

## Settled into New Centre

This time last year we were preparing to move from Lansil Way to our new home in Alston House, White Cross Business Park. We are excited to be able to report that we are back up-and-running as a drop-in centre for guests to come and have a brew and a chat with our volunteers whilst collecting their food parcels. So, we now have a team of volunteer 'Listeners' downstairs and 'Packers' upstairs – it's a hive of activity! We feel blessed with wonderful neighbours too, including Positive Futures café which kindly hosts our guests when we are at capacity. Thank you to everyone for praying for this transition and new chapter for The Olive Branch.



## Thank you so much!

We cannot thank everyone enough for the time, thought and gifts you gave over the Christmas period. Thanks to so many schools, churches, organisations and individuals, we were able to give Christmas gift bags filled with festive food, children's toys and games to every guest who visited us in December.

We really value your continued support – we are still supporting approximately 65 guests/families each week with emergency food and need your help to keep this up!

281

AVERAGE  
NUMBER OF FOOD  
PARCELS GIVEN  
OUT PER MONTH  
(2023)

£26

APPROXIMATE  
COST OF AN  
EMERGENCY FOOD  
PARCEL FOR 1  
ADULT

35

VOLUNTEERS IN  
OUR TEAM

## Ruth

We bid a fond farewell to a very familiar face of The Olive Branch. Our lovely Ruth. Ruth started with us 5 and a half years ago, initially as a baking fairy, dropping off wonderful home baked goodies for our drop-ins. Ruth quickly became a valued member of the team as Project Assistant. Ruth wore many hats and always got stuck in when and where needed and is greatly missed by all. We wish Ruth continued best wishes, as she steps into a prosperous future with a local law firm. Luckily for us, we still get those home baked goodies from time to time.

## Monopoly

You may have received Lancaster's own edition of Monopoly for Christmas and spotted The Olive Branch on the board! The Olive Branch was one of five charities that were voted in to be part of the board's design. On 24<sup>th</sup> of October 2023, Linda, Chair of Trustees and Barbara, Founder of The Olive Branch, attended the launch event at Ashton Memorial and even had the chance to meet Mr Monopoly! The event embodied the incredible support we receive from Lancaster's community for which we are deeply grateful.



Above: Ciará, Founder and Creative Director of The Performance Studios came to visit us.



## 'Take Two: Dare to Dream'

The Performance Studios delivered their annual show 'Take Two: Dare to Dream' at The Lancaster Grand Theatre on August 6th 2023. The show is an opportunity for students to perform on the big stage and immerse themselves in all things performance, and each year, the theatre group fundraise for a chosen charity. Last year, The Olive Branch was lucky enough to be chosen and representatives were invited into the Royal Box at the theatre. As Mike, a Trustee of The Olive Branch described:

*"We were seated in a private box immediately to the right of the stage, so were "up close" to the action. I was extremely impressed by the children's efforts, and their visible enjoyment is a tribute to Ciará and her team. It seemed to me that every child was given a chance to take part, regardless of ability. I will always remember the smiles on their faces at the curtain call."*

Thank you so much to Performance Studios for your donation which will support us to continue our activities to help people facing hardship.

*"The last time I was at White Cross I arrived at reception behind a man in as bad a condition as I have seen for a long time, in a dreadful physical and mental state with no doubt multiple things wrong and apparently not in any shape to do anything to help himself. He arrived in reception at the same time as me and I was so glad that the receptionist rang up to the Olive Branch rooms and someone said they would come down to meet him and presumably take him inside for a cuppa, a sympathetic ear, and some next steps towards making his life a bit better. I would not personally have had a clue what to do for this individual, or where to start, but the Olive Branch systems are well rehearsed and give the first steps to bringing hope - quite apart from the sheer humanity of somebody caring enough to listen. It made all the donations and food collections worthwhile."*

*Written to us by a donor, November 2023.*

### THINK ABOUT ...

Whether you could help to supply our most-needed items when you go food shopping?

Please do be inspired by our traffic light lists posted on Facebook each week!

### LOOK OUT FOR...

Our Easter Appeal set to launch in February in order to collect enough Easter Eggs to give to all our guests!

### PRAY...

For the work of The Olive Branch to continue to be developed and refined as we enter 2024, becoming well established in our new location in the city.