



Hannah Gerson stars in the BBC's 'Young, Welsh and Pretty Religious'

We are proud of our colleague Hannah Gerson who this week starred in the BBC documentary 'Young, Welsh and Pretty Religious', now available on iPlayer. Hannah works in our Chesed department, specialising in work with refugees. Together with Yael Peleg, Director of Strategy and Development, Hannah helps run our weekly asylum seeker drop-in centres at Hendon and Woodford Forest synagogues.

The BBC say that the documentary is a 'fresh and eye-opening look at religion and faith in the Welsh under 30s'. In Wales, there are an estimated 2,000 Jews living in Cardiff and Hannah has now relocated to London.

Hannah, who told us she has 'always been passionate about working with refugees', grew up in Cardiff in a 'small but active' Jewish community. She met with BBC producers last summer to discuss appearing on the show, having been 'on their radar' from a 2015 documentary on the Bosnian genocide. The producers enlisted her to join a team of young people including a Muslim, Christian Priest and Hari Krishna monk, to break stereotypes about life with a faith. They wanted to show young people of religion, living a moderate lifestyle and the documentary follows them as they go about their daily lives.

Hannah was filmed in London in different Jewish locations, including Woodford Forest United Synagogue at the asylum seeker drop-in centre. She can be seen in the Synagogue, telling the BBC that there are asylum seekers from 24 different nationalities who attend the centre. Hannah then goes on to explain about the centre's incredible work, from providing hot meals and food vouchers, children's toys and clothes, to legal representation and mentoring.

In the documentary, Hannah explains that her Jewish values of helping those in need, coupled with her family history as Holocaust refugees and assisting those fleeing persecution, underpins her work. She also gave the BBC a tour of Cardiff Synagogue, explaining about youth groups and the cheder. In a memorable clip in the trailer, she is filmed waving the lulav and in her succah.

While filming for the show, Hannah spent time with Sahar, Father Ross and Gopal, the other participants in the documentary and they all explained to each other about their own faiths and how they worship.

Hannah told us, 'I would really love people to volunteer in the drop in centres, as well as watching the documentary. We are always looking for volunteers. The United Synagogue Charity run two Drop-in Centres for Asylum Seekers once a month. At each Centre we see between 30 and 40 families who have had to leave their countries for fear of their lives, bringing with them only what they could carry. As Asylum Seekers they have to survive on just £37 a week and are not allowed to work. The drop-in Centres provide these families with so much.'

We are very proud of our Hannah. To volunteer with the Asylum centres please contact Orah on obarnett@theus.org.uk [1]

Date Uploaded: Thursday 23rd May 2019

Source URL: <https://www.theus.org.uk/article/hannah-gerson-stars-bbcs-young-welsh-and-pretty-religious>



Links

[1] <mailto:obarnett@theus.org.uk>