

FRIENDS OF BIG ISSUE NORTH

WINTER 2017

Michael's Mission

It's cold outside, but we have a story which will warm your heart. Michael, a former city centre vendor in Liverpool has some fantastic news; he has recently got a new job!

After building on the skills he had developed selling the magazine, Michael was approached by a potential customer, who saw how he interacted with members of the public, and offered him full-time employment in a security firm!

Michael explained "I was selling the magazine on my pitch when I was approached by the man who's now my supervisor. He'd seen how I interacted with the public and worked out that I might be good for the job. It's a full-time job, I've done it for about seven weeks or so and I'm enjoying it. I'm still mixing with the public, and I'm looking forward to getting my first proper wage."

Staff at our Liverpool office arranged for Michael to use the office as a correspondence address, and provided his new employer with a glowing reference. And, when Michael's contract arrived, our staff sat with him and reviewed it line by line, to make sure that he was confident and ready to get going.

Service Co-ordinator at the Liverpool office, Ang Griffith, spoke with pride about Michael's progression, "I wasn't surprised when Michael told me that he had secured himself the offer of employment. He is extremely polite and well-liked by his customers, which resulted in one of them offering him a job! He is over the moon, as are we for him."

But Michael's quest to



change his life doesn't stop there. Michael has another pressing goal in mind. Speaking of his hopes for this coming year, Michael said, "I was adopted when I was just a few months old and I would like to make contact with my birth mother. I promised myself to do it before I hit 50, which is a year away."

Big Issue North Trust helps vendors like Michael, who want to reconnect with lost family, by providing help to get documentation such as birth certificates. This is only possible through donations to the trust, made by our generous supporters.

So, while you're making New Year's resolutions, please remember that Big Issue North Trust supports vendors, like Michael, to make their hopes and ambitions that one step closer.

Congratulations Michael, and best of luck with the new job, we know you'll be fantastic!

If you would like to support vendors like Michael to move on in their lives, please consider making a donation to our trust.

Letter from Fay

Welcome to the Winter 2017 edition of our newsletter.

As the year draws to a close, we're doing everything we can to support our vendors to make 2018 a year of positive change – just like Michael did in 2017, as you can see on this page.

Inside, you can read more about our vendors, and about a number of generous donations of skills, gifts and time from individuals and businesses. None of our work to help vendors change their lives would be possible without your donations, so thank you for your ongoing support.

Have a fantastic festive period, and a happy new year.

**Fay Selvan,
Big Issue North Chief Exec**



AROUND THE REGIONS



In **LIVERPOOL** a local community group donated food and supplies for vendors in crisis as part of their Eid celebrations. These were gratefully received!

In **MANCHESTER**, more CPR and defibrillator training sessions for vendors have taken place, thanks to Chorlton Lifesavers. 12 vendors have now taken part in the training, and are armed with potentially life-saving skills.

LEEDS vendor Howard is giving something back to society, participating in a sponsored swim, raising money for Children in Need.

Vendors in **YORK** organised a rally in St Helen's Square for World Homelessness Day, inviting other services in the city to have their say on the issue. This event was supported by Rachael Maskell, Member of Parliament for York Central, and received a fantastic turnout.

The **SHEFFIELD** office is holding vendor representative meetings to encourage empowerment through decision making and suggestions on how the office runs.

Vaccinations for vendors

Winter is coming, and there has been a stark change in the weather. Hard-working vendors are getting wrapped up to protect themselves from the cold, but there is only so much a scarf or coat can protect you from.

Working in partnership with GP surgeries who specialise in treating homeless and vulnerable patients, staff in the Manchester, Leeds, Liverpool and Sheffield offices have been organising free vaccinations for vendors in the run up to winter.

We spoke to one of the medical practitioners from Urban Village Medical Practice in Manchester, who explained the importance of receiving the vaccination: "The influenza vaccination is administered to prevent the virus spreading. Those individuals of no fixed abode, or who have underlying medical conditions such as asthma, are more at risk from the detrimental impact of the virus. Big Issue North vendors are



statistically more likely to be susceptible to these health conditions, which is why it's so important that they have arranged for us to be here today."

So far, 11 vendors have been vaccinated, with further drop-in sessions planned over the coming months.

Preston hub gives vendors a new home

Vendors who sell Big Issue North in Preston will now find buying their magazines a little easier thanks to our partnership with the University of Central Lancashire and their community hub, 'In the City'. As a result, our vendors can buy their magazines from the hub, and engage in the services and support that In The City has on offer.

Lewis, a vendor in Preston, said: "Staff at Big Issue North were bringing all the magazines for us up here themselves. If UCLAN hadn't offered the space, we might have had to be travelling all the

way to Manchester. I'd have to take the Monday off just to travel to get my magazines. But now, it's very convenient. It's nice to be able to come into a welcoming and open space where I can get a tea or coffee."

Jenny Lamb, Senior Lecturer in Community Leadership at UCLAN, said: "The 'In the City' shop exists to develop and strengthen links with the local community, and when we learned that Big Issue North could no longer operate in Preston, we were determined to find a way to help."

Big Issue North gives a voice to unheard stories

Big Issue North has launched a new podcast series, called Anon.

Anon puts the spotlight on real people in the North, whose stories, if told at all, are rarely told well by the mainstream media. From asylum seekers to disabled people or people living on the streets, our podcast gives a voice and an identity to those who had previously been anonymous. The first episode is out

now, and features Ramona, a Romanian immigrant and former Big Issue North vendor, who talks about her life in Manchester, her family and the bombshell of the Brexit vote.

