

# ON THE MOVE

The Newsletter of Refugees Welcome - Crawley

## Refugees Welcome - Crawley the only group in the UK to win the prestigious award

A delegation of volunteers, supporters and refugees were invited to receive the award from the offices of the European Parliament Liaison. They were treated to a rooftop afternoon tea with members of the EU Office and the South-East MEP Catherine Bearder who nominated the group. Cathy Merry spoke on behalf of the group and emphasised the great contribution of the tens of volunteers from Crawley and the surrounding areas. A representative of the group will be invited to Brussels in October for an opportunity to meet with the 49 other award winners. Congratulations to all involved in making Crawley a welcoming place for refugees and to Marko Scepanovic for nominating us for the award. *Eli Barrott*

*See Page Four for more Photos...*

## European Citizens' Prize Winners



## Gardening Report

We are back in the parish garden at Worth, getting going on the second season of our garden project. With the help of donated funds we were able to buy some new tools and equipment, including a 'mini-greenhouse' which provides shelter for the newly sown seed trays. Supported by Ruth and Henrietta, Lina and Mohammed are building on last year's experience. We all had a somewhat hilarious morning bagging up well rotted horse manure from a local stable, getting very muddy in the process. So we can now fertilise our potatoes which are coming on well, together with peas, broad and runner beans, a massive courgette plant, tomatoes, salad, rocket, spinach and beetroot seedlings. We are already harvesting some salad leaves. We are hoping for sun and rain in the right amounts, and looking forward to a productive time together. *Rosemary Moore*

Our Community Sewing Project is nearly ready to go into the newly opened Crawley Museum. We are very excited that it will finally be displayed after all the work by the Community. Thanks to everyone who took part (see right) *Henrietta Newell*



## Tales of a New Volunteer

I only started volunteer work for Refugees Welcome in April of this year, so I am just a beginner! The first thing I got involved with was the preparation of a house in Crawley for a Syrian family. I simply turned up at the house, was handed a paintbrush and told to get to work. The other volunteers mucked in and we soon realised each other's strengths and weaknesses and shared out the work accordingly. First was the painting, then the arrangement of furniture and kitchen ware. (People have been so kind in donating stuff, and what has not been donated has been bought in charity shops or provided by IGOs). The garden has been mown and weeded. Even my flatpack skills were tested when I had to assemble a bedside cabinet without the use of a hammer! We are currently at the stage where we are stocking up on food and toiletries, there are lots of things to think of, as the family come with virtually nothing and have a new baby in tow! It is heartening to feel that in a small way we have done something towards making a new home for a family who have lost their own. The next job is to help them settle into a new and completely alien country, with its foreign culture and language, I suspect that may prove more challenging. *Penny Duncombe*



## Thank you

Thank you to everyone who has helped with preparations to welcome a new Syrian refugee family to our area. Our volunteer team have been hard at work transforming a completely empty house into a family home for them, painting the walls, weeding the garden, mowing the lawn, sewing curtains, putting up curtain rails and building flatpack furniture! We had a team from Virgin Holidays on their charity work day contributing their time and expertise with decorating and have discovered skills amongst our volunteer workforce that we – and maybe they themselves- didn't know they had! Special thanks to Alex, Pam, Penny, Dawn and friends from the URC and all our other painters. It has been truly heart-warming equipping the home with many donations of household items – including furniture, bedding, a whole kitchen full of crockery, a tv, laptop, hoover and children's toys. Special thanks to Father Steven from Our Lady and St. Peter Church in East Grinstead. We have also discovered the joys of freecycle with a free lawnmower that works fine and cost nothing! Our befrienders are in place and looking forward to getting to know the new family and supporting them through the challenges they will face as they settle in. Thank you also to all our befrienders who support refugees and others in the local community who have been referred to us. Befrienders help to lessen the isolation they may feel with regular visits and also offer support in many practical ways such as helping with shopping and visits to the job-centre or medical appointments. *Cathy Merry*

