



My Inspiration.

In 2013 I had a call from a hospital in Reading to let me know that my brother who I hadn't seen for years had been sectioned under the Mental Health Act. My family and I rallied around to give him the best support we could. After 5 long and hard months it was decided my brother was unable to live with me and my then 2 year old son and we sought to find alternative suitable accommodation. We failed. There was nothing available in line with his medical needs, my brother ended up on the streets for the 2nd time in his life, sadly resulting in drug addiction, and of course prison shortly followed.

In 2017, after again being in prison, he was released and the same thing happened – no suitable housing provisions for him in line with the care that was required – drugs and then imprisonment.

On one occasion while I was 6 months pregnant in 2015, with my second child my brother went missing, he was with us at our family home, had a relapse, with his mental health, I managed to track him down in a field outside of Hungerford – he had walked there from Swindon. I had to go and collect him and somehow managed to persuade him that he was safe with me, and that there was no one after him! His Mental health condition and the voices had led him to believe he was in danger and was not safe and someone was after him and would harm him. Finally he came home.

This has been his life for many years, and his story is no different to many many others.

In Swindon there are in excess of 50 homeless people, many of whom go through the same situations.

This is their life. Prison or in worst case death.

1 in 4 of us will suffer with mental illness at some stage in their life. That is a lot of people expected to make rational and fair judgement in accordance with our society when they are not of a sane mind.

How do we expect someone who cannot understand what is reality to make a good decision about reality?

There are a handful of provisions that are able to accommodate people that deal with these issues day in and day out and work with them to be to live independently. But this takes a lot of work and a lot of people working together, without someone having a base, or a "home" it just isn't possible and they may end up calling a tent behind some shops, or a space in a car park their home.

There were days that I wasn't sure if my brother would make it through alive, he would walk for 30 miles + and call me not understanding how or why he was there. On a typical day he has to listen to 4-5 voices in his head, some are friendly, some are not, he sees people and figures around him all time, often he isn't able to distinguish what is reality and what isn't but he is expected to sit in a crowded office and try and communicate or remember what day and time he needs to be somewhere.

Our Mission

An exceptional team headed up by my co-host (My Mum) Rachel George Tucker and I have been pounding the streets for a few months simply caring. Offering any donations we have been able to get from hot and cold food to sleeping bags and blankets and footwear – however, this is a temporary fix and won't help people in the long run. (Please see <https://www.facebook.com/groups/swindonhelpinghands/> or http://www.swindonadvertiser.co.uk/news/15710879.Selfless_woman_launches_campaign_to_end_homelessness_once_and_for_all/ for more information).

Together, with another team of passionate and dedicated people who have volunteered their time we are planning a Black Tie Fundraising Ball with some exciting guests attending to be held on the 17th March 2018, at the Mecca, Swindon at 7pm.

How can you assist/help

I am hoping with your generosity and kindness you would be able to donate a gift(s)

We will then either raffle or auction to raise funds to enable us to provide serviced accommodation, in line with the relevant support systems, and in turn to offer a stable home to as many of these people as we can.

We will also be looking for sponsorship on tables and of course selling tickets individually, prices to be confirmed in the coming weeks.

If you feel you are able to or would like to contribute or know more information about the longer term goals for this well-deserved and frankly needed cause, then we would be truly grateful to hear from you.

From my friends on the streets and the team we thank you for taking the time to read this and look forward to hearing from you.

Kindest Regards.

Swindon Homeless Helping Hands.

Tickets available from Meca website at: <http://www.mecaswindon.co.uk/events-tickets/>