



HM GOVERNMENT OF GIBRALTAR
MINISTRY OF EQUALITY, SOCIAL SERVICES AND THE ELDERLY
14 GOVERNOR'S PARADE
GIBRALTAR

PRESS RELEASE

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St Bernadette's Resource Centre design 2014 Christmas Stamps

The Gibraltar Christmas Stamps for 2014 have been designed at St Bernadette's Resource Centre. The stamps are extracted from artwork that has been entirely produced by adults with learning disabilities. This project began in January 2014 and, by using the concept of a collage, all users of the Centre have been able to participate. Artists were encouraged to express their understanding of Gibraltar and Christmas and how both are important to them.

The inspiration for the stamp is the International Day of People with Disabilities in December which aims to increase public awareness, understanding and acceptance of people with disabilities and to celebrate their achievements and contributions.

This project is the culmination of many hours of hard work by the artists and is a collaboration between the Care Agency's St Bernadette's Resource Centre, the Arts and Crafts Society and the Philatelic Bureau.

At the outset it was thought best that all service users work on a single piece, as opposed to separately producing individual stamps, as this would be innovative, fairer and more beneficial to all the service users at St Bernadette's and, by working as team, they might learn new, artistic and creative skills. The exciting project commenced just after last Christmas and the artists have been involved in every single aspect of the work, including priming and painting the canvas. The final product is truly a unique example of their hard work, team work and freedom of expression. The stamps themselves are extracts from the final piece and have been produced by Stephen Perera.

The work has been undertaken in conjunction with the Gibraltar Arts and Crafts Society whose members volunteer at the Centre one day a week. It was led by Philip Heath, Michelle Stagnetto and Merche Vasquez, who along with care staff, have been instrumental in inspiring service users to be creative in using their skills and abilities and encouraged them to use their imagination and express themselves through colour, different art techniques and media, textures and materials. They held small groups and one to one sessions with various service users who needed a little bit more support and reassurance so as to ensure that everyone who wanted to participate did so to their full potential. Throughout the project, the ambience at the Centre has been cheerful, warm and festive.

Telephone No: (350) 20047564 (Centrex 2348); Fax No: (350) 20042509 (Centrex: 2368)

The artists hope that the stamps will be enjoyed by everyone who collects stamps around the world and by anyone receiving mail from Gibraltar during Christmas.

The complete collection of Christmas stamps is now on sale from the Gibraltar Philatelic Bureau Shop outside the Main Street Post Office and online on www.gibraltar-stamps.com. This year, exceptionally, the Philatelic Bureau has also produced Christmas cards illustrating the same image as the stamps and can also be purchased from the Gibraltar Philatelic Bureau Shop. An exhibition of the original artwork, artists' profiles and photographs depicting the creation of the piece at various stages will be on display at the airport terminal during this week until 7th November.

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Samantha Sacramento, Minister for Equality, Social Services and the Elderly noted, 'These stamps are original and absolutely beautiful and it gives me great pleasure and immense pride to be able to showcase so prominently people's abilities instead of focusing on their disabilities and this is a perfect example of what can be achieved. Having been so closely involved in this project myself, I know how important and fun the whole process has been for everyone involved. I am very grateful to the management and staff at St Bernadette's, the volunteers from the Arts and Craft Society and the Philatelic Bureau for working together to enable this to become a reality but more importantly I wish to thank every single artist who has given Gibraltar such a unique stamp this Christmas.'

(Please see images below)



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Christmas 2014 'Christmas art'



The artists who created this artwork are: Luisa Artesani - Karen Becerra - Graeme Brooking - Alfred Celecia - Jaime Lee Cooper - Annabelle Cosquiere - Maria Cruz - Paul Dixon - Joseph Duo - Kyron Dyer - Michael Evaristo - Andrew Featherstone - Fabiola Felices - Sam Galloway - Diane Gaskin - Sandy Greig - Angelica Ignacio - Liam Ignacio - Karen Joaquin - Michael Lima - Nicholas Llanelo - Jan Lopez - Vivian Martinez - Manuel Odo - Stephen Poggio - Tracey Tavares - Keyvain Tomay - Matthew Valarino - Brian Whitefield - Glen Wimbleton - Virginia Wink - Carlos Yeo - Dorrian Zammit

