

Clevedon and District Foodbank, Nailsea Branch
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Dear Northleaze School

I am writing to thank you for your most generous Harvest donations last week which weighed in at a massive 185kg! We were absolutely delighted by everyone's generosity and as foodbank demand is still high, it is very much appreciated.

At the beginning of the summer we had a few quieter weeks but this was short-lived as we hit the school summer holidays where we issue holiday lunch bags to those who would normally be in receipt of free school meals. This summer we gave out 106 lunch bags which was a big increase on the previous summer.

In the period July to September we fulfilled 159 vouchers which equates to 256 adult and 244 child parcels. This is lower than the previous quarter but expected in the warmer months.

We continue to work closely with the Nailsea and Backwell Refugee support group. It is impossible to fully appreciate out how long it takes for people who are new to this country to settle in and find their way. The Afghan families who were housed here in January are working really hard to adapt to life in the UK but it isn't easy for those of them who don't speak English to rapidly learn it. They are attending classes though and progressing. It is hard to find any job without English so life is still quite tough for them financially. It can also be very lonely for them, especially the women, as they were used to living with big extended families around them and they no longer have this support. If you see any of them around, do say hello or give them a friendly smile – I'm sure they will appreciate it.

Now for a positive story! Back in 2021 we supported a Sri Lankan family for many months. The father had come here to do a masters degree and left Sri Lanka just before the political and economic upheaval there. They were not fully aware of the cost of living in the UK before they came – it is now a well known fact that students from some foreign countries do not have this explained to them. Hence, this family had need to use the foodbank. On near completion of his degree the family started to recognise that returning to Sri Lanka was not the best option but their visa would soon run out. After much prayer and practical support from some key people, the mother found a job in a care home and became the visa holder and the father soon got a job as an engineer at a well known farming business in the area. I was extremely touched when a few weeks ago, they returned to the foodbank to say hello to us and brought a large bag of dairy produce from the farm to issue to our existing foodbank clients. They are now financially independent and sought to help others. We don't see 'happy endings' too regularly so this was a great encouragement.

I hate to say it but Christmas will soon be upon us! The Clevedon and District Foodbank will once again be issuing Christmas Hamper packs to nominated clients. If you'd like to donate food items

towards these, do get in touch and we will let you know the items that are being included this year and what the deadline is.

Thank you once again for your ongoing support. We genuinely couldn't cope without you all!

Sarah Leong