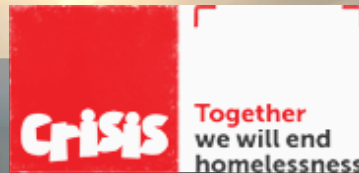


WINTER ISSUE · DECEMBER 2021

The Voluncheer

Crisis Skylight Coventry & Warwickshire
Volunteer Newsletter



Editor's Letter

BY AMY RUGG

What a year of events and achievements to look back on for our Skylight. We reopened our office earlier this year, providing vital face to face support to our members. City of Culture 2021 brought creative opportunities for members and staff alike (see pages 7-9) including a musical about homelessness and a flashmob in the city centre. Our Skylight was awarded accolades at our recent annual conference with Progression Team members. Art Coordinator, Ben Davenport was among those highlighted for their professional excellence.

Our members, too, are worthy of high praise as three poets performed at our Carol Concert (page 5) and one even helped with hospitality!

Overall, we've had another great year, in spite of immense challenges. That's surely down to the dedication of our staff (page 12), volunteers (page 13) and our resilient, remarkable members who give us reasons to keep going.

Season's Greetings and a Happy New Year 2022!

-Amy Rugg, Volunteer Coordinator



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Progression, Work &
Learning

NEW LEARNING TEAM OFFER

December at the Learning Hub

Mondays

6th and 13th December

10am-12pm: Christmas Card Making



2pm-4pm: Wooden Decoration Making



Tuesdays

7th, 14th and 21st December

10am-12pm: Bauble Painting



2pm-4pm: Wreath Making



Fridays

10th and 17th December

11am-1pm: Christmas in Coventry
Poetry Writing



Progression, Work & Learning

Upcycling



Gary Rivett, our Technical Skills Coordinator, trains and develops members' skills to create unique builds:

'Here at the Crisis Learning Hub, members are able to be creative with their chosen upcycling project. All abilities are welcome. They first learn how to prep, sand, paint and finish their item using exciting and modern paint techniques, breathing new life into each piece. Members first plan their project working with our Budgeting Coach, Emma, to explore ideas and designs, and then use numeracy skills to work out costings of researching materials, tools, and equipment.



Members' projects grow organically, changing course as their ideas develop into exciting, finished pieces for their homes.

One of our current members had an old, damp, and broken Ikea coffee table. We dismantled it and managed to dry it out, changing the layout for a more stable and striking look. He sanded it down and used pyrography to burn the tree of life as a centrepiece (see left). Finally, he applied furniture wax for a finished look.

Our workshops have a relaxed and informal atmosphere; we inspire each other and have fun along the way.'

Member Success Stories

Our lead workers always aim for members to have outside experiences that build confidence and self-worth, and last Saturday, several of our members stepped up to the mark and all shone in skills and approach. In addition to three of our members performing poetic seasonal works, one of our members, 'D' provided impromptu and much needed help behind the refreshments table, serving concert goers with a ready smile and double quick service. We were all proud to work with 'D' and everyone noted how well he demonstrated team spirit and Christmas Spirit, too!



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Volunteers Make Our CHRISTMAS PROGRAMME

This year we are offering a range of health sessions, arts and crafts, advice, food and fun for our guests with the help of over 70 volunteers. This is twice the number of volunteers from last year who will cook, serve, greet, craft, quiz, drive, sing and smile.

Here's what they're doing :

Wellbeing Days (Single Adults): 15th and 17th of December @ Central Hall, 10.30 am-3.30 pm. Physiotherapy, Oral Health, General Health, Yoga, Sports and Creative Activities. Musical Performance. Lunch served. Drop-in.

Wellbeing Days (Families/Under 18s): 20th of December @ Central Hall, 10.30 am-3.30 pm. Drama Workshop, Crafts and Haircutting. Plus a visit from Santa! Lunch Served. Drop-in.

Christmas Day: We are excited to return to an in-person full Christmas lunch and activities for guests, with an added delivery service for families or those who are self-isolating. Members will be signed up as guests by their lead workers. A full day's activities including musical performances, crafts, quiz and bingo will be offered. A quiet space will be provided for guests to relax and watch films. Food and gifts will be given out to guests with deliveries to our more vulnerable guests who will also receive a call from a volunteer to wish them a good day and ensure deliveries arrived safely.

CHRISTMAS DONATIONS

Call out for Christmas Donations

There are lots of ways to support Crisis at Christmas. Use our wish list:

<https://amzn.eu/act8Tvr> to find out what items we need this Christmas.

If you prefer, you can just use the link to find what times are needed and then purchase items online or in-person elsewhere. Please drop off or have items delivered to **James Brindley House, Coventry Canal Basin, CV1 4LY** before **Monday 20th December at 4:00 pm**.

