

Leamington is temporary refuge for a small number of families from Chile, Argentina and Uruguay, who have had to flee from the military juntas which now rule their countries by violent means. Had they stayed they would probably have been arrested, tortured, killed, or would have 'disappeared' - the fate of thousands of their compatriots over the past five years.

These families have a temporary right to live here, until they are able to return home in safety. They are trying to settle and make a reasonable life for themselves, and to make a contribution within their host community.

They don't find this easy. The first difficulty is learning a new language - from scratch, for most of them. Then there are the problems of coping with poverty, understanding English organisations and structures, trying to get involved in local life and events while knowing very few people, and gaining interest in the political and human tragedy in South America and support for the struggle against illegal dictatorships.

They get some help from a worker based in Coventry (where there are many more refugee families), but for the most part they are entirely on their own, coping with the isolation which being a refugee in a foreign country entails.

They have formed their own committee to work on the problems, and now badly need help and support from Leamington people.

#### What is needed

1. Local committee members are needed to work closely with the families and to advise on both specific and general matters.
2. Spanish speakers to help in emergencies, especially medical and dental appointments, when language problems can be dangerous.
3. Friends for families, to help to reduce their sense of isolation.
4. Invitations to local events, political and social.
5. Help to organise social events to involve refugees and local people - concerts, dance classes, parties, etc.
6. Help with learning English and with children's homework.
7. Sharing interests and hobbies.
8. People with specialist knowledge are needed to help with practical problems; Social Security, rent, repairs, etc.
9. Help to set up discussions on South American politics and fund-raising events for the local committee and to send money to Chile for example, where many children are kept alive only through the existence of voluntarily-funded dining rooms.

Knowledge of Spanish is helpful for some tasks, but is not essential as everyone is learning English as fast as they can! Any offers of help at all will be very gladly received.

#### Contact:

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