

Mission Partner for May 2021

b.friend



b.friend is a project of Bridges for Communities which enables volunteers to provide social support to isolated asylum seekers and refugees in the Bristol area.



b.friend provides a thorough training programme and ongoing support to volunteers, who commit to meeting up once a week for up to a year.

b.friend is now 10! Over the past decade several hundred have received befriending support and volunteers have had their lives changed by their experiences. Currently asylum seekers and refugees are more isolated than ever and suffering through loneliness and lack of purpose. Some of our volunteers build real friendships that last for longer than a year and both parties often talk about gaining a new family member! It has been a joy to witness! Befriending is a gift both ways. **Why not join us?**

Befriending in the time of a pandemic

Despite the restrictions our befrienders have managed to continue their support. At times this has meant dropping off food and toys. Mostly it has been about a regular phone call to check in with how the befriended is. When lockdown has eased people have taken to the local parks to take some daily exercise together. At a time when it is tempting to turn inwards, these befriending relationships have demonstrated the power of human connection.

For your prayers

- That the befriending partnerships would transition from virtual contact to meeting in person in a safe way.
- That befriended whose mental health has worsened over lockdown would get the support they need.
- That new volunteers with cars would apply to be trained.

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**Befriending asylum seekers
and refugees in Bristol**

Training programme details:

*Weds 12th May 7.30 - 9pm &
Weds 19th May 7.30 - 9pm*

Both online sessions must be attended.
Email Sam to book a place.
We welcome volunteers 18+ yrs.

Befriending is... drinking tea, hearing stories of home, building trust, helping with english, exploring Bristol, sharing in leisure activities and getting to know each other... with the support of the project.

Volunteers give:

1 and a half hrs of meeting time weekly. Commitment to befriend for 12 months. Training and support is provided.

To find out more, contact Sam Sayer on sam@b-friend.org.uk

b.friend is a project of Bridges for Communities, Charity No. 1137092

St. Michael's link person: Chris Gane

Sam Sayer works Mons to Weds and can be reached at sam@b-friend.org.uk