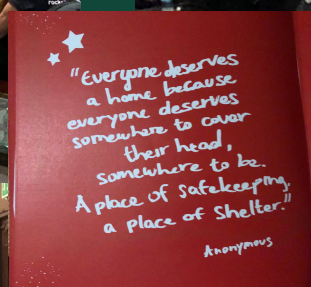
If you are donating please email: eleanor.nunn@crisis.org.uk to arrange a delivery or drop-off.



Carol Concert

Voices were raised in Coventry town centre on Saturday the 4th of December as over 60 supporters attended our first Crisis at Christmas carol concert in two years at Methodist Central Hall. Coventry Rock Choir sang two sets of festive and popular medleys, encouraging audience members to get up to dance. Three Skylight members performed moving poetry (see page 6), some of which had been composed in our Skylight creative writing sessions.

Zara Sultana, MP for Coventry South, addressed the audience stressing the urgency of ending homelessness for all as a top priority for all governments. Refreshments and good cheer were in good supply with attenders remarking on the positive atmosphere.



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Member Poem

AN ORIGINAL POEM BY 'S'



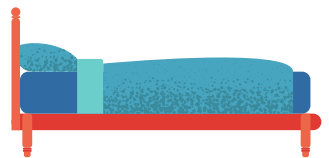
Christmas is coming, what a great time,
Children singing their Christmas rhyme,
Waiting to see what Santa will bring,
Maybe it's something that will make them sing.



But think of those with nowhere to go,
Who have to live all alone,
No house to live in, just streets to roam,
Would it be better if they had a home.



Christmas is a time for giving
So give a thought to those just living.
Give them food and clothes to wear
Make other people more aware.



They don't need a lot, just something to eat
And maybe even a bed to sleep.
It's not just adults who live this way
Children do too, but they have no say



If we all gave a little to donate
Then it would surely abate,
Give smiles to their faces and help celebrate
This time of year, which is really great.

City of Culture 2021: Home Festival

Flash Mob



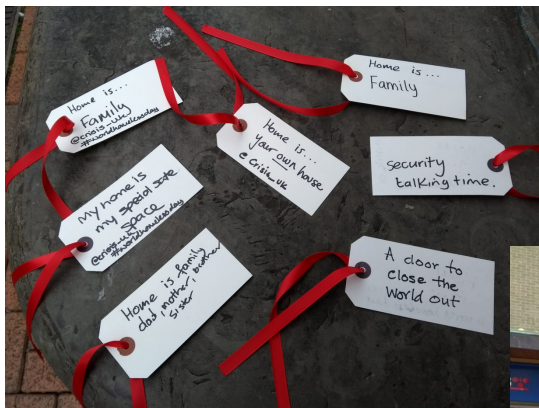
Rehearsals and Performance



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10th October

WORLD HOMELESSNESS DAY



We asked people in the city centre: 'What does home mean to you?'
This is what they told us:



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City of Culture: Home Festival

Theatre Trip



We took members, staff and volunteers to the Belgrade Theatre, Coventry in October to see 'The Ruff Tuff Cream Puff Estate Agency' by Cardboard Citizens.

A colourful, energetic and powerfully musical - we all loved the experience and being together.

Images from: <https://www.belgrade.co.uk/events/the-ruff-tuff-cream-puff-estate-agency/>

Community Outreach

ST PETER'S CENTRE



This November, we got out and about, letting people know about who we are and what we do.

We met Zara Sultana, MP for Coventry South.



Tree of the Week



On my walk home from work recently, I couldn't help but stop and take a break in the rush hour to spend a minute with this urban tree. Probably never planted or maintained, but beautiful nonetheless, with a fragility and strength that inspired me to take photos of this snow scene in the city.



Meet the Staff

ASH WEST, WORK AND LEARNING COACH



Q.1: When did you first join Crisis and what is your role?

It feels so long ago now! I joined Crisis all the way back in 2019 and I'm coming up to my third year here as the Work and Learning Coach.

Q.2: What did you do before?

Before Crisis I worked on multiple different projects supporting people to reach their potential, gain confidence, qualifications and employment, especially working with those who might be considered vulnerable or would benefit from reasonable adjustments to achieve their goals. Other than that I'm father to a wonderful 10 (going on 16) year old!

Q.3: What's a typical day like for you at Crisis?

A good day at work for me is meeting and coaching with members, supporting with job applications, securing learning placements and hearing about all the awesome things members have achieved through their own strength and determination. Otherwise I'll be speaking to employers and trainers and keeping up with all the admin!

Q.4: Have you ever volunteered and what was your experience of this (if you haven't volunteered, what would be your ideal volunteer role – where money and time no object)?

I'm a firm believer of the power of soft ground under your feet, rocks and hills to climb and fresh air to breathe. I would love to volunteer taking individuals or groups out on wanders, taking time to get a little lost and find some things off the beaten track. I know being outdoors does wonders for my own wellbeing so I think a role in helping others to enjoy it, especially if they never have, would be the ideal volunteer role for me.

