

Volunteer News

The newsletter for our volunteers who support unpaid family and friend carers



11th May 2020

Over the next few months, whilst our normal work is affected by COVID-19, we will be sending you more regular Volunteer Newsletters. We would appreciate your contributions.

To contact us:

Call: 01992 58 69 69

Email: volunteer@carersinherts.org.uk

Visit: www.carersinherts.org.uk

Carers in Hertfordshire,
The Red House, 119 Fore Street,
Hertford, Hertfordshire, SG14 1AX.

Your Volunteer Team:

Alex Daar - Volunteer Manager and Mentoring Coordinator;

Nicki Bird and Amanda Feron - Hub Volunteer Coordinators;

Jules Josephs - Mentoring Coordinator;

Julie Hayes - Volunteer Coordinator.



Bonita, Mentor, keeping fit with a game of swing ball in her garden.

Making Carers Count



Welcome

We are now 7 weeks into lockdown. The COVID-19 crisis has brought huge challenges to carers on a daily basis and it is important to highlight the contribution carers make. Carers Week gives us an opportunity to do this from 8th -14th June, even if we cannot celebrate it as normal. We would really appreciate being sent any stories you have come across that can bring the role of carers to life and show how important the role of a carer is. Hopefully these stories will help people to identify themselves as carers and access support they may have missed out on until now. Please contact one of the Volunteer Team to discuss your ideas.

As always our focus is on supporting carers, particularly during this time. We are continuing to make Keep in Touch (KIT) calls to vulnerable carers to check on their wellbeing. 1,548 calls have been completed so far. We would like to say a huge thank you to the 40 volunteers involved in this work to date, without whom we would not be able to manage this task. There is some information about the training for this work on page 2.

Vicky Crosbie, a volunteer Hub Co-Leader who has been making calls, said: "I have found making the KIT calls very rewarding. All the people I have spoken to have been very appreciative and glad of the chance to chat. The last lady I called said that I had brightened her day which was great to hear."

If you would like to volunteer to support carers by making a KIT call please contact us. If you know anyone who would benefit from this support please get in touch with us by calling 01992 58 69 69 or email: contact@carersinherts.org.uk.

For the latest advice to carers, please see our website: <https://www.carersinherts.org.uk/taking-care-of-you/coronavirus-guidance>.



Keeping well Ideas

This time our suggestions for maintaining wellbeing at home are online courses for improving skills. You will find many free courses from the Open University which may be of interest to you. They include topics such as 'Understanding Autism', 'Leadership in the Voluntary Sector', 'Making Sense of Mental Health Problems' or 'Introducing the Voluntary Sector'. For more information on these:

<https://www.open.edu/openlearn/free-courses/full-catalogue>

Bereavement Group News

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Carers in Hertfordshire Bereavement Group volunteers have continued to offer phone support. In April, our volunteers made regular calls to 41 bereaved carers.

Training

We are running a 'Skills for Keep In Touch Calls to Carers' training session on Zoom on Wednesday 20th May from 2pm - 4.15pm.

This session will cover the communication skills necessary to put carers at ease quickly, draw out relevant needs and make referrals as necessary. It will cover note taking, Safeguarding and COVID-19 guidelines.

To book a place, please email contact@carersinherts.org.uk or call 01992 58 69 69.

Your email details will be passed to an external organisation who are organising the course for us. If you wish to discuss your interest first, please email alex.daar@carersinherts.org.uk or call 01992 58 69 69 and ask for Alex.

Mentoring Meets Zoom!

On 22nd April at 7pm, Alex and I welcomed six newly trained Mentors to our first Zoom training session.

The meeting was a chance for the Mentors to discuss how their early meetings with their Mentees had gone. Conversation ranged from not being able to get hold of the mentee, to suggestions of training courses other charities run to share with mentees, goal setting and emotions about the relationships.

It was interesting to see how the move from face to face meetings to virtual contact was going as we all adapt to our challenging new circumstances.

The new post-questionnaire was looked at with its four different scoring aims including: knowledge of where to go for support, confidence in ability to cope with caring role, social contact and isolation. This was followed by a brainstorming session on how to end a relationship well.

We found two hours with a short break worked well and gave all Mentors the chance to contribute to the session.

Overall, everyone thought the Zoom session worked well. We have all had a crash course in virtual communication over the past few weeks, using FaceTime, WhatsApp or Zoom, which has helped us to develop new skills that we can continue to use in the future.

Mentors should all watch out, as I will be organising group video calls for all Mentors now. Ware Mentors are next on my list, followed by Abbots Langley Mentors. You have been warned!

We are also piloting hosting Carers Support Hubs on Zoom too and will be in touch with more news about this.

Finally, a Mentor Training and Support session will take place on Thursday 21st May. Invitations have been sent to Mentors with further details.

Jules, Mentoring Coordinator



The Mentor Group during face to face training.