Anon is available on our website (www.bigissuenorth.com), iTunes, and all good podcast providers. Please listen to Ramona's story, subscribe to the series, and share it with your friends, family and on social media.



FRIENDS REUNITED

In the run up to Christmas and the New Year, we've been busy shooting our 2018 calendar with vendors and their dogs! As the photos tell their story, we took the time to get to know the background of their four-legged, or in some cases three-legged, friends.

A rainy Monday morning saw the photo shoot begin in Preston, featuring vendor Lewis and his dog Georgia. Talking about Georgia, Lewis said: "She's a 9 year old Rottweiler who is soft as anything. She's my

saleswoman, my hot water bottle and my best friend. I wouldn't sell her for a million pounds."

In the afternoon, our photographer captured Ken and his German shepherd Bailey on the streets on Manchester. After gaining a little more information from Ken as to how his buddy came into his life, it was quickly established that Preston vendor Lewis had in fact given Bailey to Ken many years ago when they used to work together!

Ken said: "Lewis gave Bailey to me because he knew



Above: Ken and Bailey, Left: Lewis and Georgia



that having a dog would keep me out of trouble. Most customers love him – he gets treated better than me!"

After getting permission from the vendors, our office has shared updated phone numbers with the pair. At this

time of year, it is only fitting to be reunited with family and friends, and we hope that Lewis and Ken will be in touch with each other very shortly.



If you would like to buy our 2018 calendar, it's available now at our online shop. All proceeds from sales of the calendar go back into Big Issue North, to support vendors to move on with their lives.

shop.bigissuenorth.com

Leeds firm offers kind donation

A local recruitment firm in Leeds, Hudson James, has generously donated a significant amount of computer equipment to Big Issue North's offices.

The donated computers have now been put to great use by staff and vendors, as we support people to change their lives, whether that's through searching for work or training, getting ID or finding out about other local services.

Managing Director of Hudson James, Kenton Robbins, said: "We're all delighted to be able to support the team at Big Issue North with a small token of support of some surplus IT equipment.

"We all too often look at our society as a disposable one and never more so when it comes to the speed that IT systems improve, but I've learned that our rubbish is gold to others."

Do you have something you don't need, which could help vendors to change their lives? Drop us an email at fundraising@bigissueinthenorth.com to tell us more.

VENDORS TAKE THEIR PLACE IN SHEFFIELD LIFE

To celebrate Ben's Centre for Vulnerable People's 21st birthday, an exhibition is being displayed at Sheffield's Weston Park Museum.

Ben's Centre is a charity that focuses on providing food, warmth and shelter to the city's street drinkers during the day. The exhibition, called 'Sheffield Life and Times: Coming Home', explores the work of the centre and the experiences of those who access it, including some Big Issue North vendors.

The exhibit revolves around artwork from the homeless partnership agencies in Sheffield."

As one of those agencies, Big Issue North was delighted to be invited to attend the exhibition opening, attended by office manager Ben Stevenson and vendor Carol.

Carol said: "I took the afternoon off from selling Big Issue North to come and have a look at our feature at the exhibition. Ben's Centre gives people who are struggling a place to go, and it's important that people know about that."



OPEN MIC NIGHT GIVES A LITTLE HELP TO VENDORS

Two Sisters Bar and Kitchen in Skipton hosted an open mic night to raise money for Big Issue North Trust.

Organised by Joanna Ripley, of the Allan Ripley Foundation, the evening showcased a wide range of talent, and included some creative fundraising incentives, such as 'Buy Allan half a Cider' (where people were encouraged to donate the price of half a pint).

All funds are being donated to the Trust in memory of Joanna's late father, Allan, a supporter of our organisation.

From bake sales to skydives, if you're fundraising to support us, please get in touch to see how we can help! Email fundraising@bigissueinthenorth.com to see how we can support and publicise your venture.

MA-king a difference

Masters students Tanja, Pegah and Felix, from the University of Leeds, are spending time with Big Issue North to experience working with local organisations to identify problems and propose creative solutions.

Their MA course encourages the students to look at how to design a society of the future. A spokesperson for the university explains: "Through this collaboration we hope to enable organisations with a social purpose in Leeds, such as Big Issue North, benefit from students bringing fresh perspectives, ideas and solutions to the challenges they face."

The outcome of this collaboration will be a thought-provoking video, which will be shared on our social media platforms when it's finished. So, if you're social media savvy, please remember to give us a like and a follow!

How to donate

We are so grateful to everyone who donates to us, if you haven't donated already, here are some ways to support our vendors.

To set up a standing order to support our vendors please fill in the form enclosed with the newsletter or call 0161 848 2420.



You can also donate by mobile phone, just text BITN17 and the amount you wish to donate e.g. £20 to 70070



Please make out donations by cheque out to Big Issue North Trust and send it to 463 Stretford Road, Manchester, M16 9AB.



For more ways to raise funds for us please contact fundraising@bigissueinthenorth.com

It's really easy to raise funds for the Trust with EasyFundraising while shopping online this Christmas. Just remember to set Big Issue North Trust as your chosen charity and start raising at no extra cost! Go to www.easyfundraising.org.uk today!

THE TRUSTEES

Big Issue North Trust is supported by the Zochonis Charitable Foundation
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