

Harvest Festival charity collection for Solinetz

SARAH EMCH-JONES

This year's cash collection from the Harvest Service is going to Solinetz, a local charity, which grew out of the initiative of two people 11 years ago, who wanted to do something practical to help asylum seekers in Zurich and surrounding area. It is now registered as a Verein and receives some financial support from the Integration Offices of both City and Canton of Zurich, the Reformed Church and the Roman Catholic Church, but is otherwise dependent on private donations. Solinetz has two part-time paid employees, plus 436 volunteers, who are involved in various projects, ranging from German classes and sports groups to accompanying school visits. Information evenings and exchanges are regularly organised, so that volunteers are kept up-to-date with Swiss asylum regulations and procedures.

My own involvement since 2015 has been helping prepare a midday meal once a week in the kitchen at Stauffacher. We are a mixed team, from Bosnia, Eritrea, Brazil and Switzerland, with extra help, especially for the washing up, from our guests. Pre-Covid we were cooking for up to 230 people, now numbers are around 150.

Five Zurich churches (Roman Catholic, Reformed and the Old Catholics) offer their premises for asylum seekers to come and have a 2-hour German lesson, followed by a simple meal. Learning German is vital and the time together is a good weekly boost for people, many of whom are traumatised and living in difficult conditions here. At the moment we also cater for Ukrainians. It is always heartening to see how engaged the learners are during the German lesson and I'm constantly amazed how efficient and flexible the organisers are. There is a crèche for babies and

toddlers, so that mothers can also benefit from the German lessons.

Another Solinetz project is prison visiting for those facing deportation and since I started, two of the young men who were helping us in the kitchen had their asylum appeal rejected and were put in the deportation prison (Ausschaffungshaft) at Kloten (the prison for criminal asylum-seekers is in another building). I visited them both for nearly a year; in the end, one was deported, the other released. It's a controversial system, but regular visits offer at least some moral support.

Thank you for helping Solinetz and if you would like more information, please check out the website below or contact me.

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<https://solinetz-zh.ch>

<https://solinetz-zh.ch/english/projects/>



Photo: <https://www.facebook.com/solinetzzuerich/photos>

Collection of goods to donate

Any goods collected at the Harvest Festival Service will be donated to Pfarrer Sieber in Zurich, where around a hundred meals are cooked in a catering facility every day, enabling homeless people to receive wholesome, healthy meals. In addition, those affected by poverty receive food in household quantities and people with limited abilities are able to work in food processing and delivery.

Food stuffs*

tinned vegetables,
tinned tuna, tinned soup,
pasta, rice, sugar, flour,
long-life fruit juice,
long-life milk, cooking oil,
vinegar, iced tea, cocoa,
Ovomaltine powder

Toiletries*

shower gel, hair shampoo,
body lotion,
toothbrushes, toothpaste,
shaving foam,
disposable razors,
aftershave,
women's sanitary articles

**Only new & unopened please!*

For more information, visit www.swsieber.ch

You can also donate to Solinetz via TWINT, using the QR code below, or by making a payment via the

St Andrew's account with Postfinance*:

CH04 0900 0000 8001 1689 3

**Please include 'Harvest Festival 2023' in the reference*

