

## Suggestions for action:

- When a new student comes to school find ways to make them feel welcome.
- Invite newcomers to join in activities that transcend language barriers, e.g. football and computer games.
- Start up a homework club, inviting new students to join.
- Invite someone who is new to your church or school to join you and your friends for a night out.
- Learn how to say 'hello' in a new language each week.
- Read stories and books from other cultures and traditions.
- Talk about what you've just read with your family, friends or church group.

Read more stories on:  
[www.embraceni.org](http://www.embraceni.org)

## EMBRACE NI

### *Building a Welcoming Community*

EMBRACE is a group of Christians drawn from different denominations, working together to promote a positive response to people seeking asylum, migrant workers and people from minority ethnic backgrounds in N Ireland.

EMBRACE seeks to reflect gospel values, and equip the Church to fulfil its call to welcome the stranger, by providing information, training, and resource materials, and acting as a channel to assist those in need.

### **Thinking of Joining Us?**

If you are not already a member of EMBRACE, please consider joining us. Subscriptions are £10.00 annually per person and £20.00 for groups. Please write to us at the address below.

### **Making a Donation?**

If you would like to make a donation towards our work please send a cheque, payable to EMBRACE. Your support is greatly appreciated.

### **For more information contact us:**

#### **EMBRACE NI**

48 Elmwood Avenue, Belfast BT9 6AZ

**Tel:** 9066 3145 (Tuesday to Thursday 10am to 3pm)

**Mobile:** 0796 9921 328

**Email:** [info@embraceni.org](mailto:info@embraceni.org)

**Web Site:** [www.embraceni.org](http://www.embraceni.org)



Office of the

**First Minister and  
Deputy First Minister**

[www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk](http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk)



*Embrace NI | Hear My Voice Series | Leaflet 3 | Nov 2011*

# Hear My Voice

# far from home

## A teenager's story

Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

*Romans 15:7*

Thoughts from young people  
who have come here recently

## Imagine...

One day you wake up and your parents announce that your mother was offered a fantastic job in Hungary. You are told you will be moving there in one month. Your mind swarms with what this move means for your life...

### **New friends**

### **New language**

### **New school**

### **Saying goodbye**

### **Leaving friends, neighbours, cousins, grandparents...**

You talk to your parents and try to convince them it's a bad idea to move. They hear you, but that doesn't change anything. They try to reassure you by saying, 'You are going to be OK. You'll find new friends...'

Even the thought of moving makes you sick. It is difficult to imagine that a new life could ever be 'OK.'

This scenario became reality for **Asia** from Poland whose mother got a great job offer from a big factory in Dungannon.

Asia came here when she was just 14. She spoke and understood English well because her parents were English teachers.

When she went to her new school, she had a very difficult time. She felt that her new classmates didn't want to get to know her and they didn't bother to say 'hello'. She spent her breaks in the library, sitting alone. Thinking back over her first few months she says, 'It felt like hell...'

One day, another new girl, **Clare**, came to the school. Clare is from here, but like Asia, was new to the school and had trouble finding new friends. Then she noticed Asia and said, 'You are new and I am new. You don't have friends and I don't either. Maybe we can be friends'.

From that moment Asia's life changed. She didn't feel isolated and alone any longer.

*In my mother country at least I could understand what teachers were saying to me.*

*Making friends has made it so much easier for me to adjust to life in Northern Ireland.*

*In my country I had my whole family. Here I have only my parents.*

*I just want to fit in. I want to feel at home in this new place.*

*I really enjoy my new school and think the teachers are great.*

*Today, nobody noticed me and I have not lived. You have noticed me and I live again. Chekov*