



The House of Barnabas Partners with Off to Work

Since the New Year, the House of St Barnabas has been partnering with staffing and training solutions provider, Off to Work, to deliver a series of accredited courses in hospitality. Clients from across the entire homelessness sector have been given the opportunity to join us free-of-charge for employment and training courses in: First Aid, COSHH awareness, cocktails and coffee workshops, and Fire Safety, to name but a few. These courses have proven an excellent platform for engaging with homelessness organisations from across London, and have acted as an effective soft-recruitment process onto our three-month Employment Training and Life Skills Programme.

Neil Preston, the Academy Manager at Off to Work, said “our partnership with The House of St Barnabas continues to be an excellent experience; enabling us to support the homelessness sector and develop a sense of social awareness and responsibility. We hope our courses provide individuals with the sort of vocational training that will help them stand out to any future employer in today’s job market. Our assessment of each individual’s skill-set, attitude and aptitude also places us in a strong position when providing references. Should an individual prove capable and enthusiastic during training, we then consider them for either casual or full-time employment with a number of our key clients, such as The

Dorchester Hotel, Payne and Gunter at the Brit Awards, The Savoy, Wembley Stadium and the Royal Albert Hall.”



Spotlight on John



John Smallshaw didn’t know what to expect when he began the Life Skills Programme at the House of St Barnabas last September. Yet one thing is sure: he did not expect that, with the charity’s help, he would begin to achieve his dreams. Growing up in rural Lancashire he spent much of his childhood outdoors, preferring swimming and visiting Morecambe Bay to school. Yet these halcyon days

were short lived when, at the age of 15, he took the decision to leave his family home and work on the docks at Newhaven. From there, John swapped the sea for the big city, simultaneously falling into turmoil and homelessness. Switching between jobs and battling with the breadline, John would often turn to pen and paper, using poetry to make sense of his unstable situation.

Fast forward thirty years and John is a new man. Realising his need for help he turned to Crisis who signposted him to the House of St. Barnabas and its renowned Life Skills Programme. It was just what he needed. Almost disbelieving his luck John says, “It took me a few days to realise that the House and the Life Skills Programme were real and could really help me. But I did and without them I would not be

where I am now.”

Twelve weeks later John was trained in hospitality, re-skilled in I.T and ready for a job. Speaking of his new zest for life he says, “I always said that I needed a job. The difference is now I want one.” He has also developed his talent for poetry that always accompanied him wherever he went. Having always dreamt of being a poet, John’s dream is finally coming true: a selection of his poetry will be broadcast on the BBC Radio 4 show, Arthur Smith’s Balham Bash, during the third week of May. ‘John’s work can be viewed online at <http://pantechniconpoet.wordpress.com/>; he is also available for live performances and readings. Please contact philipparecord@gmail.com

Philippa Record



The Change of Use Application: The House of St Barnabas

The House of St Barnabas' licence application to Westminster Council for the official Change of Use from hostel to mixed-use venue is still in process.

A planning application was submitted to the Council to regularise the current use of the Charity's building as an Employment Training and Life Skills Centre, enabled by the rental of space for offices and a private members' restaurant and club. The Charity trains and supports people in need, helping them to develop the skills and confidence required to obtain sustainable employment, in some cases, further education.

The Charity was established to help people in need; only since the Second World War was it a hostel for women. Hostel use in the Grade I building became financially impossible some years ago due to the increased standards and requirements of hostel accommodation. At the same time the building itself was falling into disrepair. In 2006 the trustees made the difficult decision to close the hostel and re-house its residents, before re-launching the Charity's non-residential Employment Training and Life Skills Programme and establishing a venue hire business to provide the necessary funding.

The social enterprise between the Charity and Quintessentially that ran during 2010 raised over £450,000 for the House, supporting the charitable programmes and ensuring the maintenance of the building consistent with its Grade-I listed status. 50 participants completed the Employment Training and Life Skills Programme (which, innovatively, is integrated with the club operation) of which 38% went on to obtain paid employment as a result: 7 of these positions being within The House of St Barnabas itself, 2 positions within the Charity and 5 positions within the Members Club.

Some of those concerned about the change have suggested the building be sold for residential or office use. This proposal would destroy the Charity in its present form, and end all public access. On the latter point, we actually intend to increase public access to the House should the application be successful.

The Trustees of the Charity recognise there are sensitivities regarding the Change of Use but see no alternative that would allow its successful charitable work to continue. The change would allow and extend public access, would maintain and improve the building itself,

and will continue to allow us also to make an important contribution to the Soho community.

Having already received much support, we hope everyone will understand the very real challenges we face, and how we are overcoming them, and will work with us to these ends. If you wish to find out more about The House of St Barnabas and how you could support us, please contact us via our web site www.hosb.org.uk

Tours of the House of St Barnabas

The House of St Barnabas can offer tours of the building between 9am and 11am on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Please visit the [Contact Us](#) page on our web site for more details, or call the House on 0207 437 1894. Please note that these tours are subject to availability and are generally over-subscribed.



Venue Hire



The House of St Barnabas has a series of beautiful historic rooms available for hire. We can host drinks receptions, parties, presentations, press nights, private dinners etc, all managed by our team of professional event managers. By hosting your event at The House you are also providing vital funding for the registered charity, enabling them to continue offering employment opportunities to those who have

experienced homelessness. Please contact Louisa Hadkinson at Louisa@quintessentiallysoho.com for more information.

100% of the profits currently generated by Quintessentially Soho's activities, at the premises, are donated to the charity, registered charity number 207242.

The House of St Barnabas

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Registered Charity No. 207242