



Café news - September 2008

Hello Everyone!

I know it's late but I had good intentions of doing this before the month of Ramadan started, but with our trip to the Wilderness Centre and the start of the football season time has just passed by. Anyway here it is, and so is the holy month Ramadan. (The month where Muslims do not eat or drink anything during daylight hours – and to answer the annual eternal question “No, not even water!”). With Ramadan arriving earlier each year, the daily routine of a practising Muslim starts at 4am this year and finishes at approx 11pm - depending on which evening prayer you attend. Hence the reason why I wanted to do it before the fasting month started. Personally it is not the hunger that makes the first week difficult but the lack of sleep. So I hope you, the readers, realise that I am giving up valuable sleeping time on my day off from work to keep the masses informed of the events at and around The Friendship Café.

Oh yes! I have also (foolishly?) volunteered (pushed into) to be part of Café News' Ramadan Competition. Please read Imran's report in the Dads & Lads section to see how you can win a fabulous prize (not sure what it is but I heard it could be something like a packet of crisps Mmmm! – I am fasting you know!) Tip: Last Ramadan I was a

healthy(ish) 16st 2lb (baby) with a 38" waist. I HAVE lost weight since then, No honestly I have!

Please also read the enlightening article on Ramadan contributed this month by Haroon Kadodia. It is very good.

Well I am off to bed now so I can be full of energy when it is time to eat. Wishing you all the very best in this blessed month and remember your humble Editor and his family in your prayers. Jazakallah Khair- May Allah Reward You A Great Deal.

Shoaib Kathrada

Editor

The Official Newsletter of The Friendship Cafe

[Girls Group – \(including MAGs – Mums and Grans\)](#)

[Report by Farzana Ghanti](#)

During these holidays we have not had many activities so everyone was eagerly anticipating our residential trip to the Wilderness Centre. We had a core group of 19 girls aged between 9-13 and 6 mums. On the first evening we had a BBQ and a further 15 mums came over with their children, many of whom also brought a dish, and we had a fun evening together around a camp fire toasting marshmallows!

The girls were told to be ready by 8.45am the next morning and, other than the odd person cherry knocking, by all accounts the night passed much better than the equivalent boys trip last weekend. In actual fact the girls were all ready and waiting by the van by 8.15am. Who said the boys were better than the girls?!

The first activity consisted of gorge walking followed by abseiling. Apart from a few grumbles about the fact that the water was wet and cold (no surprises there!) the activity went really well. We even managed to get through the dark tunnel at the end without any lights. We also managed to get up both waterfalls without losing any wellies. We even managed to find the wellies lost by the boys group last weekend! The instructors also commented that the girls were much better than the boys group with the youngest ones being the bravest (Aisha Ghanti and Safoora Dhalech)!

That evening we all shared pizza's, delivered by my hubby and Sufyan, and we spent the evening playing games followed by nasheeds and Quran recitation in the common room.

The next morning we had crate stacking and a low ropes course onsite followed by freshly cooked Spaghetti Bolognese to end a wonderful weekend.

Thanks to all the mums and volunteers for helping to make the trip a success.

As this was my last girls group session I would like to thank everyone who has helped in the past. I will really miss you all. If ladies/mums would like to help run future girls sessions after Ramadan please could they contact Imran or myself for further information.

Swimming

Ladies swimming will also begin Sunday 5th October 9-10 am. A regular extra session a week is also being planned for the ladies, to start after Ramadhan.

Boys Group – Dads & Lads

Report by Imran Atcha

Farewell to Mrs Farzana Ghanti – Our excellent Younger Girls and Community Worker over the past 2 years will be taking a step back due to family commitments. We are all indebted to the great work of Mrs Ghanti organizing a whole range of girls' trips and family and community events. The work of a youth worker may appear to be easy as the visible aspect is always the enjoyable one of getting involved in lots of fun and sporting activities, but there is a great deal of work that has to go on in the background, before, during and after events to make sure that everything works out. Fortunately, Mrs Ghanti has offered to volunteer and continue to help out in the future so we haven't lost her altogether. Recruitment for another younger girls youth worker will be circulated shortly.

