

Community Newsletter

Autumn 2023



emmaus
Oxford
working together to end homelessness



In this issue

HIDDEN TREASURES

A huge thank you to Dawsons, leading auctioneers of fine art, antiques and jewellery, who are supporting us by valuing and auctioning our donated items.

The auctioneers have kindly waived its seller's fee to Emmaus, meaning that 100% of the sale price of auctioned items will go to us.

Putting Down Roots. The Big Give Campaign 2023

This year we are asking for your kind support as part of the Christmas Big Give campaign to raise funds to create a companion therapy garden.

Every donation made to our campaign from 28th November to 5th December will be doubled! Yes, doubled! Please save the date and visit this Big Give page that week to donate. Click here: [Putting Down Roots \(biggive.org\)](https://biggive.org)

Designed with companions, this garden will provide a calm, therapeutic space in a supportive environment where a person can connect with nature and really benefit from the healing power of the garden, a place to put down roots, grow plants as well as confidence.

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Brad's story

"I never really realised how cold cold could get"

"I was put into care when I was 16, my family life was never very good, which is unfortunately a very common story. My care years were really nice, but the issue is, once you're 18 you have to leave: you've got no more funding."

In his early 20s, Brad spent the winter months living in a tent on the streets in Oxford. "I never really realised how cold cold could get, It was the kind of cold where you would step out in the morning and your bones would get cold before your skin did; it's a horrific feeling."

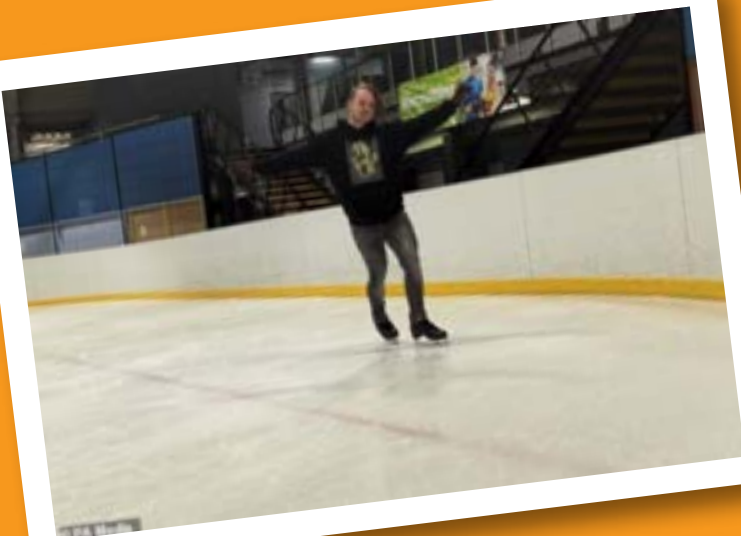
But with the help of Emmaus Oxford, he has "changed his life for the better" and, at the height of his depression, discovered a new hobby of ice skating.

"Emmaus gave me the support I needed and this included being more social and thinking about finding a hobby to give me a different focus. We settled on ice skating and I've been ice skating ever since. It's keeping me mentally and physically fit and is probably the reason why I'm still around today."

Brad now ice skates several times per week and wants to become a learning mentor to support vulnerable teenagers and to "stop kids going through the life" he has had.

"I would be dead if not for Emmaus. I cannot convey the level of support and help that I got. They've not only saved my life, but they've given my life purpose and changed it for the better."

We are grateful to Brad for sharing his story and for being an ambassador for Emmaus Oxford, giving talks to schools and groups.



Welcome Gonda

We welcome Gonda Coetzee to Emmaus Oxford as the new training manager.

Gonda has worked in adult education and training in South Africa for over 20 years and is passionate about developing learning systems that foster real learning and have a positive impact on people's lives.

At Emmaus Oxford Gonda is delivering a learning and development programme that responds to the needs and aspirations of all companions. The aims of the learning programme will be to support companions to strengthen their personal resilience, develop occupational knowledge and skills and move closer toward work-readiness.

The learning programme will follow a collaborative, empowerment approach where companions are supported to design and choose their own learning paths.

In line with this inclusive approach, Emmaus Oxford is conducting a national research project involving companions and staff from all 29 Emmaus communities in the UK to ensure that the learning programme responds to the unique needs and abilities of Emmaus companions.



Healthy Hearts

Thanks to a Healthy Hearts grant we have lots of exciting activities available to help keep companions fit in body and mind.

Activity Trips

A group of Emmaus Oxford companions and staff recently hiked to the summit of Yr Wyddfa (Snowdon). They camped out in a bothy and everyone made it safely to the top! The group had a great few days in North Wales with lots of fresh air and exercise.

Companion Fox gives his account of the recent sailing trip.

A group of us, four companions and a member of staff from Emmaus Oxford, had a five day sailing experience aboard Pioneer, a 70 foot Oystercatcher owned by the Pioneer Sailing Trust. The trip took us from Brightlingsea in Essex, West to Aldeburgh in Suffolk. We took shelter there overnight at an anchoring in the River Alde to avoid some unpleasant weather. From Aldeburgh we headed back East to Harwich for a mooring overnight and a much needed shower. Our final destination was back to Brightlingsea. The trip created everlasting memories of great friendship with 2 participants from Emmaus Coventry and the three crew. The Emmaus family came together to achieve fantastic teamwork and camaraderie. Above all else it was fun, informative, educational and showed Emmaus companions for what they are, a big friendly family.

Weekly activities

Companions can take part in football, swimming, boxing, gym sessions, walking groups and yoga. New to our bike shed are three bespoke Emmaus Oxford bikes for any companion to use.

Healthy eating

Our Healthy Hearts project is also supporting companions to cook healthy balanced meals which are being enjoyed by everyone.

Quitting Smoking

Building on the successes of last year, we have more companions getting support to reduce or quit smoking.

Sports clothes and equipment

Whatever sport a companion is interested in, we will do our best to find them the right clothes and equipment from walking boots to boxing gloves!

Emmaus Stores update

If you are a regular visitor to our Emmaus store you may have been served by Ebonie who has recently been appointed as the full time Deputy Manager. Also, at our busy Ebay store we say farewell and good luck to Paulina, and give a big welcome to Hannah. Congratulations to Ebonie and Hannah on their new roles.





In memory of Gavin

Gavin Faulkner, a companion, friend, and much-loved member of the Emmaus Oxford community sadly passed away in June after a sudden illness.

Gavin joined Emmaus Oxford in 2011 and was a familiar face in our Barns Road shop, serving customers at the tills and greeting everyone with a warm smile and a friendly chat.

Gavin was a popular member of the community, who loved joining his companions and staff for meals and social events such as bingo and quiz nights, which he particularly enjoyed.

He was also an avid reader, keen photographer alongside attending pottery classes, his creativity being an inspiration to the community.

Gavin touched the lives of so many people, not least our companions, staff and visitors to our Barns Road shop.

Support Emmaus Oxford

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 from your home or business or you can drop them in at one of our branches.

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.

Get in touch

Call 01865 763698 or visit us at
emmaus.org.uk/oxford

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