Q.5: Cats or dogs? (feel free to choose another favourite pet or say 'neither!')

Normally I would say neither, I'm not a pet person, that was until I met Lulu, my partner's Maltese. Lulu is the most loving dog I've had the pleasure to meet, she's always so happy to see me when I walk through the door!

Volunteer Spotlight

Gemma Drake

Q1.: When did you first join Crisis volunteering and what is your role?

I started volunteering with Crisis in March 2021 when an online position on the Coventry & Warwickshire Voluncheer Newsletter team was advertised on Crisis' website. I help to write, edit and format the quarterly newsletter with Amy and Steve.



Q2.: What's a typical day like for you with Crisis?

I don't volunteer every day, just a few hours here and there when we are ready to publish the next issue. The process usually starts with a zoom meeting with the rest of the team where we discuss the previous issue and how to improve it. We then divide up tasks and articles. Most of the time I will be responsible for writing or editing 2-3 articles or sections. I then add these into our newsletter template on Canva and add in some photographs or graphics. The whole team will then check over and edit the pages right before publication.

Q3.: What do you do outside volunteering with Crisis?

Currently I'm a third year International Development student at the University of Sussex so most of my time is taken up with that. Outside of my studies I play hockey and love spending time in nature or with family and friends. After my undergraduate degree I am hoping to get a master's degree in the field of urban sustainability. Beyond that I don't really have a life plan but will take the opportunities as they come.

Q4.: Have you ever volunteered before and what was your experience of this ?

I have done a few different volunteering opportunities before Crisis, yes. I ran a weekly quiz night at my local care home when I was 15 as part of my Duke of Edinburgh award. At the moment I also volunteer for an education charity called Our Moon, where I write blog posts and podcast summaries for the HALI Access Network Podcast.

Q5.: Cats or dogs?

My family has had both dogs and a cat and so I love them both. However, I think I am drawn to dogs a little bit more as I have more experience with them. My family also has chickens, so I feel as though I have to give a shout-out to them too!





Wellbeing

COOKING TO DE-STRESS

If I am not under time pressure, I find cooking to be incredibly therapeutic and a great way to destress after a long day. Here is a fairly easy recipe for a creamy BEETROOT RISOTTO that I often cook from BBC Good Food:

<https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/creamy-beetroot-risotto>

Ingredients

- 500g fresh beetroot
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- knob of butter
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 1 garlic clove, finely chopped
- 250g risotto rice
- 150ml white wine
- 700ml hot vegetable stock
- handful grated parmesan (or vegetarian alternative)
- 4 tbsp soured cream
- handful chopped dill

Gemma's Tips

- I personally leave out the dill because I am not a fan. If you are like me you can perhaps replace the dill with another herb such as parsley.
- The last time I cooked this dish I didn't have any white wine. If you don't like cooking with wine you can replace it with another acid such as lemon juice or white wine vinegar. This gives it a tangy taste which I quite like but I would recommend putting in less vinegar than you would do wine.

Method

STEP 1


Heat oven to 180C/fan 160C/gas 4. Peel and trim the beetroots (use kitchen gloves if you don't want your hands to get stained) and cut into large wedges. Place on a large sheet of foil on a baking sheet. Toss with 1 tbsp olive oil, season, then cook for 1 hr until the beets are soft.

STEP 2

Meanwhile, heat the remaining olive oil with the butter in an ovenproof pan with a lid. Tip in the onion and garlic, then cook for 3-5 mins until translucent. Stir in the rice until well coated with the butter and oil. Pour over the white wine, then let the mixture bubble away for 5 mins.

STEP 3

Stir well, then pour over the stock. Stir again, cover and place in the oven. Cook for 15 mins until the rice is soft. Remove the beetroots from the oven. Whizz $\frac{1}{4}$ of them to make a purée, then chop the remainder into small pieces. Stir most of the Parmesan, the beetroot purée and chopped beetroot through the risotto, then serve with some soured cream dolloped over and the dill and extra Parmesan scattered on top.



Christmas Madlib

TO PLAY: Replace words in brackets with silly examples of that part of speech, then read out loud. Best played in a group in the holiday spirit!

Santa Claus has gotten a little bored of the normal Christmas traditions so has made some alterations this year. First, he swapped his sleigh with a large (NOUN).

Instead of reindeer, the sleigh is now pulled by a (ADJECTIVE) (ANIMAL).



He is also trial hiring (CELEBRITY) on the production line because the elves are slacking off.



Santa has swapped his usual red and white garments for (ADJECTIVE) (CLOTHING PLURAL) and (ADJECTIVE) (CLOTHING PLURAL).

There is even a rumour that Santa's traditional 'Ho Ho Ho! Merry Christmas!' is being ditched for (PHRASE, SAYING OR LYRICS).

