WALKING IN MEMORY OF STEVEN

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At Emmaus, we give people a home, meaningful work in a social enterprise and an opportunity to get themselves back on their feet again.

Emmaus Leeds is home to 26 companions - previously homeless people who are members of our community and work in our social enterprise. We collect and sell donated goods, using the money generated to sustain our community. We also repair, refurbish and upcycle items in our workshops and run a delivery/collection service for our customers.

Emmaus Leeds is one of 28 Emmaus communities across the UK and part of a wider international movement. Founded in France after the Second World War, there are now more than 350 Emmaus groups in 37 countries, working to tackle the many causes of social exclusion.

Emmaus Leeds is based on St. Mary’s Street near West Yorkshire Playhouse. The retail, coffee shop and office space covers the first floor and the community is situated above. In the basement we have our workshops, sorting areas and storage spaces. We also run two other second-hand stalls on Kirkgate Market in Leeds.
A mixture of things led me to being out of work and having nowhere to stay. I broke up with my girlfriend and ended up losing my job at about the same time. This led to me drinking more and things got worse. I couldn’t pay my rent so my landlord evicted me.

I ended up sleeping rough because the only homeless shelter available to me was full. I kept checking back, having meals there and eventually they let me stay overnight. Whilst I was staying at the homeless shelter I went with a friend to visit Emmaus Leeds to see if he could join. All I could see was positives – a drug and alcohol free environment, a place to gain skills and experience, and somewhere to give me some stability. I joined Emmaus Leeds in June 2014 and have not looked back since.

When I joined Emmaus I was surprised that everyone had their own room, it was more like a studio flat. Everything was provided, from three healthy meals a day, to furniture, a TV and support from the Emmaus staff. I initially worked in the warehouse and coffee shop because I had some prior experience in these areas. I like to cook as well so I have also worked as a kitchen porter and chef.

Being part of Emmaus has given me the stability to move forward with my life. I found a new girlfriend and she encouraged me to go for a new job. I applied to a large retailer to be a Warehouse Operative but mentioned about my FLT license. I decided to join as a Warehouse Operative and hold out for the FLT Driver position that they said would be available after a few months.

Now I am working full time. I was staying at Emmaus Leeds until I found a new place to live and save up for deposit. Emmaus has a move-on policy to support companions when they decide to leave the community. I met with my Emmaus support worker on a weekly basis and she offered me any help that I needed. I now have my own place to live close to where I work.

Being at Emmaus has made me feel part of a family again. I was with these people 24-7 and if I wanted any support it was always there. Now I have left the community I’ll miss it but I’m sure I will pop back in to see everyone.

There should be more places like Emmaus and it’s a good thing that it exists. From my own perspective it has helped loads, my health has improved massively and I don’t want to think where I’d be without Emmaus. It has given me opportunity.

"From my own perspective it has helped loads"
Companions takeover The Weather Café

Formerly homeless people from Emmaus Leeds recently organised a special event at The Weather Café, a pop-up art space, bringing together people from the Leeds’ community and creative sectors.

Four companions of Emmaus Leeds hosted an invite only event at The Weather Café. The evening included a live band, talks, discussions, networking and a three course meal cooked by Emmaus Leeds companions from food donations that would otherwise have gone to landfill.

Nicholas, Emmaus Leeds companion and one of the organisers of the event, said: “I thought the event went very well and it was good to meet lots of new and different people. It was great fun and a really positive use of a great city centre space. I would like to give special thanks to artist David Shearing, Jo and David for the meal, the band ‘Ten String Thing’ for keeping us entertained and Leeds College of Art student, Ailsa Rham, for photographing the night.”

Corecom support for Emmaus

Emmaus Leeds has partnered up with local recruitment company, Corecom Consulting. The partnership has developed into a mix of activities including support for companions, help to increase the profile of Emmaus Leeds and fundraising initiatives.

Corecom have kindly provided Emmaus Leeds companions with IT and CV building workshops to increase their skills and confidence. Members of the Corecom team have also volunteered in the Emmaus social enterprise, donated raffle items and carried out a Christmas themed fundraiser.

Jonathan Sanderson, Managing Director of Corecom Consulting, commented: “Being able to use my expertise to make a difference to the lives of companions at Emmaus is such a rich and rewarding venture for both myself and all of the employees at Corecom Consulting.”

These efforts have been recognised by Stuart Andrew, MP for Pudsey, Horsforth and Aireborough. Stuart added: “It’s clearly of great value to Emmaus in helping the people they support get the skills that they need to help improve their life chances.”

New café open for events and hire

The in-store café at Emmaus Leeds has recently been refurbished. The vastly improved space now offers a much larger and varied menu as well as an outside catering service. Our new café is run by our friendly companions and all the money generated goes towards the running costs of our charity.

Tyler, one of our companions who now works in the café, said: “It’s good because there’s now a better choice and we’re able to cater for people with different dietary requirements. It also gives us the opportunity to spread the word of Emmaus with more people coming in.”

We’ll be hosting different events in the café space and welcome other groups and businesses to host their own events here. Please get in touch for more details.
Solidarity is an important part of life at Emmaus Leeds and this year our community is taking part in a number of initiatives.

Solidarity means working to help someone less fortunate than yourself. Acts of solidarity can vary from raising money for charity, donating goods or volunteering time to worthy projects. Solidarity can be very valuable for Emmaus companions as it is often the key to helping to rebuild self-esteem, proving that everyone has the capacity to make a difference to the lives of others.

At the start of the year, companion Nick decided to combine his passion for mountain biking with a fundraising challenge for solidarity. Nick wanted to raise money for the Leeds Flood Relief Appeal and for Emmaus so he embarked on a series of challenging downhill mountain bike races.

