

Hi everyone

1. Our Christmas Luncheon on 10 December

As I write, provisions for our Christmas Luncheon this Saturday are literally piling up in the pantry, and several groups of volunteers are preparing to bring in gifts, decorations or other vital elements of the festivities later this week. We expect around 250 guests from all over London to come and enjoy a turkey dinner with all the trimmings, accompanied by Christmas music and followed up with a gift bag of goodies to take home.

Thank you to all the donors and volunteers who are making this possible!

2. Winter Appeal – you have given nearly £4,000, but we still need another £11,000 to reach our target of £15,000

Our Winter Appeal is vital in order to provide for the day-to-day running expenses which form the foundation of our regular provision of free food and clothing, and these costs are set to rise: the most guests we serve in one day is usually about 100, but 116 people came looking for help last Saturday! Of course, they don't only get access to food, clothing and toiletries but also basic advice, company and friendship.

If you have not yet contributed, you can still add your support:

- **Online:** www.justgiving.com/campaigns/charity/whitefield-soupkitchen/winterappeal2016
- **By cheque:** Made out to 'Soup Kitchen'
- **By bank transfer:** email Miranda for our bank details:
soupkitchendirector@hotmail.com

A recent report calls isolation a 'Giant Evil' affecting millions of people in Britain, due to a lack of friendships, loneliness in old age through a lack of family or neighbours, family breakdown, low self-esteem among the unemployed, rising homelessness.

Thank you for helping the Soup Kitchen to be part of the answer.

With our warmest wishes for a peaceful Christmas and New Year,

Miranda, Michael, Alex, Jorge, Constance, Paul and Aminur.

Soup Kitchen (SK) at the American International Church ... E News ... June 2016

A Message from the Director: THANK YOU!

Back in February we launched an emergency appeal, as we had seen an exponential rise in guest numbers, and funds were very low. Since then you have rallied round wonderfully, we reached our Winter appeal target, and our financial position has stabilised. It was especially helpful to have details of other funding sources we could apply to, as well as employers' match-funding. We have also had a large amount of food and clothing donated. For our part, we have been able to make some substantial savings to our 2016 budget.

However we cannot afford to be complacent, as guest numbers remain high – an average of 73 guests a day in May, which is a 12% rise on May 2015. As we complete the first half of 2016 and look ahead to the second half, we are heartened by the fact that we have an inspiring bunch of supporters like you behind us!

Miranda

Clothes Closet Supplies

Although we hand out a lot of used clothing, some of our stock has to be new, e.g. underwear and toiletries, like toothpaste and shavers.

We now have a very helpful **Amazon Wish List at:**

https://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/registry/wishlist/3TAFE2FYKQCPI/ref=cm_sw_em_r_awwlg_n3Aoxb4ARC9BR_wf

Orlando runs for us again - 625 miles in 13 days!

Orlando and his father (with a combined age of 96) will be running 625 miles from 19 June – 2 July, following England's cricketers in their One Day International (ODI) series against Sri Lanka.

Setting off from Lords on 19 June, they will run up to Trent Bridge (watch the 1st ODI), then on to Edgbaston (watch the 2nd ODI); the Bristol County Ground (watch the 3rd ODI); the Oval (watch the 4th ODI) and finally arrive in Cardiff in time for the 5th ODI on 2 July. Orlando says, *'It's going to be exhausting but fun! We'll be sleeping rough in bivouacs along the way, supported when necessary by my mother and sister.'*

Orlando and his father are primarily raising money for the Lord's Taverners (LT), the UK's leading disability sports charity for young people, who are providing all their PR support, but LT have given permission for the SK to benefit at the same time. This means that 25% of any sponsorship money you give to the SK will be passed on to LT to cover their costs.

Please give these 2 intrepid runners as much support as you possibly can by sponsoring them at:

<http://www.justgiving.com/O-Brooke>

Our mission continues: Free food - Free clothing – PLUS Community and relationship

Our main focus is addressing food poverty, but we also provide free clothing and toiletries every 2 weeks, and building community among our guests is very important to our mission.

These are just a few of the guests who are our 'regulars' (their names have been changed):

- **Jed** who comes to the SK every day. He has no close family or friends and has asked us to check up on him if he ever stops turning up. He says no one else would notice.
- **Richard, Kevin and Jake** help with vital practical tasks relating to both the kitchen and the clothes closet – collecting food donations from local restaurants, taking clothing donations that we cannot use to the charity shop, watering the plants in the courtyard.
- **Several guests** who help with tidying up at the end of each SK session.
- **6 guests** who attend the Bible Study; one is a very tuneful and enthusiastic singer!
- **Malcolm** whom we have known for many years; he is in poor health and we give him £10 a month towards his electricity bill.
- **A handful of older guests** who have been using the SK for many years and really benefit from the routine, the company and a square meal. They are in accommodation but the free food and clothing help them to manage on benefits. Some of them are experts on the local area, especially homeless services, and they enjoy giving advice to newcomers.
- **3 female guests** who come in weekly to collect extra toiletries.
- **James**, a guest who just turned 60 and became eligible for an over 60s oyster card, but he couldn't manage to apply for it himself. We made the application for him.

For PHOTOS please go to the SK's Facebook page or Instagram:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Soup-Kitchen-at-the-American-International-Church/298663436940986>

Instagram: @soupkitchenlondon

The Budget and homelessness

The latest Budget announced extra funding to address ever rising levels of rough sleeping, as well as future funding for supported housing. Leading charity Homeless Link welcomed any strong commitment from government to show that they are taking the causes, scale and impact of homelessness seriously and that they understand the invaluable role played by homelessness services: *'This follows successive years of funding cuts to frontline services, and a raft of changes*

to benefits that have disproportionately affected people experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness ... The past few years have been a challenge for our member projects, working with fewer resources in an uncertain funding environment to tackle increasing levels of homelessness.' They added that the government should take into account the chronic shortage of genuinely affordable accommodation, and ensure that those on benefits are not excluded from it. Also the existence of vital frontline services which support people out of homelessness must not be put at risk.

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www.amchurch.co.uk/soup-kitchen/

UK Charity No: 1051770 & US 501(c)3 org
Helping the Homeless in Central London