

Winter 2019

ISSUE 136



THE  
*Simon*  
STAR



[www.simoncommunity.org.uk](http://www.simoncommunity.org.uk)





[www.simoncommunity.org.uk](http://www.simoncommunity.org.uk)  
[info@simoncommunity.org.uk](mailto:info@simoncommunity.org.uk)

020 7485 6639



THANK YOU

Bloomsbury Baptist Church  
St Martin's Gospel Oak  
St Giles in the Fields  
Pret a Manger  
Fareshare  
Time Out  
The Cruise Portfolio  
Bloomberg

All our individual donors and supporters

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## Drivers needed

We are looking for drivers to help us take the food to the guests on the outreach runs. If you have a licence and are able to drive the van (it is not a special licence, just the same as the car) then we would love to hear from you.

We especially need help with the soup run (Thursday evening 8pm to 11.30pm) and the street cafe (Sunday 1pm to 3pm)

Please email us at:  
[rcullen@simoncommunity.org.uk](mailto:rcullen@simoncommunity.org.uk)

Thank you for reading this winter edition of Simon Star and for supporting the Community. We use this newsletter to let you know what is going on and invite you to share your stories.

If you would like to update, edit or remove your contact details then please get in touch.

You can email us on [admin@simoncommunity.org.uk](mailto:admin@simoncommunity.org.uk) or call the office on 0207 485 6639

# WELCOME TO THE SIMON STAR

Welcome to our winter Simon Star. We hope that this newsletter finds you well and happy.

There has been a lot of change at the house and a new team of volunteers are getting ready for the winter.

We have noticed lately that the numbers on certain services have been fluctuating, and in recent weeks have seen a lot of new faces out on the street. On street work we go to people individually as they are bedding down for the night with hot drinks, sandwiches and whatever

other treats we can find or make. The numbers on this service have significantly increased in the last year with many more people bedding down in Central London.

We have had to increase the number of volunteers on this service just so that there are enough hands to carry everything we need to make sure all the guests get something to eat and drink.

We are thankful to all our supporters whose generosity allows us to carry on with this work.



# GETTING READY FOR WINTER

## Shelter set to open at the end of December

We are looking forward to opening our winter shelter again this year at St Martin's, Gospel Oak. We will be partnering again with Quaker Homeless Action as this worked very well last year.

We will be opening on the 30th December to coincide with the end of Crisis at Christmas and also the Quaker Christmas Project.

As in previous years we will have 8 beds every night for 3 months. We have community groups and individuals cooking hot meals for guests each night.

This year we also have a coordinator, Oscar, who was previously a live in volunteer. He will be working closely with guests to see how he can help them overcome obstacles and look for ways for them to move out of homelessness. Oscar will be on hand to support volunteers who are helping out at the shelter.

In addition to the winter shelter, all other services will be running as usual and we will do what we can to find donations of socks, sleeping bags and anything else that will help our guests survive the winter.



# THE BIG GIVE CHRISTMAS CHALLENGE

This year we are taking part in The Big Give Christmas Challenge. This is a scheme which will double any donations we receive between 7 and 12 December 2019.

*WE HAVE A TARGET* of £25,000 to raise, and we have already secured £13,000 of this, meaning that we need to raise a further £12,000 between now and 12 December. If we are successful in raising the full £25,000, this will be doubled by The Big Give Foundation to £50,000(!) which will be utterly crucial to sustaining our work for the next year.

## *HOW TO DONATE*

Please get in touch with Jim on [fundraiser@simoncommunity.org.uk](mailto:fundraiser@simoncommunity.org.uk) or 07894 085505 to let him know if you want to take part – or to ask any questions. Donations must be made between 7 and 12 December to be doubled.

## *THE DIFFERENCE YOUR SUPPORT COULD MAKE*

We support, feed and talk to homeless guests in London through over 400 outreach services per year. With only 2 paid staff we support a core of around 50 volunteers, who go out every night, in vans, on public transport to bring food, hot drinks and company to rough sleepers. Our volunteers help us run street cafes, street outreach, a winter shelter and a house. We don't just get people a roof over their head, we create a community.

£1,100 will pay for us to do a soup run to 100 guests over the winter months.

£2,400 pays for half of our street outreach costs to 500 rough sleepers across the year.

£8,000 will pay for a resident to stay in our supportive and therapeutically-informed home for a year.

# WHAT'S GOING ON...

We have been very lucky to have regular drivers every week for tea runs. One of our rocks on the rota has been our Monday tea run driver Tony who has driven the tea run for several years now and has provided steady support to us as a community, but also to individuals that he meets on that service. Tony is hanging up his driving shoes and retiring now, so we want to thank him for his significant contribution over these past years and wish him a very happy and peaceful retirement.

At the end of the summer we had someone suggested at a community meeting that we have a picnic for guests in Regent's Park. We picked at day at the end of July and typically it poured with rain! We were surprised and delighted at how many guests turned up and everyone said that they enjoyed the food.

The Christmas dinner is going to be at the evening centre again this year as it worked so well last year. Chelsea is planning the menu (two meats and a veggie option) and our friends at the Cruise Portfolio will be sponsoring us again this year. We told you recently that our van is getting towards the end of its natural life. The van is very much part of life here and has served us well.

Last year we provided 463 outreach services and gave out 19018 meals / drinks to our guests on the street. Out of all these services, 296 of them were taken out on the van. When we don't have a driver, or we are visiting guests in their doorways we take the bus, but for the other services having a van means that we can take hot food out onto the street, which makes a huge difference.

A massive thank you to our van for lasting this long (!) and to all the amazing people that have driven it. And yet more thanks to all our friends who have helped us raise the money for our next van!



**Pia cooking for the house & shelter**

# THANK YOU

Thank you so much to all the people that wrote and sent messages and donations after our last newsletter when we told you that we needed a new van. We are looking for the van replacement and hope to be all set by the end of the year.

Thank you also to those brilliant people who did the half marathon walk in September raising almost £5,000! Thank you for your efforts and we hope that your feet have forgiven you now!

Thanks again to our friends at The Cruise Portfolio who are fundraising to sponsor our guests Christmas Dinner this year. We already have people planning the meal for this year and we know that it's going to be delicious!

Since our last issue we have said goodbye to volunteers Martina, Pauline, Yousra and Bruno who have gone back to their studies. We have never had a group so reluctant to leave us and it was great! They have moved on to Belgium, Holland and Austria. Pia has also left us to return to Chile. They are all greatly missed.

We have also said goodbye to resident Dawid who has now joined our friends at Emmaus Medway.



## HELLO & GOODBYE

We have been joined in the house recently by volunteers Amy and Carla who are both from Germany. They are settling in well and enjoying going out on the services and spending time with guests.

Two new residents have joined the house, Fred and Michael have joined us recently and are settling in well. We are pleased to welcome them into the house and they are a great addition to the group.

