

## Welcome to our Christmas Newsletter

We hope that this newsletter finds you all safe and well. This addition offers our reflections of the year, as we continue to provide a person centred and holistic service to those we support whilst working hard to meet the ever changing landscape of covid-19 regulations.

Last year, we informed you of the exciting plans for our Day Centre drop-in for rough sleepers. We have shared a piece about the expansion of our Drop-in which is now a 24 hour safe haven for homeless women.

We are extremely proud of the hard work and efforts that our staff, across the project continue to make during these uncertain times and we have seen the benefits of their hard work manifested through the many achievements and positive outcomes made by our women.

We have received tremendous help from volunteers who have richly added to the support that we provide through running activities or supporting our frontline staff team which has in turn improved the wellbeing of the women we serve.

We have been overwhelmed and humbled by the generosity and kindness that we continue to receive from our supporters, we would like to extend a massive 'thank you' to you all.

Wishing you all good health and Prosperity.

Phillippa Middleton



Our Patron Ellie Goulding (left) and Hannah Bernard from Barclays Bank (right). Officially opening the Sanctuary at our Launch

## Where We Were then and Where We Are Now

As we prepare to celebrate Christmas it is important to take some time out to reflect on the year and the milestones that have been achieved.

### Where we were:

This time last year, the Day Centre, now known as 'The Sanctuary' was open from Monday to Friday 9:30am - 1:30pm. The covid-19 Pandemic caused us to shut the Centre completely and we were unable to hold any face to face activities. Instead, we offered food parcels, toiletries and housing advice to the women from our sister building Elgood House.

The Sanctuary was also under refurbishment and our service users were meeting with the project architect to provide their input on their preferences of colour schemes and fixtures.

### Where we are now:

The sanctuary is now a 24 hour safe haven for homeless women receiving over 600 visits per month in comparison to 124 visits when we initially reopened. Women can access the sanctuary at a point of crisis or to use the facilities throughout the night. The refurbishment is now complete and service users are thrilled with the changes which include brand -new showers and a new fully furnished kitchen. (pictured below)



A new team of 9 Advice workers have been recruited to provide advice and guidance to women as well as supporting them to access more stable accommodation. The Sanctuary Team oversee 4 Emergency beds which we are able to refer eligible clients into for a maximum of 28 days while we support clients to search for more stable housing.

On the 11th of November 2021, The Sanctuary had its official launch. We were joined by special guests and funders to officially launch the Sanctuary as a 24 hour service.

Some significant milestones have been accomplished so far, and we are excited about continuing to offer a safe space to women at their point of crisis, 24/7 7 days a week.

## Christmas Volunteer Opportunities

Would you like to make a difference to the lives of women experiencing homelessness this Christmas? To help us spread some **festive cheer**, the Marylebone Project has both **group and individual volunteering opportunities** that's ideal for work colleagues, or even groups of friends or family who are looking to celebrate Christmas by making a real difference to others.

The Marylebone Centre will be hosting a range of exciting activities over the Christmas period. To help make this a wonderful time for our women, we're looking for volunteers to join us in preparing and serving food, preparing gift bags and facilitating games including bingo and a quiz, and even dressing up as Santa to hand out gifts!

If you're interested in supporting us please contact our Volunteer Coordinator Lucas by emailing: [volunteer@maryleboneproject.org.uk](mailto:volunteer@maryleboneproject.org.uk) or call on: 020 39591459

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## Christmas Appeal

Christmas can be a hard time for many women at the Marylebone Project. With **1 in 4** homeless people spending Christmas alone, we like to make the women at the Project feel **appreciated, loved and supported**.

We are appealing for presents to go into gift bags for our service users. **Perfume, gloves, scarves, pyjamas, socks, notebooks, chocolates, make-up, purses and bags** etc make great gifts! Please deliver items unwrapped and don't include candles, sanitary products or used toiletries/make-up.

Please contact [marylebone@churcharmy.org](mailto:marylebone@churcharmy.org) for more information.

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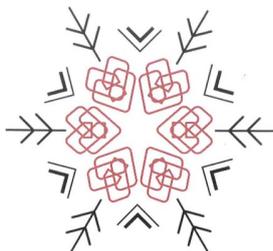
## Christmas Card Competition Winner 2021

This year we have been running **card-making workshops** in the run-up to Christmas where women have enjoyed chatting while being creative.

We would like to thank all our participants who have been coming to the workshops for your endless **enthusiasm and energy!**

winning designs →

All 3 designs will be available to purchase. For more information Please contact Esther by emailing:



## Christmas in Hungary, by our TFG Volunteer Panni



The Hungarian Christmas season starts with the day of St. Nicholas. On the eve of St. Nicholas Feast Day, children are visited by Saint Nicholas, or Mikulás. That night, we place our newly polished boots on our windowsills to be filled with small presents by Mikulás and his helpers. If you've been good, you will wake to find a boot filled with oranges, mandarins and small chocolates. If you've been naughty, Mikulás' sidekick "Krampusz" (a mischievous devil), will have left a bundle of birch sticks "virgács" instead. The longer the birch sticks the naughtier the one who got it!



Later in December celebrated on December 13, Luca Day marks Hungary's annual Winter Solstice which were spent practicing a variety of folk traditions to ward off evil.

One of Hungary's most famous holiday folk traditions is the carving of the Luca Chair. Made of nine different types of wood, the Luca chair was to be carved by Christmas Eve. The hitch: Only one carving was permitted per day. Once the chair was complete, its maker would carry it to midnight mass, where it would give him a high enough vantage point to spot witches in the crowd. A Hungarian saying that lives on from this tradition is "Készül, mint a Luca széke" or "You are preparing it as slowly as a Luca Chair!"



