

Black Santa



BELFAST
CATHEDRAL



Christmas Sit-out 2015

Generosity is a source of our own inner peace and well-being as we celebrate God's gift to us once again at Christmas. Thank you for your continuing support.

Donation slip and Gift Aid response on back page



Assistance Dogs NI: One mum said: "Our daughter is now happier and much more confident."



Daisy Lodge is the Cancer Fund for Children's short break centre. "The fight against the illness can feel like a lonely place at times."

Together we can make a

Unveiling a Blue Plaque in memory of Dean Sammy Crooks, Belfast's first Black Santa, at the start of the 2014 Sit-out reminded me of the aspirations of the Christmas Sit-out and how it has grown over almost four decades.

Sammy Crooks' first impromptu Sit-out was to raise funds following severe flooding in Bangladesh. It was so successful he held another on the steps of St Anne's at Christmas 1976, urging the people of Belfast to: 'Give and let live. Save the children, feed the hungry, heal the sick. Please don't pass them by.'

In 2015 that appeal remains the same. So much is happening both locally and internationally. Who cannot fail to be moved by the awful plight of refugees, stories of the emotional and physical abuse of innocent children, and the growing number of homeless men and women making their beds for the night in doorways in our cities and towns.

So many people in distress, we wonder how we can possibly make a difference? Thankfully we can. The pictures above are testament to this. They are just a small sample of the charities the Sit-out has supported. By grant aiding the many, many worthy charities whose experience and expertise reach out to the most needful in our community, we can help the children, the hungry, the sick. Like Dean Sammy Crooks, we too can make a difference.

In recent years we have supported more than 200 charities through the Black Santa Appeal EVERY YEAR. In 2014, in spite of difficult economic conditions, we collected £186,000 with around 85% distributed at home and 15% abroad

Collecting people's gifts for charity as Black Santa is such a meaningful and



NICRAS supports refugees and asylum seekers: "We provide a welcoming environment and some cash to relieve deprivation in a very small way."



Oh Yeah Music Centre: "Older people engage happily in discussions around music ...it helps build confidence and reduces isolation."

difference this Christmas

emotional experience. The privilege of being a conduit between one person's kindness and generosity and another person's need is extremely humbling.

Yes, there is fun and laughter and all the joy of the Christmas season, standing on the Cathedral steps with others, relieving people of pennies and pounds! Passers-by are sympathetic and sometimes amused when the weather is at its coldest, or when the rain comes down. But that is all part of it, and reminds those who take part of a substantial truth - that it is a privilege to have the opportunity to serve others.

Many of you have made donations over the years and I am deeply grateful, as were my predecessors Deans Crooks, Shearer and McKelvey. Although the organisation is more sophisticated now than that first Christmas when Dean Crooks took his barrel onto the steps of St Anne's, the principle remains the same: Generosity is a way of showing our concern for others.

As I appeal to your generosity once again I would like to say how heart-warming it is to be part of such an important tradition for Belfast; a tradition that is not just about raising and distributing money, but a tradition which brings people together. We are in challenging financial times, but I believe that we can make a real difference once again this Christmas.

I will begin the Sit-out on Wednesday December 16 and would love to see you call by in the days before Christmas.

Dean John Mann

Black Santa Donation Form 2015

You can donate by cheque or cash. If donating by cheque, please cross cheques and make payable to Sit-out. Donations can also be made by bank transfer to: Bank of Ireland, Sort Code 90-21-27, Account Number 60907288. Please e-mail sitout@belfastcathedral.org to let us know about your donation.

ALL DONORS: All donors please complete **(BLOCK CAPITALS)**

Title ----- First name or initial(s) -----

Surname -----

Full home address -----

-----Postcode -----

To gift aid your donation

If you are a UK taxpayer, you can 'gift-aid' your donation by ticking the box below and signing the declaration. Please ensure that you have also completed 'ALL DONORS' section above. (For Gift Aid we need your full name, not initials)

Please treat the enclosed gift of £ ----- as a Gift Aid donation to St Anne's Cathedral Sitout (Charity Registered XN 46142)

I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for the current tax year (6 April to 5 April) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all the charities and Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs) that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for the current tax year. I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify. I understand the charity will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I have given.

Signature ----- Date -----

Postal address

Please post completed forms to:
The Dean of Belfast,
Donegall Street,
BELFAST,
BT1 2HB
Telephone: 028 9032 8332

Please tick if you require a receipt

