



Friars Primary School & Nursery

Part of the Portico Academy Trust

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PORTICO
ACADEMY TRUST

opening doors, unlocking potential

CEO – Mrs C. Woolf

Tuesday 24th September 2019

Dear Parents/Carers,

As a school supported by its parents, we have always been thoughtful and generous when it comes to aiding national charities and projects within the local community. This year for our harvest collection will be no exception, when we will be supporting 'Off the Streets.'

'Off the Streets' is a grassroots night shelter which is open all year round in Southend. In November 2017 it was revealed Southend had the 8th highest number of rough sleepers in the whole country. Off the Streets looked at addressing this problem and so opened up in September 2018 in an old shop. Originally it slept 10 at night but then due to an EU law had to reduce its numbers to 5.

The strapline of Off the Streets is 'a stepping stone and not a stopping point' and this has been the ethos of the shelter throughout. Del, Karen and Kirsty who run it are determined that it is more than just a shelter and work hard with the guests to help them move positively forward.

Indeed, in the 49 weeks it has been open they have helped 51 (and counting) people into permanent accommodation. When a guest is accepted into the shelter, they are sat down and between them and the shelter 1-3 targets are agreed which are designed to help them move forward not just with accommodation but also benefits, employment (they have found 9 people jobs so far), mental and physical health and addiction help.

As well as signposting the guests, Off the Streets will also attend the appointments if the guest wants this. People who have been housed include a 69 year old woman and a rough sleeper who had been sleeping on the streets of Southend for 10 years. The shelter also organises outreach and regularly goes into the town to see who is out and about and has helped some of them into housing too. In February they were awarded the 'Excellence Standard' by Housing Justice and are very keen to be part of the local community. Despite some initial concerns locally, Off the Streets has worked hard to engage with the neighbours and indeed several of them now volunteer for the shelter

This year, Off the Streets have asked particularly for the following items, although all donations will be welcome:-

- Small bottles of water
- Chocolate snack bars
- Deodorants men and woman
- Wet wipes
- Coffee
- Sugar
- Long life milk; we go through loads!
- Toilet rolls
- Pot noodles
- Hot chocolate
- Squash

We ask that no fresh food or food with short shelf life dates are sent in.

A representative will be visiting the school to speak to the children and explain to them what will be happening with the food that you have so kindly donated.

Donations can be brought into class the week beginning Monday 23rd September.

Thank you once again for your support and donations.

Yours sincerely,
Mrs. Dyer