



Welcome to the March edition of Volunteers News



Spring Brings Hope

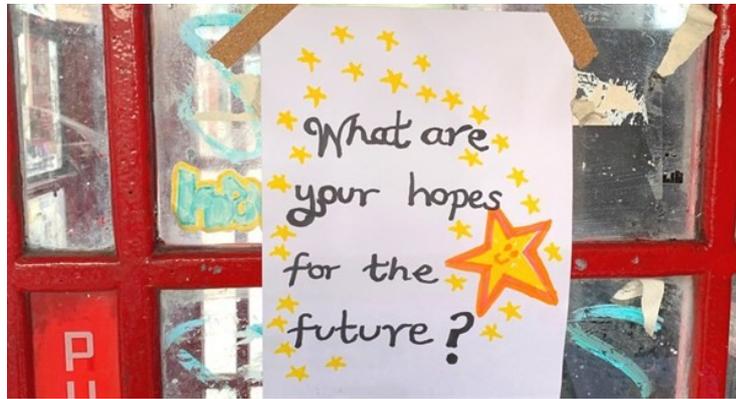
Hope is all of the little things we do each day, such as volunteering to make our lives better, not just something that will happen in the future.

MICROVOLUNTEERING: WHAT YOU CAN DO: PAGE 3



compact for leeds
public and third sector
working together for the people of leeds





“Do remember they can’t cancel spring.” David Hockney

One year has passed since the first lockdown, and many of us have faced a range of challenges in our lives, from small to big, from personal to social. It’s been a roller coaster ride of emotions.

Spring is the season of Hope. This year, I realised when spring buds start to appear, I feel uplifted. However, after the year we’ve had, I am experiencing pandemic fatigue! To help cultivate some hope and build some emotional resilience, I asked myself, “What do you feel hopeful about right now?” Here are a few things from my Hope list. What would you put on your list?

- * Spring buds and vaccines
- * A roadmap easing restrictions
- * Working with compassionate volunteers & colleagues
- * Keeping connected to friends and family

Editing this newsletter helped me to feel more hopeful, with articles that cover:

Page 2: Keeping happy and spirits high by Irene

Page 3: Microvolunteering: What is it?

Page 4: Fantastic new volunteer service

Page 5: Students fundraising for Carers Leeds

Page 6: Keeping connected with volunteers

Page 7: The most wonderful time of the year ... Volunteers’ Week!

I hope you will enjoy reading this newsletter. The next issue will be a Volunteers’ Week special edition.

Warm wishes. Valerie, Volunteer Coordinator



April Volunteer Coffee and Chat

Steve Taylor, Head of Operations will be joining volunteers to talk about our move back to The Headrow and the future of services provided by Carers Leeds. Tuesday 27 April 2021 from 12:00pm to 1:00 pm.



Feel good news by Irene, Carers Leeds Envelope Filler

After such a challenging year in lockdown, it's been tough not meeting up with other volunteers. I have missed chatting away, exchanging what's happening in their busy lives whilst stuffing envelopes and having a laugh.

Recently, I attended a Zoom planning meeting with Valerie and Catherine regarding this edition of our volunteer newsletter. I put forward an idea about asking our volunteers about anything that has made them happy and kept their spirits up during this difficult time. They both thought it was a good idea, so here it is. I hope a few things I am writing about will inspire some of you to send yours in to include in the next edition of News Extra.

I have likened this lockdown to the great film Groundhog Day which I watched and enjoyed. In this comedy romance, a weatherman (Bill Murray) finds himself living the same day repeatedly. After watching the movie, I put a prominent notice on my fridge, 'Welcome to Groundhog Day'. It made me smile.

So, all the constant cleaning, cooking, walking wasn't so bad. I actually found cleaning the cupboards very therapeutic, and [Kidz in Kampz](#) charity shop did very well out of it. This charity supports the educational and welfare needs of children living in camps for displaced people along the Thai/Burmese borders.

