

I wanted to keep you informed about where we're at this year with supporting the refugee crisis. Below are some details that might be good to know about. We have a lot of bad news every day, so it's important to note the good work and energy of all involved in our school to find creative, engaging ways for our students and school community to connect and support refugees.

Before the Ukrainian war, our asylum system, known as direct provision, which is a system to support the basic needs of those forced into migration and refugees seeking asylum. Pre-Ukraine war, we had system, already stretched. As of 6th Sept, **51,500** (according to the Dept of Social Protection) Ukrainians had arrived in Ireland through the EU Temporary Protection Directive, so the whole landscape of those in our system has changed dramatically; hence the needs for the types of support have changed.

Traditionally we ran a Christmas toy appeal to support the work of the JRS (Jesuit Refugee service), which works directly with those in direct provision. We also ran an Easter sponsored football event for refugees in either South Sudan or Syria.

Following a meeting a few weeks back with the staff in the JRS, we looked over our partnership and how we might move forward with continued support. As you can imagine, the needs are enormous this year, so we have responded to the needs requested by the JRS by organizing the following events.

Elements

All elements' students will participate in a sponsored soccer tournament at the beginning of Advent to raise money for a refugee **hardship fund**. The hardship fund is a fund being held by the JRS to respond to everyday emergency needs. We will tie our event into the world cup to be a mini world cup which should generate a lot of student energy. A big thank you to the PE department who will help us run this event in distillery, all elements' students will take part, so it is a social justice event for all and an introduction to the term Man For Others.

Rudiments

We will be asked to support the drive to raise money for winter coats for refugees living in tented accommodations in Germantown. This event may be in the form of a raffle, and TY students will coordinate the event.



Transition Year

The new TY leadership module will be responsible for organizing both previous events. As part of their module, they will liaise with myself and Mr Murphy; they will speak and

pitch ideas to elements and rudiments students, organize both events and advocate for the work of JRS. As TY, they would have taken part in the Christmas Toy appeal and rudiments soccer tournament for JRS in their first two years in the school. This is an excellent new initiative and will make the range of our work much broader in what we can achieve.

TY ran a drive this week to collect old children's costumes for refugee children in Gormanstown; the aim is to support JRS with the children's Halloween party. This was a whole school drive so feel free to donate any old children's costume you might have at home, I am still collecting until Thursday.

Poetry

Poetry students are doing the JRS Change program, a ten-week programme exploring the subject of refugees, direct provision and forced migration. One of the highlights of this program is they meet a refugee who shares their story; this idea is to enable our students to put a face and a story on the word refugee; in this way, what naturally emerges is a compassionate response. One of the new elements we will do in this program is instead of one refugee coming into the school, twelve boys from direct provision, their own age will come in, and they will play football together and then share some food. The aim is for our students to learn, connect and hopefully develop a friendship with the boys they meet.

All of these programs will be finished before December 5th, so as not to disrupt our annual VDP work and Sleepout.

I have a [attached a small slide show](#) that gives useful contextualized up to date information on the refugee status in Ireland at present if you interested.