Archery – thanks to Community Counts and Positive Futures, and volunteers Mohammed Hansdot, Ashraf Vaid and Farouk Mehta, the Friendship Café Archery Club had its first practice during the boys residential at the Wilderness centre. 25 young boys and a group of adults took part and the best shot amongst the adults went to Junaid Raja who I witnessed getting a bull eye on his first shot. His next few shots were not so accurate so we'll put it down to a fluke. After Ramadhan / October, we hope to have a regular slot so watch this space for further information.

At the younger boys residential, we had one derailleur snap off a bike and made pedaling impossible so Reyaz came up with the bright idea of wrapping the chain and derailleur around the pedal and then holding onto Mohammed H's bag at the back to create a crazy tandem-bike arrangement – Worked fantastic and a good workout for Mohammed H and a fun free-wheeling ride for Reyaz. I had to lead the group carrying a passenger on tandem both days and this encouraged me to work out an easier route by the second day. Pc's Damien and Justin from Barton St Police Station joined us on the first day and we made sure that they had a good workout and meet the children and dads at the same time. The first group of boys also did gorge walking but this was deemed difficult due to their small size so the next group did rock climbing and abseiling off Symonds Yat instead.

It was really great to have so many parents and helpers also attend and while I went to sleep I could hear the adults sitting under a tree reminiscing over the old days or discussing the problems of the world in to the early hours of the morning. Many thanks to the staff and volunteers who helped to make it happen. Many, many hours of hard work went in to make this annual event a successful one. The 3 day younger boys residential was one of six that have taken place through the Friendship Café this year, in addition to the 25 or more other day events and outings that have been taking place.

Congratulations to 14 year old Zahid Fetteh, keen and active member of GymNation as well as a great volunteer at the Friendship Cafe. Zahid has been signed up to play for Cheltenham Town Football Club. Zahid has solemnly promised not to forget us when

he becomes rich and famous so we wish him well and look out for him on your screens in the next few years...

Swimming

No swimming during Ramadhan. Sessions restart on Tuesday 14th October, 8:15 -9:15 pm and Sunday 5th October 11-12 noon for the males. The first Tuesday of every month is always cancelled during winter time.

Congratulations to Ashraf Vaid who broke his own record in August, swimming 50 lengths in the hour – that's 1250 metres. Excellent considering that he was a complete non-swimmer a short while ago.

Guess the Weight & Waist Gain / Loss of the Editor

The Editor has kindly agreed to be duly weighed over the weekend before Ramadhan, and then reweighed on the last day of the month, to see what difference the 30 days of abstention has had on the poundage, if any. This includes taking a waist measurement to see if he needs to buy all new trousers. We're inviting readers to send in your estimates of what the pre and post Ramadhan waist and weight statistics are and there will be a fabulous prize for the closest estimate. We won't tell you what the fabulous prize is yet – still have to work that one out – but eye up your editor, Mr Shoaib Kathrada, and come back with your guesses to thefriendshipcafe@homecall.co.uk

Ramadan Article

There are numerous verses in the Holy Quran that relate to natural phenomena and science. The development of the foetus is given in detail. However, this does not warrant the idea that we must provide

rational justifications for verses or commands of the Holy Quran! Though we live in a secular world we must also realise that science will not give us the answers to all our problems or questions, nor will it necessarily guide us along the straight path towards Allah(swt). As we start the blessed month of Ramadhan it is natural for us to be curious about the effects of fasting on our physical bodies, regardless of any physical benefits that we may gain from fasting. Allah has given us one overwhelming reason to fast - and that is to gain Taqwa, or self restraint.

What gives a Muslim the strength to regulate ones natural instincts like eating and drinking - an urge so powerful that it is almost impossible to neglect and kill? What drives us to be so religious and disciplined? Is it fundamentalism, or is it that we like to be masochists? The answer quite simply is the power of Iman (faith) is so strong in us during this month that we fulfil this Divine command with pride and joy (even our Ed happily sacrifices his pizzas and burgers! [You forgot the kebabs Ed!](#)) Iman in Allah, believing in the Unseen allows us to control our animalistic nature. This power is what Allah describes as Taqwa - a power that needs to be recognised and continually developed and strengthened. This power will help us all our problems and guide us along the straight path to Allah!