[Joe Wicks](#), the PE Teacher, was a godsend. I managed to follow him on [YouTube](#), Monday, Wednesday and Friday. I didn't do all the exercises as I have bad knees. Still, I mixed and matched by going on my exercise bike indoors and some on my mat on the floor (with Buddy, my dog, jumping all over me).



The mask-wearing at the beginning was hard but I eventually embraced it. I even made myself a mask and matching headband out of skull material which I love. I started taking selfies in my masks and created a photo book, which I titled "The Lockdown Look 2020". This makes me smile.

I'm in [Leeds People's Choir](#), and I miss singing with them, but they have been sending me jokes and funny videos which have had me howling. I find it's the little things that make me happy, and one of them was getting a coffee from McDonald's on my way walking into town on a Friday. When it shut due to COVID, I was gutted, but it's open again, so I can smile again.

I've also cut my own hair during lockdown and my husbands. I have finally baked a banana cake (I've wasted so many bananas before this). No more!! because my first attempt is absolutely delicious.

Thank goodness for the vaccines. I've had my first one, so it won't be too long before we can return to happier times because of the very successful rollout.

Please let Valerie have some of your happy stories, celebrations, anything that has helped you get through this last year. We will publish them in the next edition newsletter.

MICROVOLUNTEERING



BITE-SIZED BITS OF BENEVOLENCE

Microvolunteering: what is it and what you can do

It's a simple idea – that people are more likely to volunteer their time in short and convenient, bite-sized chunks – and turns it into a new approach to community action. It offers volunteers a series of easy tasks that can be done anytime, anywhere, on their own terms.

At Carers Leeds we've put our own spin on this idea. Here are some tasks that volunteers can do online and offline. You can commit to do a one-off task or repeat a task.

The only equipment you need to do an **Offline** task is a phone. For **Online** tasks you will need access to a computer/laptop/tablet or smartphone.

Microvolunteering opportunities

Online / Offline

Proofreader – Proofreading written content for the volunteer programme such as newsletters, handbooks and more	Online and Offline
Website tester – Visiting our volunteer website page, completing a set of tasks, giving your feedback	Online only
Training course tester – Completing a training course and giving your feedback	Online and Offline
Volunteer News reviewer – Taking the time to review the content of our volunteer newsletter and giving feedback	Online and Offline
Volunteer Policy content reviewer – Help us to review our volunteer policies and give your feedback	Online and Offline
Photographer – Taking on photography assignments (indoors and outdoors) to help us build up a stock of photos that we can use for volunteer promotional materials, reports and online	Online only
Writer – Taking on writing assignments for our website blog or volunteer newsletter	Online and Offline
Social media – Spreading Carers Leeds volunteer messages to friends and followers on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram	Online only

To register your interest in one or more of the above opportunities contact Valerie

Email: valerie.banks@carersleeds.org.uk **Phone:** 07985 754 570

“We now have a fantastic new Telephone Evaluation service delivered by skilled volunteers”

Tom, Team Leader



Catherine, Volunteer News Reporter sits down with Tom, and volunteers Sue & Diane to talk about our new Telephone Evaluation Service

Tom: How long has the Telephone Evaluation service been running? Last September we started to trial the service for a few months. Sue suggested some really helpful amendments to the questionnaire and the procedure. Diane joined the team in December, and since attending a training session Diane and Sue have been carrying out 12 telephone evaluations per month.

Tom: What are you hoping to achieve? Obtain more feedback so that we can understand what carers really value. It's an opportunity to find out what carers think of different parts of our service, groups and events. The information we collect will be used to make improvements and changes, and to promote our services. We will also give feedback to our staff team.

Tom: What are the benefits of having volunteers involved? It allows us more time to have a conversation with carers and ask more questions. Thanks to Diane and Sue, we are now learning more about what carers think, their experiences and what has worked for them.

