

It's been quiet here

LAST time you heard from us, we'd just welcomed a new Syrian family to Horsham. They have settled in well, despite lockdown hitting before they'd had time to explore the town. The two children started nursery and school respectively during the summer term and are looking forward to making new friends in September.

The family we were due to welcome in March had their move cancelled at the last minute due to the Covid-19 crisis. We've been unable to find out what happened to them and hope they were able to leave the refugee camp in Jordan. This is a timely reminder that there are still thousands of people in this situation.

Lockdown also meant we had to cancel our now-traditional Eid al-Fitr party, when HRSG's volunteers get to enjoy fabulous Syrian food cooked by the families, and everyone plays silly games. Fingers crossed for Christmas!



But there's good news too

BACK in February, one of the Syrian dads joined the facilities team at a large school. His part-time job is more than just a chance to earn money and regain self-respect - he's also proud to be playing a key role in helping the school, staff and students navigate the new distancing and hygiene rules, and to be putting something back into the community.



Meanwhile...

NAJAT's Syrian Kitchen goes from strength to strength. As soon as lockdown rules allowed, he brought some tasty new snacks as well as the now-famous falafel



wraps back to Horsham Carfax market on Saturdays - that is, apart from the weekend he was invited back to the Sussex Prairie Garden, after a successful event there last year.

You can also find them on Sundays

at the Vegan Market in Liverpool Rd, Worthing, from 9am-5pm.

The Syrian Kitchen is available for events and has plans for a local delivery service. Check out their Facebook page!

Love it or loathe it?



WHERE would we be without it? Of course, we had to abandon our lovely, lively weekly conversation class. Like parents everywhere, the Syrian adults were too busy coping with cooped-up children to worry about their own English lessons in lockdown (we did the worrying for them, especially for the complete beginners who felt especially isolated).

Thanks to the wonderful donations HRSG receives, we've been able to ensure every family has access to the internet via phones and, in most cases, laptops.

HRSG volunteers, some of whom had only just joined us, stepped in with brilliant, inventive and practical learning for the kids (and some parents) via Zoom*. From making reading fun to basic maths and even science experiments, the team did all they could to help the kids keep up with their classmates.

(*other online platforms are available, as the BBC would say!)



Speaking of donations...

THERE are still items we're looking for on behalf of the Syrian families. Bicycles are always in demand, for adults and children



- if you have one to spare, please get in touch.
● We're particularly looking for two adult

bikes (one male, one female) and a boy's bike for age 7-8. They need to be in safe working order, though we can have them checked over by a mechanic.

- We urgently need medium-size coats for a man and a woman
- Garden furniture
- Curtains and blinds

Update from Safe Passage



THE UK Government is trying to shut down safe routes for desperate migrants to reunite with their families. Safe Passage needs your help to continue its vital campaigning on their behalf.

HRSG gains independence

FROM 1st September 2020, HRSG became independent after our hard-working core team got all the protocol and compliance in place. Huge thanks to everyone at Horsham District Council who has helped and supported us from the beginning, particularly Rachel Evans, whose knowledge, good sense and advocacy have been invaluable.

It may be that we now have our full quota of Syrian families under the original UNVPR scheme, but we are ready to welcome anyone who needs us.

Thank you for your support