

Heartbeat

Monday, December 19

Issue 14



Providing a 'beacon of hope' at Christmas time



Caring students have sent Christmas cards to 'prisoners of injustice' to offer them hope in their battles for freedom.

The students have worked closely with Head of RE, Mr Moorhead, and human rights organisation Amnesty International, to ensure the messages of hope have been received by those prisoners they are representing.

Amnesty International produced a booklet with the cases of 12 such victims who they chose to obtain the maximum impact over the festive period.

Among them is Albert Woodfox, who has spent 43 years in solitary confinement in a Louisiana prison for a crime he has always maintained he did not commit.

Mr Woodfox believes he was targeted because of his affiliation to a now defunct civil rights movement.

His conviction has been overturned three times, yet he remains in prison as the state appeals every decision in his favour.

Hope

Sophie Robertson (13D) was among those who sent Christmas cards along with messages of hope and support to Mr Woodfox and the other 11 prisoners.

Sophie said: "Sending Christmas cards and writing letters for Amnesty International can provide a beacon of hope for those who feel all may be lost. It shows them they are not alone."

The students' kind gesture has been recognised by those seeking freedom, with Mr Woodfox saying: "I'd like to thank our friends at Amnesty International for their remarkable support the last years, culminating in the Write For Rights campaign."



"These messages from beyond the prison walls have become an enormous source of strength for me as I continue my fight for freedom."

Sixth Form students (pictured) wrote to another victim, Waleed Abu al-Khair, who was severely punished and remains in prison for blogging about free speech. Those views were echoed by one such prisoner, Yecenia Armenta, who was released in June this year.

Yecenia had been jailed on the basis of a 'confession' extracted after 15 hours of torture, Yacenia said: "I am immensely grateful and think (people sending Christmas cards and writing letters) are

doing the nicest thing you can do, which is helping people who are facing such unjust situations.

"It fills me with pride and I truly feel it is a wonderful thing."

Head of RE, Mr Moorhead, expressed his pride at the students' gestures, he said: "As usual, I am very proud of Sacred Heart's commitment to human rights.

"At Christmas, we remember the birth of Jesus. He was a prisoner of conscience. His human rights were denied him in court and he was executed. Jesus was innocent. Christ is being crucified in 2016 in every place where injustice reigns."



Students gave the gift of giving this Christmas

Staff at an Asylum Centre in Liverpool have thanked students and staff for donations of clothes and artwork.

Asylum Link is an organisation dedicated to assisting Asylum Seekers and Refugees and to raise public awareness around Refugee issues. Their cause was helped after kind-hearted students, together with the help of staff at the College, decided to make a much appreciated donation of clothes.

Along with the clothes, artwork created by students here was also donated to be displayed in the Centre, that provides friendship, help and advice as well as encouraging the participation of asylum seekers and refugees within the service.

The gesture was welcomed by Centre Manager, Ewan Roberts, he said: "Thank you for the artwork and the clothes - all very welcome. I will send a card, but please pass on our thanks to everyone that helped."

Head of RE, Mr Moorhead, said: "We gave clothes to the asylum seekers at the Asylum Link centre. These were unclaimed lost property and donations from staff. Special thanks to Mrs Rostock for washing everything and Mr O'Malley for a lot of the donations.

"We also delivered art work the Sixth Form had made on the NOCN RE day. Hopefully the positive-themed artwork will help to turn the centre into a home.

"Mary and Joseph were a pair of displaced Eastern European refugees seeking a home. "As it is Christmas we felt that the perfect way to remember the nativity was to help other refugees who have found themselves homeless."



Festive Fayre aplenty at Lower

Lower Site has been the party place to be in the run up to Christmas, with no fewer than three big festive events.

First up was the ever-popular Pensioners' Party. Our young at heart friends joined staff and students for a full Christmas dinner, followed by party games and raffles.

Not to be outdone, on Tuesday, our younger members of the College took part in the annual Lower Site Disco.

Students from Years 7 & 8 let their hair down, strutted their stuff and had a thoroughly enjoyable time.

Finally, the eagerly-anticipated Christmas Fayre took place on Thursday, with staff, students and even Santa himself taking part in all manner of party games and competitions. All money raised from the events will go to the SVP.



News in brief

Christmas Assemblies will take place today. Year 11 students will take their Maths Mock Exam this morning and Catering Examinations finish today. There is a Cabaret Concert taking place in the Prep Hall tomorrow. Term finishes on Wednesday. Have a very merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. See you all on January 4.

