

Supporting Ruhama – a true Tour de Force!



A huge thanks to an incredible group of current and retired **An Garda Síochána** who travelled to Sicily in October to bike their way up Mount Etna in aid of charity. An enormous amount of preparation and training went into this impressive '**Tour De Force**' event, with all funds raised by Gardaí going to support the vital work of **Headway Ireland** and **Ruhama**. We are grateful and touched by your hard work and support.

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Film screening takes place to mark EU #AntiTraffickingDay

To mark **EU Anti Human Trafficking Day**, the **Anti-Human Trafficking Unit of Ireland** hosted a film screening of '**The Price of Sex**', a documentary showcasing the stories of sex trafficking survivors across Europe. Inspiring **survivor activist Fiona Broadfoot** was also in attendance to talk about her experience of being trafficked into prostitution at the age of 15.

Trish & Anne from our **Housing & Development service** and a group of our brilliant **volunteers** represented Ruhama at the event and left inspired by Fiona's story and her drive to empower victims and survivors of prostitution via her activism in the UK and Europe. Big thanks to the Anti-Human Trafficking Unit of Ireland for having us and for showcasing the **importance of survivor voices in the fight against sexual exploitation**.

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VOLUNTEER 



Ruhama attend EU conference in Vienna to help formulate European-wide gender equality strategy

Sam Slater from our **Policy & Communications team** represented Ruhama at the '**Gender Equality + YOU**' conference in Vienna recently. 250 young people from the EU, NGO representatives and EU parliament members and ministers met to **discuss gender equality at EU level** and to contribute to a future and formal **EU strategy on gender equality**. Samantha took part in broader sessions on implementing **gender equality initiatives** and specifically contributed to the 'Relationships and Sexuality' breakout sessions, lobbying for better and more robust **European-wide sex education**. We were thrilled to contribute to the strategy and help bring the topic of gender equality back to the EU political stage.



Read more about the event here

Photo Credit: Austrian Presidency of the Council of the EU 2018

Sharing expertise and training alongside YWCA Ireland

Our **CEO Sarah Benson** helped facilitate a training on the issues surrounding prostitution and sex trafficking with **YWCA Ireland** recently. Lively and fruitful discussions were had with an energetic audience who built upon their advocacy skills, learning how to communicate these issues to their organisations and teams. Thanks for inviting us to speak and share our expertise with a group of thoroughly engaged participants - a great day spent!



Donation of toiletries from the team at Airbnb

Big thanks to **AirBnb** who recently gathered and donated an assortment of toiletries to Ruhama for the women we support and for use on our Outreach Van. Shoutout to **Alice O'Toole** who kindly organised the donation - we're very grateful for the kind gesture.

The Homeless Period Ireland donate to our Outreach van

A HUGE thank you to **The Homeless Period Ireland** who recently donated boxes and bags of toiletries to our Outreach Van. Women we support in street prostitution often experience difficulties in accessing costly sanitary products - your support and kindness will go a long way. Keep on doing the incredible work you do.



Healing From Trauma

'Lia's story'

Ruhama offered support to Lia*, a survivor of sex trafficking to Ireland, by way of a full care plan, education and development assistance and trauma healing support. This is her story, as told by her Ruhama support team.

The snow was melting and public transport was finally moving again. Lia*, determined, made it to her class at Ruhama and was smiling as a result. After a three hour journey on public transport, she arrived at her destination. This was another small yet meaningful triumph for her after the long and more harrowing journey that led her to seek support from Ruhama.

Lia was sex trafficked to Ireland and left traumatised by the violence and abuse she endured before finally escaping. Surprised by the caring greeting she received on arriving at Ruhama, she began to open up more about her experiences and hopes for her future. Lia was given a full care plan by our casework service, tailored to her individual needs and situation, outlining exactly how we would support her to build a life for herself and her family in Ireland.

Lia enrolled on our Trauma Healing Programme, which aims to help participants with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) to reduce anxiety and improve their coping skills and overall mental health. On starting the course, Lia was sceptical as she felt simple wellness practices could not magically help her recover from the pain of sexual violence. But she surprised herself, seeing the benefit after just two weeks – "I can see the impact. I do (one of the wellness practices) a lot if I can't sleep and it helps. My son even notices the difference."

Completing the course and receiving her certificate was a huge moment of pride for Lia. After seeing it with her name on it – Lia was ecstatic and explained "It's the first time in my whole life that I'm getting a certificate!". She is especially pleased that her own efforts are having a positive effect on her children. She has even been sharing wellness tips from the course with her older child, who she says "has been traumatised".

"Life is tough and still is. I'm not there yet but some of the bitterness is going away. I have hope for the future."

Recently Lia had to seek alternative accommodation. She now lives at some distance outside of Dublin so her journey time for appointments has tripled. However she still happily attends several classes and is committed to working with the Ruhama team as she continues to rebuild her life. Ruhama cover Lia's travel costs to assist her participation. Recovery is a slow step by step process which Lia acknowledges – "Life is tough and still is. I'm not there yet but some of the bitterness is going away. I have hope for the future."



Barista Training with 3FE Coffee for women we support

Ruhama are working with the **fantastic 3FE Coffee** and **Rachel Reid**, Barista Trainer, to provide Barista training over four workshops to women we support who are engaged on our **Bridge to Work** programme. The barista training blends the practical art of making coffee alongside the theory. The aim is that the participants who successfully complete this training will be in a position to **secure employment** as a Barista in Dublin.



Bridge to Work was developed by Ruhama to assist the women we work with in securing stable employment. We are developing positive **partnerships with employers** to facilitate paid work and voluntary placements, in integrated work settings for periods of 6 - 9 months.



Know an employer who might be interested in getting involved? Talk to Elaine on elaine@bridgetowork.ie.

Winter Appeal for Van Donations



We're accepting **donations of various items**, including gloves and hats and vouchers for the women we support.

Note: We can only accept new and unwrapped items.

Please **contact our administrator Meredith Meagher** in advance to see what items we accept or are in need of. Call us on **01 836 0292** or pop us an email at admin@ruhama.ie.



Recent Jewellery Making Workshops at Ruhama

Women we support had tons of fun making jewellery at recent workshops at Ruhama. Thanks as always to our **volunteer Laura-Lee Conboy** who runs regular workshops for women to get involved in, to relax, build confidence and improve self-esteem.

