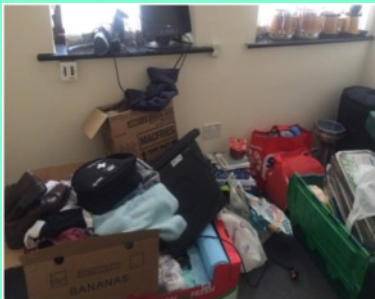


FODI OFFICE MOVE

On Thursday 29th October we moved from number 23 to number 10 Bridge House, our new office has two big rooms and two small interview rooms. We like it a lot. Moving was hard work and a great group of guys helped us to do it.

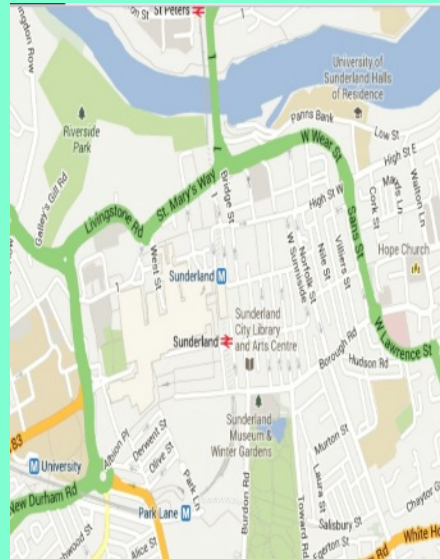


Here are some "Before" and "After" photos.



Our thanks go to 'Bizspace' and especially Lynne Oliver for arranging this under their charity initiative.

Service users are notified of classes etc at the drop-in. Other uses of the office will be publicised as necessary.



Sunderland has been a City for 21 years now. Work continues to turn Sunderland into a City of Sanctuary, which means, at root, it is trying to make Sunderland a welcoming place for asylum seekers and refugees. We have seen many individual acts of kindness towards asylum seekers, some of them incredibly generous, and are looking to formalise and extend the warmth some people already show.

We couldn't do it without all the people who help.....

We run the drop-in providing socialising opportunities, food, clothing when we have some; access to the Internet, to football, gym and the cinema; to English conversation classes, free haircuts, outings, help in accessing services such as outreach solicitors, housing, etc - oh, and so much more.

Thanks are due to our main funders (Northern Rock Foundation and Clinical Commissioning Group) of course; but also to the many who help us with donations and services : Hylton College, The Quakers, Streetcare, a Zakat gift from a group of Muslim ladies, The St. Vincent de Paul Society, the Jill Franklin Trust, St. Chad's, The United Reform Church, SAFC, Chris Howson at the Interfaith Centre, several individuals who do not wish to be named but have generously helped us over the year, J. Barbour who donated several

winter coats, Red Cross, Brar & Co, (these are in no particular order, and I just hope I've not missed anyone!)

The individuals are too numerous to list : but to those who make the food, wash and tidy up, give collective and individual English speaking classes, run the trips, organise the film and gym visits, help those who are in need and in despair, keep the IT right so that people can access e-mail, check things out on the internet, etc., keep things going and developing : a massive thank you.

Access to sport- Partnership with the Aquatic Centre

FODI continues to work with the Aquatic Centre, which is now run by an organisation called Everyone Active, the consumer brand of Sports Leisure Management Ltd. We provide Everyone Active cards (formerly Lifecards) for our members and FODI now has its own Gym and Swim vouchers printed by Everyone Active. Vouchers are distributed to FODI members who are regular users of the gym and pool. The Raich Carter Centre can now also be used with FODI vouchers, which is a bonus for FODI members who live south of the river. Elizabeth Meek, who now works at Hetton and Houghton Leisure Centre, has been very helpful with the changeover to Everyone Active. The gym and pool have proved very popular, and those using the Aquatic Centre say the exercise helps them forget some of their problems and make new friends. The vouchers are particularly useful for those who do not get cash support and who would not otherwise have access to sport. We have also provided soft play vouchers for children of FODI members, so they can play to their hearts' content in a safe, warm and colourful environment.

TWEDDLE FARM VISIT

We took families for a day out in July. Here is Rahmat's account

Thank you Jane for this opportunity to express our experience regarding the visit to the farm. My experience at the Tweddle Farm was fabulous particularly with great enjoyment and fun my daughter had. She fed some sheep, saw various animals (parrot, donkey, horses, cow, chicken etc), was in the tractor and had great experience while she was being carried along. She met new friends at the event and they were altogether happy while catching fun with each other.

My daughter, Amirah, was reluctant to leave the farm and on the following day she asked for another visit; this is an indication of the fun she had which she would always wish to attend.

It was a worthwhile and lovely event.

Kindly accept my appreciation for all your support and care and please extend this to the FODI team.

Rahmat and Amirah



CINEMA

Last year we decided to trial the use of cinema vouchers to give people access to the cinema now and again. As prices for the vouchers have increased, we decided it was better value for money to arrange adult trips to the cinema on Saverday Tuesdays, where tickets are much cheaper. Members will be informed of proposed dates and tickets will be purchased for individuals on the day. Sunderland Empire runs a Juniors Saturday film club for parents and children with very cheap tickets and parents have been informed about this. Please inform Jane if you are interested in going, so that we can monitor anticipated costs.