This challenge has given Nick a real focus. Alongside his work in our social enterprise, he has been training hard, publicising his fundraiser and building partnerships. We are all extremely proud of Nick’s efforts and wish him well for his remaining races this year.

Before our team are able to begin a house clearance, we must assess the items you’d like to donate or provide you with an estimation of any charges. This is so our clearance crew are able to evaluate the saleability of your goods and check the logistical requirements for a smooth and safe house clearance.

To find out more about our professional house clearance service or to arrange an evaluation visit, please call us on 0113 380 7841.
Companions team up for Paris Salon

A group of companions and staff from Emmaus Leeds have recently visited Paris, France to take part in a Europe-wide charity sale to raise money for charitable projects worldwide.

Four companions and two staff members teamed up with Emmaus Mossley to fill a van with donated items to sell at the Emmaus Paris Salon. This annual event brings together over 120 Emmaus communities from across Europe in one big charity sale in the French capital.

Nick, a companion at Emmaus Leeds, commented: “The Emmaus Salon was an amazing experience, from all the great people to the city and the food. I thoroughly enjoyed it and had a great time, for a good cause.”

The concept of solidarity, helping others less fortunate than yourself, is a central ethos of Emmaus and a motivation for all the communities taking part in the Paris Salon.

In 2015, the Paris Salon attracted 28,000 visitors on a single day and generated more than 200,000 Euros for international solidarity projects in Latin America, Asia, Europe and Africa.

Paul Cloke, Deputy Community Leader at Emmaus Leeds, added: “This year’s Emmaus Paris Salon was a fantastic event and a great experience for all those who took part. Our team put in a lot of hard work before and during the event but it’s satisfying to know that our efforts will support projects and people in many different countries.”

Back in March, Mariate and Pilar, two of our volunteers organised a Language Swap event in our café area. The event aimed to give people an opportunity to build their language skills, meet new people and find out more about Emmaus Leeds. Over 30 people attended this first Language Swap event and lots of fun was had in our friendly café environment.

Pilar commented: “The Language Swap was a complete success and together we achieved all the objectives. It brought together people from many nationalities, with everybody enjoying the day and meeting other extraordinary people. I am really thankful to Emmaus for giving us the opportunity to develop our skills through this event and for having the chance to help the community.”

Keep your eyes peeled on our Facebook page for details of upcoming Language Swap events and other events taking place at Emmaus Leeds.
NHS volunteers help out

The latest group of volunteers to walk through the door at Emmaus Leeds were a team of NHS workers who are based at Quarry House in Leeds. The employees of NHS England wanted to help give something back to their community and what better way to do that than through the good work we do here at Emmaus.

The team spent the day doing various bits and batters. These included painting benches and railings in the allotment area, filling up our bric-a-brac department with clothes and other items. They also helped out the companions by loading up the delivery vans.

Ollie Mansell, Policy Coordinator at NHS England, said: “We felt privileged as a team to have the opportunity to lend a hand at Emmaus, particularly since they’re based so close to our Leeds office. We were made to feel extremely welcome, and we welcomed the chance to work alongside an organisation with a mission and values so close to our own.”

Those kind words were echoed by Emmaus Leeds’s Community Leader, Katrina Mattock, who said: “We were very pleased to welcome the employee volunteers from NHS England. The team worked well in the community and had the chance to work alongside our companions.”

Volunteer with Emmaus Leeds

We’re always on the lookout for new volunteers to support our work and use their skills and experience to benefit Emmaus Leeds. We currently have four exciting volunteer roles for specific areas of Emmaus Leeds.

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<th>Role</th>
<th>Requirements</th>
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<tr>
<td>Joinery or Furniture Restoration</td>
<td>Do you have skills in joinery or furniture restoration? We want someone to help bring old furniture back to life and pass on their skills to people within our community.</td>
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<tr>
<td>eBay</td>
<td>Do you love buying and selling goods on eBay? We’re looking for a dedicated eBay Volunteer to assist our Retail &amp; Business Manager in developing the Emmaus Leeds eBay store.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Urban Allotment</td>
<td>Do you like gardening, food growing and working outdoors? We’re looking for an Urban Allotment Volunteer to assist with a garden project.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Media</td>
<td>Are you active on Facebook, Twitter and other platforms? If so, we need your help to raise the profile of Emmaus Leeds online.</td>
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To register your interest or find out more about any of our volunteering roles (general, sorting room, stock replenishment) please call Gina Morrison on 0113 380 7849 or email ginamorrison@emmausleeds.co.uk.
Support Emmaus Leeds

Donate to us
We depend on donations of good quality second-hand items that we can sell on to support our community. We can collect items or you can drop them off at our stalls or St. Mary’s Street store.

Shop with us
We sell unique and amazing items at great prices. By shopping with us you’re not only likely to pick up a bargain, you’ll also be helping to provide a home for people who have experienced homelessness.

Volunteer with us
Volunteering with Emmaus can be a great way to gain work experience or just get involved in a vibrant and bustling community. Contact us to sign up and see what volunteering roles we have available.

Please get in touch...
Call 0113 248 4288 or visit us at www.emmaus.org.uk/leeds

Our shops:

Emmaus Leeds, St Mary’s Street, Leeds, LS9 7DP

Emmaus Leeds Stalls, Kirkgate Market, Between Rows F & G and Row J, Leeds, LS2 7HY

or visit our eBay store
www.emmaus.org.uk/leeds/ebay

CALL: 0113 248 4288 | WWW.EMMAUS.ORG.UK/LEEDS  @EMMAUSLEEDS /EMMAUSLEEDSUK