But the Luca calendar was also a time for love spells! To forecast the name of her future husband, an unmarried woman would write twelve names on small scraps of paper and burn one a day until Christmas. The name on the last piece of paper was believed to be her future husband's name. Alternatively, the scraps of paper could be put into dumplings and then cooked; the first dumpling to rise to the surface of the boiling water would contain the name of the woman's husband-to-be.



In Hungary we decorate the Christmas tree on the 24th. Several kinds of ornaments and ribbons are used, but the most important thing – and the child in me enthusiastically agrees – is parlor candy. It’s called “szaloncukor” in Hungarian. As kids we used to sneak the candy out of the shiny foil, but we arranged it so that it looked like there’s still something inside.

Hungarian holiday meals contain a spicy fish soup called “halászlé”, which translates to ‘Fishermens’ soup. Stuffed cabbage, or “töltött káposzta” is another holiday delicacy. The cabbage leaves are filled with savory rice, minced pork meat, herbs and – of course – paprika. These delicious rolls are served with a generous helping of sour cream. So much better than fish am I right?

In Hungary, poppy seeds (mák) are believed to bring good luck and fortune in the new year. One of the most famous poppy seed desserts is “mákos rétes”, a rich poppy seed strudel. These



poppy seed rolls have two traditional filling varieties: poppy seeds, symbolizing richness and good health and walnuts, which were believed to protect against bad luck. Another delicious poppy seed dessert is “mákos guba.” This bread pudding sprinkled with poppy seeds and drizzled with sweet honey is a traditional treat used to reward children for good behavior. Or at least that’s what my grandmother told me back in the days...

### Christmas in Germany by our TFG volunteer– Imke

You know Christmas is coming when you see Lebkuchen (gingerbread) and Speculatius (Gingery biscuits) and are allowed to bake Vanillekipferl, Zimtsterne and Spritzgebäck. Christmas markets, Christmas music on the radio and Christmas lights spread the Christmas spirit throughout Germany! Traditionally we light up one candle for each Sunday in Advent. You will find those four candles on an Adventskranz (an advent wreath made of fir branches) in nearly every German household.

German Christmas markets are amazing, my family and I love going to the one in my hometown to drink “Glühwein” (mulled wine) or hot chocolate. The many lights and smells just give you the ultimate Christmas spirit! My family and I usually go to Church in the late afternoon to watch the service which also includes a “Krippenspiel” (nativity play). Afterwards, we go home to eat, sing Christmas carols in front of the Christmas tree and exchange our presents of course.

In last days before Christmas, we like to buy and decorate a Christmas tree (a real one and they are usually huge!). Typical German Christmas tree decorations are “Strohsterne” (star-shaped ornaments made of straw), baubles or little angels folded out of paper. Furthermore, we always put candles on our Christmas tree – in my family that means real candles, but a lot of Germans also use electrical ones.



# Vanillekipferl

by our tfg Imke



Preparing time: 20 mins

Cooking time: 10-20 mins

#### EQUIPMENT:

Bowl	Mixing spoon	Baking tray
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#### INGREDIENTS

	Ca. 20 biscuits
butter	180 g
sugar	50 g
flour	250 g
ground almonds	1
<b>To cover the biscuits in:</b>	
Icing and Vanilla Sugar	As much as you like :)

#### METHOD:

Mix all ingredients together in a bowl.
Knead a dough out of the ingredients.
Form little crescent moons (see image above).
Put them on a baking tray and bake until they are golden.
When still hot, cover the Vanillekipferl in icing and vanillin sugar.

**ALLERGENS:** gluten

## Marylebone Project's COVID Response

I've been mulling over what to write in this piece; the pandemic, it's impact and how we managed.

Where to start? To be truthful, I'm not sure I've fully processed the past year yet. Not to say there haven't been positives that came from the pandemic. The newfound closeness we had with our colleagues from other teams, a shared experience we had with our service users, and the new ways we worked digitally to wrap support around our clients.

### But, in all honesty, it was incredibly hard.

Friends and family recommended watching 'Help', about a care home in the pandemic. The awful scene where the carer is waiting for an ambulance that wasn't coming was too triggering and I had to turn it off. That happened to us. The countless times we were waiting for ambulances that were taking more than an hour to arrive. It still makes me feel panicky.

### But, in all honesty, we got through it.

We got through it together. Being able to come into work with my colleagues, my friends, my support system. It is something I will forever be grateful for. It gave a sense of normality when the outside world seemed like chaos.

We continued to move residents into new properties, we welcomed new residents to the Project, and we were able to connect with outside services on Zoom or Teams to continue providing the necessary support to our residents in a time that was incredibly hard for everyone, but them the most.

When the whole world stayed behind closed doors, we all turned up and connected with each other in a new way. That's how I'll remember the pandemic.

~Sidney Nurthern

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## The Festival of Home

Our social Enterprise 'Munch in Marylebone' was invited to have a stand at the Museum of Home's 2-day festival 'The Festival of Home'. This vibrant event featured performances, talks, lunch clubs, workshops and more, exploring themes of home and belonging.

300 cakes and cookies were freshly baked and beautifully presented by our Catering Coordinator, Aderemi Amusa and our Social Enterprise Time for God volunteer Panni Furcsa. The cakes were sold to the other festival goers and received fantastic reviews.

The theme of the festival focused on homelessness that is happening every day in London, often behind closed doors, and often for women and families. The feeling of belonging is one we should all be able to experience, the festival highlighted what belonging is to different people so we chose to explore this theme with a group activity, investigating what home means, using our Tree of Home (pictured below), informal introductory talks about our work helping vulnerable homeless women, and all-day bake sale.



MarylebonePrjct



Marylebone Project

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

If you would like to find out more about how you can **support our work** or if you are a **funder** and would like to visit the Project please contact

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