



ST NIC'S IN THE CITY



January Spotlight

Each month this year we will be giving a bit more profile to one of our St Nic's in the City partners.

This month it's the turn of *Welcome Boxes*.

January Spotlight

Welcome Boxes



Welcome Boxes is a simple way to make a big impact on the lives of refugees.

The concept is simple. Trained volunteers from the local church deliver a Welcome Box filled with small gifts to the homes of recently arrived refugees. These volunteer 'Welcomers' are then able to offer friendship and make sure their new 'Neighbours' are connected with local services and community.

We caught up with Faye Sherwood and Beth Rowland. Faye Coordinates the project in Nottingham and Beth is a Welcomer.

Faye, What does volunteering involve?

Volunteers take a box of gifts and go in pairs to greet and welcome a family or person that's recently arrived in Nottingham. They then spend about three months helping them with practical things, hopefully become friends with them, and help them integrate within the local community. Anyone can get involved. You don't need any special skills, qualifications, or to speak a different language. You just need to be friendly!

Beth, What's it like being a Welcomer?

It's challenging but really rewarding. I'm befriending an Albanian family and there's a language barrier. But to see how much they've changed in the last few months, they seem so much happier, secure and safe and settled here which is absolutely fantastic and I love going to see them.

Beth, How has God been at work?

I think it's been fantastic for me to see that God has been working in the families lives even though they don't know who he is.

I prayed that I would be able to open people's eyes to Welcome boxes and the generally the plight of refugees in the city. I was able to share my volunteering experiences with my workplace and ask them to support me and they donated and are still donating. Its enabled me to have so many conversations at work about why I do it and it's helped me to share a bit of my faith as well.

Also I have been praying a lot recently, specifically for the kids that they will get places at school and they now have, that's fantastic and has been a great answer to prayer.

Beth, Rob and Faye with a welcome box



Faye, How can people be praying for Welcome boxes and are there any specific needs people could help with?

It would be great to pray for all those arriving in the city. Pray that we have more volunteers to welcome more people and ensure they get a good welcome and that they genuinely feel loved and welcomed to Nottingham. Pray for community that they find that somewhere, be that with us or elsewhere.

What would your hopes be for the future be?

Beth: Firstly for the family I am welcoming, that God would be transforming their lives, and that even if they don't come to know him that they will be settled, secure and safe in this country. Secondly, I want to see people's hearts changed before refugees. I want to see churches specifically knowing the problem and knowing there is an easy way that they can help. So I hope Welcome boxes will expand, that more churches will be able to come on board.

Faye: My prayer would be that everybody that comes to Nottingham feels welcome here. That they have a great opportunity to be part of the community and through that they have the opportunity to hear the gospel. I think it's so important that people have that chance!

**To find out more, to volunteer, or to commit the work of
Welcome Boxes to your prayers, contact city@stnics.org**



Serve Nottingham
and make disciples for **Jesus**

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