

SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL SCOTLAND NORTH REGION
REGIONAL MEETING: 28TH MAY 2022 – PROGRAMME ACTION CHAIR, Janice Wilson

CROSS PARTY GROUP on HUMAN TRAFFICKING

I attended the May meeting which concentrated on Ukraine. We received a presentation from the International Justice Mission and Andy Bevan who many of you will remember from 2013! He is now the Chief Advocacy and Impact Officer and still based in Edinburgh. He was joined by Lia Husarciuc who is responsible for Social Services and Criminal Justice Liaison within IJM UK. She is in Romania at the moment .

We were told that there are at least 5 billion men, women and children in Europe - living outside the protection and the benefits of the law. IJM UK want to strengthen Justice Systems; Rescue and Restore victims; Bring criminals to Justice and, Protect vulnerable populations. They are also planning to expand into Poland, Hungary and Bulgaria -then eventually expand into Spain, Italy and France.

Lia told us about their Ukraine Refugee Crisis response. The overview was that there are 2.1 million refugees with 7.7 million people internally displaced of which 90% are women and children. Since the 24th February 5,232,014 refugees have already fled Ukraine. IJM are offering emergency shelter, food and medicine in Romania, Moldova and Ukraine along with safe transport and safe placement. IJM also have 8 Protection Officers at each crucial border point and in Bucharest Overflow Centres. There were many questions: Does IJM help Ukrainians to come to Scotland? Answer: Some have changed their mind because of the time delay. Also people are choosing the country they can get to the fastest – It is their choice. We had a discussion around how to help with the trauma they will have and how to help women and girls to stay safe. Social Integration will be the key. Pat Black told the meeting about the Soroptimist Clubs in the region and suggested that IJM contact them because they will have the resources to help.

RESOURCE WEB PACK from STOP THE TRAFFIK

I have sent this Link out to all our Regions who are forwarding it on to our Clubs. Some of you might find it helpful.

<https://www.stopthetraffik.org/stay-safe-uk-resource-web-pack/>

SCOTLAND NORTH CLUBS

May is a month when Clubs are putting plans in place for projects that will see them through the year. I have listed below the many activities that our members have been participating in these past few months.

ABERDEEN: International Women's Day – Marischal College was illuminated in purple and members gave out Fair Trade Roses along with information about this important day. Their Council appealed for help to support Refugees and members agreed to purchase cleaning materials with others donating soft furnishings. They also sourced maps of the city and One member made up 20 sewing kits. They then helped the Council officials sort all the donations! They support KIVA and this project provides loans to help women to realise a business opportunity.

CRIEFF: Supported the Crieff Food Bank and donated 49.55kg of food items. This Club also recognized International Women's Day by having a stall in the local Co-op – explaining who we are and along the way collected £150.15 in donations for WaterAid. Now that life is slowly returning to something like normal, volunteering has taken off with members on Bertie Bus, Building Bridges, Richmond House Care Home, The Community Trust, Crieff Food Bank, Marie Curie and many others. Club members are taking part in The Big Plastic Count organised by

Greenpeace joining thousands across th UK on a survey of all the plastic packaging we throw away for one week from 16 to 22 May. The results will be interesting!

DUNDEE: After a club meeting and a talk about Smalls for All, they agreed to donating a cheque of £50 to the charity. For International Women's Day, they had a club meeting with three speakers looking at different ways in which women can ensure their own safety. This meeting was also part of Dundee Women's Festival. Another speaker from the RVS spoke about their Hospital to Home Service. The Club donated £50 to them and some members have agreed to knit knee rugs and twiddle muffs for those who are housebound. On World Earth Day, Prue demonstrated making eco-bricks (in an earlier Spotlight). She took over 50 of these eco-bricks to a local community garden where they will be put to good use. In April, Maureen Collison and Jenifer from S I Paisley once more went on the Kiltwalk. They walked 14.4 miles and raised £1,095 which with the 50% addition from the Hunter Foundation will pay for Mary's Meals to feed 100 children for a whole school year.

EASTER ROSS: Members continue to donate food, knit baby hats and sponsor a girl through Action Aid. They also recycle what they can. Following on from their funding of 5 Silver Birch Trees for the Dingwall Community Woodland Garden project, two members attended and assisted in the planting of trees as part of the jubilee celebration for the Queen's Green Canopy. Ross County Football Ground has been a great place for the club to collect funds and they recently collected an amazing £940 to help the people of Ukraine. £500 was sent to the SIGBI Emergency Fund and the remainder to help refugees in their local area. More members have returned to volunteering at Maggie's Highland and CHAS.

INVERNESS AND NAIRN: Lots of knitting by a member with some going to Mikeysline and the hats going to Blythswood Care.

PERTH: World Thinking Day got the club thinking with Forgandenny Primary School and along with St. Madoes Brownies Pack they held a dress design competition. Members also donated many items like blankets, clothing, toiletries etc as well as non-perishable food to Ukranian Refugees expected to be rehomed in the area. The Bookmark Project started in 2020 with RASAC but stalled due to COVID. It has started again with 10,000 bookmarks given to RASAC for distribution to secondary school and community groups. The Club has also raised awareness of child exploitation and human trafficking by raising £167 for the purchase of the book Brave (A story of Friendship and Freedom). The books were gifted to organisations and charities including local libraries in Perth and Kinross. After a talk from Joy Gillespie on the work of SOHTIS, the club has donated £1,000 to support their important work to ensure survivors of this horrendous industry do not end up back in situations of exploitation. Finally the club continues to recycle blister packs, bottle tops and batteries.

ASSOCIATE MEMBER – Jean:

Jean is doing much to reduce the amount of 'waste' destined for landfill and by doing so she is helping our environment. Jean and the people of Blairgowrie drop off their blister packs at their local computer shop and also at the BARI food shop. Jean then takes them to Superdrug in Perth for recycling – the last load comprised of 5 large full bin bags!) Jean also has a partnership with friends, family, neighbours, Blairgowrie Blythswood Care and Alyth's Thrifty One and they all collect baby/childrens clothing and other items which are no longer required. Jean collects them all and then makes sure they all go to the small volunteer-led charity Button and Bows in Perth who give them to families in need. In March, after the request went out from the Perth and Kinross Association for Voluntary Services requesting items for Ukranian refugees who would be coming to Perthshire, Jean asked her network for more donations. She received men's warm clothing and footwear, toiletries, games, blankets and even umbrellas plus much more which she handed over to PKAVS.

Scotland North members really do 'Inspire Action and Transform Lives'. Well done everyone.