

# Refugeegee

## Everybody Benefits – New Enterprise Award

### Describe the work of the charity organisation being nominated

Refugeegee was set up in December 2015 to provide a warm welcome to forcibly displaced people arriving in Glasgow. Refugeegee has generated an amazing response from people in Glasgow and beyond, they have provided over 4,000 community-built, personal welcome packs and gained charitable status in September 2016. Refugeegee aims to enable the existing community in extending the friendly welcome that Glasgow is world renowned for. They do this through welcome packs, events and volunteer opportunities. Refugeegee have empowered the Glasgow community by providing everyone who wishes to get involved with an opportunity to do so; be it through writing a letter, donating essential items, joining the team at an event or fundraising. Refugeegee work with multiple organisations around Scotland, from their partners who distribute welcome packs through to schools and community organisations looking to do something similar in their area. Refugeegee are a truly Scottish response to the refugee crisis; they love hearing from other individuals, organisations, groups and projects and collaborating wherever we can on the very simple objective of making the world a nicer place to live.

### Give examples of the projects or work the organisation has done

Refugeegee is a community-led charity that gives people a way to welcome and embrace those newest to arrive. We strive to ensure that people who have been forced to flee their homes arrive in Scotland to a warm welcome and some of the things that will help people to feel more at home here. Their projects are entirely centred on making Glasgow feel like home to anyone who has had to leave their home, country and belongings behind. In the first instance this looks like creating welcome packs from the established community; for the new community. To make these packs happen they run community workshops with schools, community groups and workplaces throughout Glasgow to decorate tote bags that all the welcome packs go in. They also run regular appeals for Letters Fae The Locals, one of which goes into every pack along with toiletries, a notepad and pen, a hat and gloves, a token of Scotland (from tea towels to guide books, from Tunnocks to Irn Bru) a book, and a wee snack. All of these items are donated by locals for new weegees.

Refugeegee also run a series of community events with a team of volunteers called PopUps where they set up a “shop” that newly arrived people can attend to get items that they need for their new homes; whether clothing, bedding, crockery, cushions and lamps or any other soft furnishings that make a house a home. These events enable refugees to choose items that they like or need without needing to pay for them; making their new house in Glasgow feel more like a home. Refugeegee also host cross-culture events like ceilidhs where new Glaswegians can come along and learn a Scottish tradition, but also teach the Scots their traditional dance. They host tours round Glasgow that they encourage volunteers to attend and make friends with the newly arrived people. Refugeegee do a huge amount to make the most vulnerable in our community feel as welcome as possible by empowering local people who care and giving them something that they can do.

### What has been the impact of the organisation's projects or work?

The impact of Refugeegee can be seen through the demand on their welcome pack project from other organisations. Refugeegee are delivering over 100 welcome packs a month to newly arrived people who each get the opportunity to write back which is one of the best ways to see the impact

of Refuweegee's work. "To Refuweegee, I can only imagine what a magically beautiful gift life would be, if the world was only filled with such compassionate souls. I am speechlessly heartened by such a rare and unexpected act of love and humanity in my moments of despair. I am forever indebted. Faithfully, M." "Knowing that someone in the city had thought about me, means so much. Even if they are a stranger to me in person, they took the time to care and think of me." "I am from Namibia, a girl and am very happy and proud receiving this gift. Would like to say thank you very much for everything you put into the bag, it's really helpful to me. May the lord be with you and bless you with many more years to help others." The Refuweegee team are always so humble about their impact frequently saying that they are only as good as those who donate; but I believe their reminders for Glasgow to be the best it can be has had a hugely positive impact on my community.

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