

Esther Community Newsletter September 2013

It's been a while since we posted you with news of all the happenings at Esther, so prepare yourselves. . .

Changing Rooms

We have just had a much needed revamp of the lounge – our main communal area in the house. Jo, a very artistic member of the night staff, spear headed the operation and we went from white and worn to clean red and yellow over night. A group of the housemates joined in with the painting and the result is a much more warm and homely lounge with cushions and throws. Hopefully it is now a place that the residents can enjoy being in.

The garden area is also undergoing a makeover with the help of Magic Carpet. A number of housemates have been enjoying creating mosaics that will be displayed on the garden wall – we are looking forward to the finished result. A couple of the resident's have been so keen to get on with their mosaics that they have been waiting for the session to begin and continuing long after it was due to finish.



Another addition to the garden are our laying hens – we were sadly left with only one of our original hens from the battery hens that were rescued and joined us over a year ago. We couldn't leave our hen on her own so she was joined by three new hens – Oreo, Hobnob and Marshmallow. They have been slightly more trouble than their predecessors and there is little left of our gardening efforts after their fun in the garden. But their eggs recently won second prize after being entered by Vicky, one of our staff, into her village fete competition. One of our residents in particular enjoys looking after the chickens and garden area.





Other activities have continued in the house over the summer and we have been making good use of our new meeting room. The manager's office was moved into the smaller of the rooms beneath the bedsits and the larger room was made available. It is used for maths, literacy, creative writing, yoga and any other activities on the structured day programme. A few of the residents have even taken their maths and literacy exams in there.

Emergency Accommodation

Another use for the newly done room is our continued provision of an emergency bed. The council have provided a fold up bed and the room has direct access to the kitchenette and toilet – this means that we are fully equipped to take women in need of emergency accommodation. Since the meeting room has been available in April we have provided for 11 women – some staying just one night and others over the weekend until other arrangements could be made.

Moving on.....

Two of our bedsit residents have recently moved on. One to a housing association property near her family which she is hoping will be her 'forever home', another to a shared house that is a stepping stone to move on. Two of

our hostel residents have also moved on. These are all residents that have been with us for between 11 months and 2 years so it is lovely to see them move forward but they will also be missed around the project.

Their leaving will obviously free up rooms for other women to move in and begin rebuilding their lives.

We have already filled the bedsit vacancies with two residents from the hostel that are ready for more independent living. One already has a job and is keen to find her own accommodation.

Book launch

One of the popular groups on our structured day programme is creative writing. Our tutor, Fiona, has compiled the work of some of our residents over the last year and has it being published as a book of short stories highlighting the issues of homeless women. The book, called 'Five Lives' is now in print and will be launched on the 16th September.

Christmas Fete

I know it is way too early to mention Christmas but we have already begun to prepare for our Christmas fete that raises funds for the extras that we do at Esther – such as activities on the structured day programme. It will be on the 7th December at St David's Church. We are under the process of allocating stalls and deciding what to make and sell. If anyone can help with donations or would like to book a stall for selling their own produce (£5) please let us know.

Our office number is 01392 496600