Thomas Essomba



Thomas Essomba is the new Commonwealth flyweight champion.

The unbeaten Sunderland star stopped Sheffield's Waleed Din in the 11th round at Rotherham. to clinch the vacant belt Thomas Essomba is the new Commonwealth flyweight champion. The unbeaten Sunderland star stopped Sheffield's Waleed Din in the 11th round at Rotherham. to clinch the vacant belt. Essomba, born in Cameroon but now an adopted Wearsider, had too much skill and strength for the previously-undefeated "Dynamite" Din. The Phil Jeffries-managed fighter put Din down three times in the penultimate round with the home camp throwing in the towel.

Referee Steve Gray accepted the retirement sparking celebrations in the ring and outside it with the ecstatic band of Wearside fans.

Summary of the fight

Essomba was on top from the first bell at the Magna Centre, moving forward and scoring successfully. Din was more competitive in the second but the Cameroon-born fighter was back in charge in the third and better was to come in the fourth. A powerful left from the 27-year-old floored Din. The ex-ABA champion was up by the count of eight and survived the rest of the session. Essomba maintained his dominance in the fifth and sixth rounds to hold a strong lead at the mid-point. Din upped his game in the seventh and eighth and for the first time in the bout, the home fans came to life. However, Essomba was soon back in charge, starting the ninth with a left hook to the chin and a spanking left-right combination. Din was put down in the 10th though, amazingly, referee Gray ruled it as a slip. The Sheffield 22-year-old was soon down again, but Mr Gray did not count it as a knockdown but with his gumshield coming out three times in the round it was a sure sign the end was nigh. And when Essomba floored Din at the start of the 11th this time it was no slip. Din was up at eight and allowed to continue but he was decked for a second occasion. Again, he was up at eight but the Sean Casey-trained fighter soon repeated the feat. Din, to his credit, got back up but his corner had seen enough and Essomba was the champion.

Summer Activities

What to do during the Summer holidays? It's always a problem during the long school holidays – how to keep children interested and entertained. It's particularly difficult for people on very low incomes, when even a bus fare into the town can set you back quite a bit when you've a family to keep amused.

This year, FODI made sure our asylum-seeking families knew about the free events that take place in our City (and there's a good range of them) during the school holidays, and helped with bus fares. People went to the Minster to take part in the excellent activities at the Family Summer sessions there, where people were made really welcome. Children could play in a safe and stimulating environment, and the sharing of food was hugely appreciated by parents and children alike. Also, some of families just did simple things like taking the children to the beach, to South Shields, and, later on, to the illuminations.

It just takes a very little money, and good information about what's on where.....



Megan and Phillip's Wedding- 23rd July 2015- Enniskillen, Northern Ireland

In the Summer of this year one of FODI's volunteers, Megan, got married in the Northern Irish town of Enniskillen. The day began with the ceremony within a huge fairytale church, think the church from Shrek!, along with a live mini orchestra to play the guests and then Megan into the church. After the ceremony it was time for everyone to head over to the beautiful lakeside resort of Lough Erne, where many photos were taken, speeches were said, a sat down meal was eaten and then the reception party where a live band got us dancing through the night, all set in a magnificent room overlooking the majestic Lough. An amazing day was had by all and probably most of all by Megan and her husband Phillip! Congratulations!

Written by FODI volunteer and wedding guest, Amy Pearson.

Welcome to Sunderland!

We operate a “meet and greet” scheme through City of Sanctuary. We train volunteers, and find people who can speak the many languages we encounter (to the best of our ability – any Oromo speakers out there??) . The dispersal centre for Sunderland is in Wakefield, and the staff and some volunteers there try to send us information on when someone is coming into the City, so that we can plan to meet them, show them round the essential places to know (post office, library, drop-in, GP surgeries, etc) and try to help on any problems people have when they first come here.

We found that many people arriving here didn't really know much about Sunderland, and were nervous about being sent to somewhere they'd not heard of. We now have material about Sunderland in the Dispersal centre, so that people can know a bit about our City; and some of our asylum-seekers worked on a video with the students and staff at Hylton College, and one of its purposes is that we send the finished item down to Wakefield dispersal centre, so people there can see some of our City, showing them that's really nice up here. This has now been done. Some of the contributors speak frankly about how they viewed Sunderland before they got here :”Eh? Where's that? Don't want to go” was one lady's first reaction. But she continues and says that she now loves the place, the people, the beach, etc. but, alas, not the cold when it is cold.

Of course, some people come to Sunderland not through Wakefield – dispersals within the region. We can't plan in advance for that, but we try to help them when they make their way to the Drop-in. And most people who are here are wonderful supports to their newly-arrived colleagues, bringing them in to us, and showing them where to shop, etc.

The meet and greet team can be contacted through FODI, and at the Drop-in each week.

Thanks to all of those who help us in what we are seeking to do.

