

‘THE VOLUNCHEER’:

Crisis Skylight Coventry’s 1st Volunteer Newsletter

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Welcome to the June issue, packed full of good news, fascinating facts, quizzes and more. If you have anything that you’d like included in future editions of this newsletter, please let me know on amy.rugg@crisis.org.uk.

The Big Lockdown Art Show: Coventry Members and Volunteers

A little while ago, we had an idea for an online art exhibit to bring volunteers and members together online by displaying some of the work they’ve produced at home whilst under lockdown or in the past. We’ve been moved and inspired by the stunning art and artisan creations our volunteers and members have created both in the past and during lockdown. We are currently working with Birmingham’s Skylight to curate these works onto a website which we hope to launch in the next few weeks. It’s not too late to get involved. If you have any creative work you would like to submit, please take a photo and email it to me by Friday 19th June.

Success Stories:

This month we hear from Ash West, Employability Coach: "Our member, ‘J’ (name changed) came to us in 2019 after a relationship breakdown lead to homelessness and issues around substance misuse. ‘J’ was a successful head chef, working long hours, leading teams in busy professional kitchens.

The progression team provided immense support, providing ‘J’ with the energy and motivation to recover, overcome barriers and develop his independence. We supported ‘J’ to secure housing through a local housing provider, which freed ‘J’ to look at options for returning to work. ‘J’ quickly completed a basic food hygiene qualification through Crisis.

But that’s when COVID struck, and, realising that the catering industry was to take a while to recover from the global pandemic, ‘J’ saw an opportunity to retrain and achieve the financial independence they (plural pronouns used) were striving for. Last month, ‘J’ completed their counter balance fork lift training with such enthusiasm and skill that they finished a whole day early and so completed additional training with the company in the "spare" day to improve their employability.

With newfound optimism, skill and motivation, ‘J’ secured employment in a warehouse position, awaiting the fork lift truck induction process and is well on the way to achieving their goals."

National Volunteers Week 1-7 June:

The first Volunteer Virtual Coffee Morning took place on the 3rd– It was lovely to see the lovely Lucky Lowe and one of our Member Volunteers ‘S’, who both gave a great deal to the session with their news and views. We also had the very wonderful Christmas and Events Coordinator, Eleanor, along for the company and helped with our tech.

Lucky and ‘S’ both contributed recipes to our fb page and all staff posted supportive messages on social media all that week with photos of smiley faces on the palms of their hands.

Eleanor and Tasha Reilly, Functional Skills Coordinator organised fun, fascinating volunteer facts or images every day.

‘Thank you’ scrapbooks were sent out to each member with e-cards containing supportive messages from every staff member available. All in all, it was a good week. Here’s to an even better year in 2021!

New volunteer opportunities

Online Events:

STOP PRESS: We **URGENTLY** need a volunteer for **The Great Online Cov & Bham Quiz on 26 June 2020 at 14:00 – 15:30** to help keep scores (as a fair and impartial adjudicator!). If you can help, please email me or Eleanor Nunn at eleanor.nunn@crisis.org.uk

For the last 12 weeks or so, we have had a type of ‘volunteer furlough’ throughout most of our Skylights. However, Volunteer Coordinators have been busy behind the scenes rewriting all our volunteer role descriptions to take into account social distancing or remote working, both with members and staff. This process is nearly complete, and we are happy to say that we are now ready to invite our existing volunteers to ‘step back in’ to working with our members and others. Volunteers are vital to our achieving our aim to end homelessness together.

New Triage Service

Following the ongoing crisis of the current global pandemic, we are aware at our Skylight, and across the country, of an increase in demand on our services from people who have never experienced homelessness before. As a response to this, we have developed a new triage system, due to be rolled over the next few weeks, so that we can quickly assess people’s needs, ensuring they get the best most appropriate support. We recognise that this won’t always mean support from Crisis, but we have been working closely with our local partners to ensure that everyone who needs either lighter touch or more specialist support is referred appropriately.

New Online Learning Offers

The learning team continue to work hard to ensure members are as supported as much as possible during these challenging times. We are holding online tutorials with learners where possible and ensuring that we keep in contact with members we are currently working with over the phone. More recently, we have developed an Online Timetable offering a combination of Live online sessions facilitated by a member of the Crisis team (please note, enrolment is required on each of these courses), Pre-recorded sessions which have been developed by members of the Crisis team and external video links to free online content.

Wellbeing: Self-soothe Boxes

As our Coventry Skylight plans for our ‘post-lockdown’ service delivery and office life, we are aware of how important it is to look after our wellbeing, if only to cope with the future changes inevitably coming our way.

With that in mind, self-soothe boxes are easy to make and allow you to create something appealing and comforting in times of stress or sadness that will remind us of times when things are better. Follow this link from BBC Bite-size and let me know if you make one – send a picture for July’s issue!

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zfy3382>

Tree of the week:

This stately sentry of Naul’s Mill Park is a copper beech which, looking at the trunk, is about 100+ years old, probably planted around the time the park was opened in 1909. I pass this tree on my daily morning walk and am struck by it’s graceful stature.

Trees offer not only shelter and shade but also a reminder of their timelessness and of the way they beautify our surroundings and give us the time and space to breathe just by standing tall and reaching up.

