

APPEAL: INMATES RALLY TO HELP ISLAMIC MISSION

Prisoners come to aid of Iraq charity



by **KATHIE GRIFFITHS**

T&A Reporter

Inmates at prisons across the country have been getting on their bikes and helping a Bradford-based charity send aid to Iraq.

Volunteers from the city's Human Relief Foundation teamed up with helpers from national prison charity Inside Out Trust yesterday to load up two 40ft containers ready for a three-week journey to Basra.

The loads were made up of 350 bicycles, 20 wheelchairs, 210 sewing machines, bike trailers and baby buggies as well as spruced-up supplies of artificial limbs and computers all re-conditioned by prisoners with the Inside Out Trust.

The double shipment will set sail from Southampton across the Mediterranean to Jordan before making the final part of its voyage by land to Basra.

Inside Out Trust's regional co-ordinator David Brown, who is based in Bradford, said: "We try to rescue things that would otherwise be dumped. A lot of the bikes we packed up for Iraq were salvaged from waste tips, others were unclaimed lost property and some were passed on by Center Parcs.

"We get them and fix them up - some have no wheels, just one pedal, a bent frame or dodgy brakes but we put them right."

Now in its 11th year, the Inside Out Trust works with more than 1,000 prisoners helping them pick up job skills which will be useful at the end of their sentence. Everything they re-condition is sent out to third-world countries in need.

"We must have donated thousands of pounds worth of goods just in these two containers for Iraq but you can't place a big enough value on the self-esteem it gives the prisoners to help," added Mr Brown.

Human Relief Foundation project co-ordinator Yousaf Razaq said he would be visiting prisoners in the New Year to tell them how their donations had been put to good use.

"It's the first time we've ever sent bikes out but we know there's a need for them. They will be given to children as Eid presents and to professional people like nurses and doctors who need to get round quickly but don't have any other transport.



CHARITY: David Brown and Yousaf Razaq with a bike. Inset, David Brown with Carmel Dylak, all from the Human Relief Foundation

"The sewing machines will go to classes we run for women wanting to get back into the job market and the computers will go to colleges for students - the wheelchairs and limbs of course will go to local hospitals who are desperate for them," said Mr Razaq. On average, one 40ft container is dispatched from Bradford to Iraq every four to six weeks.

It sends blankets, sheets and medical supplies from well-wishers in Bradford and across the UK.

The Foundation has three Iraqi offices in Baghdad, Basra and Mosul manned by more than 100 volunteers who know the territory and distribute donations. Mr Razaq said: "Iraqi peo-

ple are continuing to suffer from the collapse of the country's infrastructure, demolished homes, hospitals and schools."

The Human Relief Foundation has raised more than £2 million for Iraq since it was set up in 1991 after the first Gulf War. Anyone wanting to make donations can send cheques payable to The Human Relief Foundation, Freepost BD3125, PO Box 194, Bradford, BD7 1BR or pay in to a Barclays bank account, sort code 20-11-81 account number 70554022.

For further details, visit www.hrf.co.uk.

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