

Giving something back – a weekend in Calais

CHARITY PASSION PEOPLE

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MediaCom is very proud to give every employee one day of paid leave per year to volunteer for charity. Austin Goh, Associate Director here at MediaCom, recently used his day to volunteer for the charity Help Refugees- here he tells of his experience.

I recently used my day of volunteering leave to work in a refugee warehouse in Calais. Even after the destruction of the Jungle, there are almost 2,000 people living in the forests in Northern France and over 200 are unaccompanied children who are still in need of aid.



Over a long weekend I fixed broken tents, sorted donations, chopped wooden pallets for firewood and cut vegetables for food distribution. We were called up to help distribute food in Dunkirk where twelve of us served 1,000 meals in under two hours. The whole process was like a military operation where speed, team work and trust between us had to be quickly established to deal with the overwhelming volume of people we had to serve.

We were also fortunate enough to spend time chatting, playing football and eating with several of the men there. We weren't allowed to take pictures of the food distribution as this could negatively affect the refugees, however we were allowed to take pictures in the warehouses which you can see below.



The weekend challenged any preconceptions I had of refugees. They were humble, took pride in their appearance, were respectful, educated and above all were normal people no different to you or I. Amongst mixed emotions and physical tiredness, I returned to London to start my working with a new outlook on the refugee crisis, and a sense that meeting so

many refugees was a real privilege.

If anyone is interested in volunteering or donating items to the cause, please visit <https://helprefugees.org>. Alternatively, the Choose Love t-shirts are available on [ASOS](#) with 100% of profits going towards the refugee crisis- even Julia Roberts has been rocking one of these!

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