

# Emmaus St Albans

## December 2013 Newsletter



### Record Breaking Sale!



Half-Price Sale Day on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> December, in all three Emmaus St Albans shops, brought in takings exceeding £6,000, beating all previous sale day totals!

Companions and staff were primed and ready for the flood of customers queuing outside well before 9am.

Four to five times the usual daily number of customers visited the shops, buying anything from picture frames to pianos, clothing to coffee tables.

End-of-day till rolls were as long as your arm!

Thanks to the efforts of companions and staff, customers were thrilled with the service as Emmaus vans followed them home with their purchases on board.

For details of the next Emmaus St Albans sale day, keep a close eye on our website or pop into one of the shops.

### Sleep Out 2013

Two staff members, four volunteers and 11 companions took part in the 20<sup>th</sup> annual sponsored Sleep-out beneath the chiming bells of St Albans Abbey to raise money for eight homeless charities, including Emmaus. The rain held off, but temperatures dropped to 5°C in the early hours of the morning.



**Jennifer Hewson** (Emmaus staff) recounted,  
*"It was a great experience, and it was humbling to hear the stories from those who have been street homeless before. I think I managed to get three hours broken sleep in total and I don't think I have ever heard so much snoring in all my life! However it was the eerie silence at 3am when everyone had drifted off that woke me suddenly. I was very impressed with the polar bear onesie (jumpsuit) that I wore which made me look ridiculous but kept me lovely and warm."*



Spirits were kept high with St Albans Abbey serving delicious hot beverages and soup all night and activities inside the Abbey included a midnight mass.

**Geoff** (current companion) commented,  
*"There was a great atmosphere and it brought back a lot of memories for me. I am just so thankful that I got into Emmaus before the winter weather set in. It was nice to be able to share my memories with everyone especially the special bond I formed with an 'Iggie Piggle' children's ride-on machine which kept me company whilst sleeping rough in St Albans. I never thought my homeless days would teach me the lyrics to the children's programme, 'In the Midnight Garden'!"*

The total amount raised already exceeds £500 with more pledges to collect.

## Donate to the Rucksack Project!

The Rucksack Project is a worldwide movement to distribute rucksacks filled with essentials for those forced to sleep out in winter. Two Companions from Emmaus St Albans, on hearing about the project, decided to extend it to St Albans. Customers quickly responded to posters, donating many items from hats to toothpaste.

We plan to work with other local organisations to distribute rucksacks to the most vulnerable this Christmas, on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> December. Donations will be gratefully received before Friday 20<sup>th</sup> December.

We desperately need the following:

Hats, toiletries, scarves, socks, gloves, dried foods, canned foods, sweets, flasks, t-shirts, sleeping bags, blankets, rucksacks, thermals.