Somebody once complained that it made no sense to listen to the endless lectures and tabligh jamaat talks... I've been listening to them for the last 30 years but for the life of me cannot remember a single one of them. So I think I'm wasting my time and the Imams and tablighis are wasting theirs..' Someone wrote a clincher which answers comments like this; I've been married for 30 years now. In this time my wife has cooked some 32,000 meals. but for the life of

me I cannot recall the entire menu for a single one of those meals. But I do know this, they all nourished me (as is generously evident on our Ed's physique!) and gave me the strength I needed to do my work. Without the meals I would be physically dead today. Likewise, without the fasting and the lectures and all the other religious endeavours you and I would be spiritually dead today!

I want to end this article with a little story....' Two men, both seriously ill, occupied the same hospital room. One man was allowed to sit up in his bed for an hour each afternoon to help drain the fluid from his lungs. his bed was next to the room's only window. The other man had to spend all his time flat on his back. The men talked for hours on end. Every afternoon when the man in the bed by the window could sit up, he would pass the time describing to his room mate all the things he could see out of the window. The man in the other bed began to live for those one hour periods where his world would be broadened and enlivened by the activity and colour of the world outside he could not see. The window overlooked a park with a lovely lake, ducks and swans played on the water. Children sailed their boats. The beautiful flowers, grand old trees the beautiful landscape.

As this was being described the man on the other side of the room would close his eyes and imagine the picturesque scene. Then unexpectedly, a sinister thought entered his mind. Why should the other man alone experience all the pleasures of seeing everything out of the window while he missed out? It didn't seem fair! As the days passed and he missed seeing the sights more and more, his envy eroded into hate and resentment and soon turned him sour. He began to brood and found himself unable to sleep. He should be by

the window - that thought and only that thought controlled and dominated his life.

Late one night, the man by the window began to cough. He seemed to be choking on the fluid in his lungs. The other man watched in the dimly lit room as the struggling man by the window groped for the button to call for help. Listening from across the room he never moved to help never pushed his own button which would have brought the nurse running in. In less than five minutes the coughing and choking stopped along with the sound of breathing. Now there was only deathly silence.

The following morning the day nurse arrived. When she found the lifeless body of the man by the window, she was saddened and had it taken away by the hospital attendants. As soon as it seemed appropriate, the other man asked if he could be moved next to the window. The nurse was happy to make the switch, and after making sure he was comfortable, she left him alone. Slowly, painfully, he propped himself up on one elbow to take his first look at the world outside. Finally, he would have the joy of seeing it all himself. He strained to slowly turn to look out of the window.

It faced a blank wall! The man asked the nurse what compelled his deceased room mate to have described such wonderful things outside his window. The nurse replied ' perhaps he just wanted to encourage you...'

You and I can interpret the story in many ways. But one moral stands out especially for this blessed month of Ramadhan: There is tremendous happiness in making others happy...we are encouraged

to think of the pangs of hunger and thirst in those who do not eat because they cannot...to reflect upon the daily lives of those who go without food and water for days and do not enjoy the privileges and favours we enjoy.... to develop compassion and concern for others... The irony of all this abstention from food is that quite often we enjoy our best meals in Ramadhan!

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Community News

Children & Young People's Directorate – Photo Competition

There is a photo competition taking place, where **all** children and young people aged 0-19 are invited to take a picture of something they think needs changing in Gloucestershire.

For more information please go to www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/getsnappy .

Gloucester Works

Delivering jobs and skills in The City

Gloucester is changing. Development is taking place in and around the city, changing the landscape and creating thousands of jobs. Around 1000 jobs will be created in the Quays by April 2009 where hotels, a supermarket and an outlet centre are being built. We want to connect local people with these opportunities and ensure they have a stake in the future of Gloucester by supporting people through skills and qualifications into real jobs.