Sue: What was it like to be involved in piloting the service? It's been really interesting. Initially, a set of evaluation questions were agreed that we amended and refined. Four carers agreed to take part in the pilot, and their feedback was recorded on the new form. I met with Tom to discuss the process and what seemed to have worked well. After our meeting, Tom also contacted the carers involved in the pilot to listen to their experience. The pilot took time to complete because we wanted to make sure the service was going to be a positive experience for carers.

Sue: What's it like now being further involved? It has become more interesting. Team Leaders have started to refer carers who have recently used our services. We are now calling a range of carers who have received different services.

Diane: Why did you want to volunteer for the Telephone Evaluation Service? I have volunteered for about 2 years, making welfare calls to carers for the Dementia team. This new role gives me another opportunity to give back to Carers Leeds. Since the lockdown, I've enjoyed volunteering from home but miss the social interaction. However, it's been fun working with Tom and Sue to develop the service. It has broadened my understanding of the diverse range of services provided by Carers Leeds and the positive impact the organisation has on the lives of carers.



The Leeds RAG Fashion Show (LRFS) is the biggest student event of the social calendar. Every year, students from all across Leeds come together to try and raise as much money as possible as part of the Leeds Universities' Raising And Giving Societies.

Not only is the Leeds RAG Fashion Show an excuse for everyone in Leeds to get glammed up for a night of performance, fashion, glamour and partying, but it's also a great opportunity for members of the student community to pursue their passion in the arts, management, communications, and the events sector. Most importantly, however, it is an opportunity for students to give back to their local community and the wider world. In previous years we have managed to raise thousands for our chosen causes, aiming every time to make the show self-sufficient and reliant entirely on volunteers and donations, so that we can give the maximum amount possible to our charities.

This year, we have chosen Carers Leeds as our local cause. The past 12 months have been memorable for all the wrong reasons, and a monumental challenge for so many in society. We feel that, in particular, carers and the people they care for have had to overcome more obstacles than most. The sad reality of the previous year is that too many people have gone under-appreciated for all they do for too long, and it has taken something catastrophic like the COVID-19 pandemic for the general public to take notice. We realised that Carers Leeds are doing incredible things all over the city that we love, and that they deserve our support. This year more than ever, we want to be able to offer as much in the way of donations as possible to the wonderful people at Carers Leeds.

We are still living through crazy times, but the spirit of LRFS is persevering through it all, just as we know the spirit of Carers Leeds is. We can't wait to be able to offer you some much needed beauty and escapism with our show, and we are hoping that this year we will smash our fundraising record once again!

Thank you to everyone at Carers Leeds for all your hard work.



Says...





We have started to plan our favourite week of the year, **Volunteers' Week!** At our February Volunteer Coffee and Chat meet-up on Zoom, we asked volunteers how they would like to celebrate the week. They came up with a range of ideas:

1. Creative activities such as poetry, baking, craft events
2. Fish & Chips at Roundhay Park
3. Share impact of volunteering on carers & organisation
4. Day trip to the seaside
5. A cake to celebrate the rollout of the vaccines
6. An online meet-up

To help us channel volunteer creativity, Lydia, our Connections Support Worker has been invited to our March Coffee and Chat event on Friday 26 March. Lydia will be talking about a Volunteer Scrapbook Project and inviting volunteers to get involved. We don't want anyone to miss out, so if you cannot attend or don't use Zoom, you will receive a message by email or post from Lydia to let you know how you can get involved.

As usual, Volunteers Week will take place 1-7 June. Looking at the Four-step roadmap for easing of restrictions in the UK, no earlier than 17 May a maximum of 30 people can meet outdoors. Our Senior Management Team have been asked to consider the idea of an outdoor event for volunteers. We are awaiting their decision.

We will keep you posted about our Volunteers' Week celebrations

Contact Details

Valerie Banks—Volunteer Coordinator/Volunteer News Editor

Email: valerie.banks@carersleeds.org.uk Phone: 07985 754 570

Aidan Finney —Carers Befriending Coordinator

Email: aidan.finney@carersleeds.org.uk Phone: 07940 720 474

Carers Leeds Advice Line: 0113 380 4300

