

INCLUSION GLOUCESTERSHIRE

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VOLUNTEER VOICES

December 2021

The Volunteer Voices Newsletter from Inclusion Gloucestershire, sharing views, news and volunteer voices.

December Kindness 2021

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 Spread kindness and share the December calendar with others	2 Contact someone you can't be with to see how they are	3 Offer to help someone who is facing difficulties at the moment.	4 Support a charity, cause or campaign you really care about
5 Give a gift to someone who is homeless or feeling lonely	6 Leave a positive message for someone else to find	7 Give kind comments to as many people as possible today	8 Do something helpful for a friend or family member	9 Notice when you're hard on yourself or others and be kind instead	10 Listen wholeheartedly to others without judging them	11 Buy an extra item and donate it to a local food bank
12 Be generous. Feed someone with food, love or kindness today	13 See how many different people you can smile at today	14 Share a happy memory or inspiring thought with a loved one	15 Contact an older neighbour and brighten up their day	16 Look for something positive to say to everyone you speak to	17 Give thanks. List the kind things others have done for you	18 Ask for help and let someone else discover the joy of giving
19 Contact someone who may be alone or feeling isolated	20 Help others by giving away something that you don't need	21 Appreciate kindness and thank people who do things for you	22 Congratulate someone for an achievement that may go unnoticed	23 Choose to give or receive the gift of forgiveness	24 Bring joy to others. Share something which made you laugh	25 Treat everyone with kindness today, including yourself!
 26 Get outside. Pick up litter or do something kind for nature	27 Call a relative who is far away to say hello and have a chat	28 Be kind to the planet. Eat less meat and use less energy	29 Turn off digital devices and really listen to people	30 Let someone know how much you appreciate them and why	31 Plan some new acts of kindness to do in 2022	

ACTION FOR HAPPINESS Happier · Kinder · Together



Every month Action for Happiness have these fab calendars with a new theme each month, this month its Do Good December, there are some lovely ideas to try for yourself, with family, friends, or groups that you are in.

Volunteer Opportunities at Inclusion Gloucestershire Drama & Dance Groups



We have some fab new drama & dance volunteer opportunities starting in January 2022. Helping the facilitator to run our inclusive drama & dance sessions. They are ideal volunteer roles for people interested in teaching/facilitating drama and dance workshops or people keen to help out and get involved in inclusive creative workshops.

Tim Heaven is one of the 'experts by experience' at Inclusion Gloucestershire, having previously been a part of Gloucestershire Voices, and shares his love of acting through 'Dramatic Change' project headed by Inclusion Gloucestershire.



"It is definitely a good place to make friends but if you are not interested in acting or drama, we are always looking for people to be behind the camera and behind the scenes to learn those skills as well." Says Tim

Dramatic Change aims to create films and resources that promote disability awareness, equality and inclusion. Courses run for six months for those who face disabling barriers with the aim of developing confidence and skill and is an opportunity for people from a wide range of backgrounds to come together, socialise and make friends, with the wider goal of self-development.

Through the group, resources (films, plays, forum theatre) are made to educate and train people on disability awareness, equality and inclusion.

We are offering lots of new Volunteer opportunities for 2022. If you are interested in this volunteer role or our many other volunteering opportunities with Inclusion Gloucestershire, please Email julesa@inclusion-glos.org

Speak Up Group Volunteer Wayne Hands writes about his experience of being a volunteer in The Inclusion Gloucestershire Speak Up groups.

Volunteering in the Speak Up Groups.



In my brief time as a volunteer for Inclusion Gloucestershire I have had the pleasure of being involved with the Speak Up Groups on Zoom. The meetings each have been about specific subjects like PIP and the Latest Government Green Paper and Self Advocacy and the National Disability Strategy, with coming meetings looking at physical disabilities and sensory impairments with many more planned for the new year.

The Speak Up Groups give everyone the chance to have their say about the particular topic being discussed and allow people to network, give voice to concerns and pass on information. The latest Speak Up Group was about Self Advocacy, and I had the pleasure to co-chair the meeting with Faye Longley, we raised some of the concerns people had about the current situation in the care sector and we even had 2 people reconnect with each other after a good number of years being out of touch.

As you can imagine the meeting about PIP and the Green Paper raised a lot of interest as it can be a very contentious subject. This is a great way to interact with people who face the same challenges and barriers as you may well have had to overcome or people who may work with or for organisations that may be able to offer assistance and advice. We all need a little help sometimes and we all have valuable insight and lived experiences that may assist someone else or give them hope in overcoming these barriers.



All contributors can feel confident that their input will be valued and respected so why not join us and let's talk about the things that affect our lives. I encourage you all to join us at our next Speak Up Group by registering your interest by emailing fayel@inclusion-glos.org and putting speak up group as the subject.

One of our fantastic volunteers who writes under the Pen Name Lily Stafford, shares their experience of Holding Space for people.

Recently, I've been thinking a lot about the art of 'holding space' for people: creating a supportive environment where people can feel fully seen, heard and accepted as they are. It comes up again and again throughout my life – whether I'm processing childhood trauma in therapy, meditating in front of my shrines, training as a professional coach or sharing meaningful time with my



friends. I've used a range of metaphors to explain these ideas, each aimed at different audiences, but I want to find something more universally relatable. After



several weeks of chipping away at this project, here's what I've got.

I see holding space for people as like building a chrysalis for a caterpillar – a safe container where we can come apart without fear of dying.

For a caterpillar to transform itself into a butterfly, it first needs to completely dissolve into mush and become vulnerable, which would kill the caterpillar unless it happened within a safely enclosed container. Similarly, recognising our wounds and releasing unhealthy coping strategies is often terrifying, especially if those unhealthy strategies have literally kept you alive in the past. Even if you're safe and comfortable in the present, your brain doesn't recognise that – it sees behaviours labelled as 'necessary for survival' and assumes it would be suicidal to let them go. So holding space involves creating an external container of unconditional love and acceptance, so that people feel safe enough to lower their guard and go through whatever internal experiences they need in order to heal and transform. By helping people to feel truly safe, we can lay the foundation for transformative experiences. To read more of this fantastic article please go to the blog. <https://onequeersentence.wordpress.com/2021/09/11/the-art-of-holding-space/>



Jackie Sallis our lead Volunteer Newsletter Writer shares with us some Interesting Christmas Facts

Christmas is coming very soon less than a month now. But how many of us know about some of the traditions and history of Christmas. I have a few that I would like to share with you. Firstly, up until the 4th century the birth of Jesus was not celebrated by the Christian church. Pope Julius 1st chose December 25th to celebrate Christmas to coincide with the pagan festival called the feast of the nativity by holding Christmas at the same time as the winter solstice it was hoped by church leaders that Christmas would be embraced. However, by the Middle Ages they gave up dictating how it was celebrated.

The custom of sending Christmas cards was started in the UK by Sir Henry Cole in 1843 Sir Henry had the idea of Christmas cards with his friend John Horsley who was an artist they designed the first cards and sold them for 1 shilling.

The Christmas tree originates from Germany where Prince Albert was born and introduced to England, he had a German wife called Charlotte who was thought to decorate a tree for her family in the 1790s. Later Queen Victoria and Prince Albert are thought to be the ones to make it a custom to decorate a tree at Christmas.



Christmas Carols were first sung in Europe thousands of years ago these were not Christmas Carols they were pagan songs sung at winter solstice celebrations as people danced round stone circles soon after many composers all over Europe started to write Christmas Carols.

I hope you will find some of the history and the traditions of Christmas interesting. I certainly did when I read about them. Finally, may I wish you all a very happy healthy peaceful Christmas and New Year.

