

# Refugee Action's Alternative Advent Calendar

As we approach the season of goodwill and sharing, we look forward to the relaxing times we will be spending with our families and friends.

This December, please put aside a few minutes each day to think about men, women and children who are far from their families and friends, struggling to survive through each day.

Every day as you think about those less fortunate, please add a few pennies to an empty jam jar – whatever you collect will be given to a destitute person.



## Maryann, 57, from Zimbabwe

Having fled persecution and threats by the militant youth wing of Mugabe's political party, Maryann endured years of destitution after her claim for asylum had been turned down.

She had to live on hand outs from her local church and charities, something that she found deeply humiliating having worked all her life and brought up her children.

Maryann has her own room now in a house run by Refugee Action, where she is warm and safe. She receives daily support from an advice worker and volunteers and is finally in a position to prepare a fresh asylum claim with new evidence.

## Week 1: 1–7 December

### FOOD

#### Thursday 1

Single people waiting to hear the outcome of their asylum claim live on just over £36 a week, meaning that items like chocolate bars are a luxury.

Give 30p for every chocolate bar you've had this week.

£

#### Friday 2

Destitute people are only occasionally able to have a hot drink.

Give 20p for every cup of tea or coffee you've enjoyed today.



£

#### Saturday 3

Destitute people have no choice in what they eat, sometimes having just one meal a day.

Give 50p for every meal you have had this week that you've really liked.

£

#### Sunday 4

People living in prolonged destitution suffer from poor health as a result of an un-varied diet and harsh living conditions.

Give 10p for every piece of fruit you have had this week.

£

#### Monday 5

Sitting down to have a meal with your family means a lot to most people.

This evening, mention Maryann's story to your family and tell them why you support refugees.

#### Tuesday 6

Refugee women housed by Refugee Action grow their own vegetables.

Find out more about Refugee Action World Food Night by emailing [info@refugee-action.org.uk](mailto:info@refugee-action.org.uk)



#### Wednesday 7

Give 75p for a bag of vegetable seeds so that Maryann and her friends can grow more vegetables in the spring.

£

### SHELTER & WARMTH



#### Thursday 8

UNHCR\* estimates that there are over 15 million refugees who have had to flee their homes.

Give 10p for every place where you've felt at home.

\*United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, [www.unhcr.org.uk](http://www.unhcr.org.uk)

£

#### Friday 9

People who are forced to live on the street can only on very rare occasions have a shower.

Give 10p for every shower you've taken this week.

£

#### Saturday 10

Refugee women staying in the Refugee Action house have their own bed for the first time in years.

Give 20p for every night this week that you have had a good night's sleep.

£

#### Sunday 11

One of the hardest parts of being destitute is trying to keep warm in the winter.

If your central heating is switched on today, give 10p for every hour that your house is heated.

£

#### Monday 12

Make your neighbourhood more welcoming to refugees.

Call us on 0845 8942536 to order free copies of 'Make Your Neighbourhood Nicer' booklets and pass them onto your neighbours.

£

#### Tuesday 13

Maryann and other refugee women knit scarfs and hats, both for themselves and to help fundraise for the upkeep of the house.

Please give 5p for every jumper in your wardrobe.

£

#### Wednesday 14

As another cold winter is setting in, spend a few minutes thinking about men and women sleeping outside in the freezing weather.

Give 10p for every bed in your house.

£

# Week 3: 15–21 December

## SAFETY



### Thursday 15

Refugees arriving in the UK have survived years of living in places ravaged by war and conflict.

Give 5p for every year of your life that you have lived in a safe and stable country.

£

### Friday 16

A person claiming asylum can be detained at any point in the process and often without a specific reason. Refused asylum seekers are especially at risk.

Give 5p for every night that you will spend in your house this month.

£

### Saturday 17

Many refugees have fled countries where civil liberties do not exist.

Give 10p for every protest you've taken part in.



£

### Sunday 18

Sadly, sometimes refugees in the UK are victims of violent, and on occasion even fatal, racially-motivated attacks.

Give 10p for every time you see a policeman or policewoman on your street this month.

£

### Monday 19

Spend 10 minutes today reading about one country which a large number of people flee from, in search of safety.

To name a few, they are Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia and Sudan.

### Tuesday 20

Tell your family, friends or colleagues something interesting about the country you read about, especially in relation to why people have to flee.

### Wednesday 21

Refugees often have no choice but to endure long and perilous journeys to reach a safe country.

Give 80p for every time you have travelled to go on a holiday this year.

£

## giftaid it

Yes, I am a UK taxpayer. I would like Refugee Action to treat all donations I have made in the four years prior to this year and all donations I make from the date of this declaration as Gift Aid donations.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Please notify us if you no longer pay an amount of income/ capital gains tax equal to the tax we reclaim from the government, currently 25p for each £1 you give.

You can cancel this declaration at any time.

# Week 4: 22–24 December

## FAMILY & FRIENDS

### Thursday 22

Hundreds of asylum seekers are currently in immigration-related detention, alone and terrified about what their future will bring.

Give 30p for every party you attend this month.

£

### Friday 23

Families often end up being separated when trying to flee persecution. A quarter of refugees arriving in the UK are young people on their own, some still children.

Give 10p for every present you will buy for a child this Christmas.

£

### Saturday 24

Maryann is turning 58 today.

Raise a glass to a better future for Maryann and other refugees.

Thank you for thinking about people like Maryann. Together we will ensure they are not forgotten.

[www.refugee-action.org.uk](http://www.refugee-action.org.uk)

[facebook.com/RefugeeAction](https://facebook.com/RefugeeAction)

[twitter.com/refugeeaction](https://twitter.com/refugeeaction)



working with refugees to build new lives

Please return this form to: Refugee Action, FREEPOST LON15834, LONDON, SE1 8YX

I enclose a cheque for £\_\_\_\_\_ (please make cheques payable to Refugee Action)

Title \_\_\_\_\_ First name \_\_\_\_\_

Surname \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

If you are new to Refugee Action, please tick here if you don't want to hear about our work in the future.