We will offer you:

- A personal action programme to help identify your current skills
- Free training and qualifications to help you get into employment
- Support to identify childcare and transport options
- Links to **real** jobs in the Quays, Business Parks and throughout the City through the Jobs Bank

- Work trials and guaranteed interviews when job ready
- Ongoing support and further training to enable you to progress when in employment

Example –You could complete a free Hospitality pre-employment qualification as well as an interview skills course which guarantees you an interview at the new four star hotel that will open around Christmas at the Quays. Once employed, you would then receive continuous support, complete a free NVQ2 Customer Services qualification and further personal development helping you to progress ‘up the ladder’.

For more information, contact your local Community Area Co-ordinator below:
 Nasrin Atcha-Patel (Central) nasrin.atchapatel@glosfirst.co.uk (01452) 450050
 Joanne Lewis (Central) joanne.lewis@glosfirst.co.uk (01452) 450046

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Jerusalem Peacemakers/Spirit of Peace

Iftaar Sessions

*The Jerusalem Peacemakers will be hosting a public Iftaar at the Friendship café on Monday 22nd September between 7 -8 in the company of the Mayor of Gloucester Norman Ravenhill
 Please contact David on davidbennett@blueyonder.co.uk if you are interested in attending.*

A WORKSHOP TO DISCUSS, AND SET THE FUTURE DIRECTION, ON DELIVERING BETTER MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR PEOPLE FROM BLACK AND MINORITY ETHNIC COMMUNITIES

Date : 3rd of October 2008

Time : 10.00am until 12.30pm (Lunch provided)

Venue : Anglo Asian Cultural Centre, 91 Barton St, Gloucester

Organiser : Bren McInerney, Barton and Tredworth Community Trust, Tel 01452 544933 e mail brenmcinerney@hotmail.com

Please contact Bren if you are interested in attending.

Jobs/Vacancies

CARE ASSISTANTS

I have a small residential care home of 8 residents (6 ladies and 2 gentlemen) in Little Witcombe, Gloucester, just after Brockworth, about 5 miles from Gloucester city centre. The 2 gentlemen are self caring.

I have vacancies for care assistants for day and night duties. All the present care assistants are ladies. The rate of pay is between £5.52 to £6.00 per hour (£6.52 to £7.00 per hour during the week-end) depending on qualifications and experience. The rate for night duty is £35 per night (£40 in the weekend).

If you know of anybody who is interested with the above work, please ask them to contact me on

01452 309367 or 0770 9211 577.

Dawood Junglee - djunglee@hotmail.com

NCH Gloucestershire Participation Project

Part Time Team Leader, based in Gloucester.

Salary Scale: 35 – 38 (£28,863 - £31,347 – Pro Rata)

The Participation Project is an energetic, enthusiastic and innovative project that works with children, young people and organisations to enable children and young people to have a greater say in decision making in the design, commissioning, delivery and evaluation of services. Due to an expansion in the project's work we require a part time Team Leader to supervise our Participation Staff and undertake the day to day management of the team.

The successful applicant will have management experience, an open working style, and good organisational and communication skills. They will need a strong commitment to social inclusion and experience of engaging with children and young people. In return we can offer regular supervision, a supportive team, excellent working conditions and lots of opportunities for further development. We welcome diversity and difference. People with disabilities, those from BME communities, and men are currently under represented in our workforce.

A relevant qualification or experience equivalent to NVQ 4 is required.

For an informal discussion about the post please contact Paul Summersby during office hours on 07712936545 or email him at paul.summersby@nch.org.uk

Closing date for applications is Friday 12th September 2008, Interviews will be held on 4th October 2008.

Apply online at www.nch.org.uk/jobs or, for a postal application pack, write to: NCH Recruitment Shared Service, 552 Kilmarnock Road, Glasgow G43 2BL quoting the reference number: DV507/557

Website of the Month

If we follow the guidelines in this booklet we can gain a very good physical as well as spiritual benefit in Ramadan Insha Allah.

Written by the NHS, the National Health Service,

http://www.sct.nhs.uk/files/Diversity/Ramadan_Health_Guide.pdf