## Campaign Update

As supporters of Safe Passage, we were happy and heartened to hear this latest part of the Campaign:

On the 13th June 2018 some of the Safe Passage campaigns team went to Parliament to watch the debate on the "Dubs II" Amendment to the historic EU Withdrawal Bill to give refugee children in Europe the right to reunite with family in the UK after Brexit. Beth and Alf Dubbs gave a short briefing at midday in Central Lobby in Parliament and then a few Safe Passage representatives met their MPs to raise the main issues and ask for their support. From the main gallery, Representatives and supporters of Safe Passage were able to see the very positive reaction from the Government - The Amendment was conceded twice. Firstly, the Government have drafted their own version of an international transfer arrangement to replace the Dublin Regulation and secondly, accepting Yvette Cooper's amendment extending the definition of 'family' to include Uncles and Aunts. Many Conservatives were particularly vociferous in support, such as Heidi Allen and Anna Soubry.

Sadly, although the Government had conceded Yvette Cooper's extension of family reunion, they did not end up conceding reunion for siblings under 18, due to the lack of means of support. HOWEVER, after the debate, Heidi Allen received the welcome news that the Government have agreed to look again at underage siblings being able to reunite! It seems set to come back to the House of Lords which would strongly suggest that the government may concede on this too. There was no vote on the Amendment as it had already been conceded by the Government, and afterwards we had a short briefing to discuss what we had learned from the action. It's certainly clear that we should always go after exactly what we want - and that we should extend our campaign relations with different MPs after the astonishing level of support from both sides during the debate.

Safe Passage say they will keep us posted on any new developments - and as always thank you so much for all your support! Nearly 5,000 emails were sent to MPs and Lords by the public since the campaign for Dubs II began, and it's certainly managed to change history for the better! Refugees Welcome - Crawley Campaign Group will be asking for your support soon for our local Campaign to bring more families to Crawley and West Sussex beyond 2020 when the UNHCR Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme (SVPRS) ends.

By Henrietta Newell, Iyadh Daoud and Ian Irvine

### Talk Club News

East Grinstead Talk Club has been out and about enjoying the warmer weather with visits to the playgrounds at the Kings Leisure Centre and East Court. We especially enjoyed our outings to Blackberry Farm and Godstone Farm (despite the rain) , feeding the animals and enjoying the adventure playground and joined forces with Crawley Talk Club for a lovely day out (more rain!) at Sheffield Park woods . We are grateful to the Village of Sanctuary group from East Hoathly who funded our day at Godstone Farm. We celebrated Eid with an evening get-together which was enjoyed by all and gave us a chance to cook for our Syrian friends *Cathy Merry*

### Worth School IT, English and Arabic

A big thank you to Worth school and to the teachers involved: to Dominic for this initiative, to Simeon who has been leading an IT course for several of our refugees to develop their computer skills, to Helen for providing one-to-one English conversation practice and to Sheena for enabling two of our Syrian women to teach Arabic to an enthusiastic group of Worth students. Well done (Mabruk!) Lina and Azeza! *Cathy Merry*

*Further photos of the EU Prize (right)*



## Ramadan Outing for Syrian Family

It was Ramadan. I got up to a sunny warm day thinking of the fasting Syrian parents who have to cope with their children at home in a small house for it was half term.

Samar welcomed the idea to go to Standen, a national Trust garden. After a short lunch we were all engaged in an activity specially organised for children that day. The activity was to recognise the plants that bees like. It was exciting for the children who ran from plant to plant observing and smelling and waiting to recognise a bee. The activity was enjoyed by everybody. Vocabulary and spelling was practiced and before returning home the children insisted we visit the beehives. A well informed staff member explained clearly and interestingly. We returned home with a very enthusiast Bilal, 8 Years old, keen to know every thing about bees.  
*Najwa Mounla.*

## Eid al-Fitr Celebrations

We enjoyed celebrating Eid al-Fitr in June with our Syrian families. It culminated with a meal including a special 'Eid Cake' (right).

