

Volunteer News

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



1st June 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, Nicki Bird, Amanda Feron, Jules Josephs and Julie Hayes.

Making carers count

Update from Alex:

We are gearing up our work to carry on our Hubs, mentoring and training. We are looking at online options; we have trialled a Mentor Training and Support meeting and a Hub on Zoom. We are mindful that we need to be flexible and offer a range of ways to reach volunteers and carers.

Carers Week will be celebrated 8th – 14th June. The latest issue of Carewaves will be sent out shortly with a poster to display.

For the latest advice to carers, please see our website:

<https://www.carersinherts.org.uk/taking-care-of-you/coronavirus-guidance>



Welcome

Volunteer Week 1st - 7th June



Volunteer Awards 2019

In the first week of June, we are celebrating our volunteers and all the great work they do!

During lockdown, volunteers have been working to support carers in lots of ways. Mentors

have been speaking to their mentees by phone and the Bereavement team has been supporting bereaved carers by phone too. Other volunteers have been making KIT Calls, writing letters and supporting our Carer Support Advisors. Watford Hub leaders piloted the first Zoom Hub meeting, which went really well.

Here is what 3 of our volunteers have said about their recent volunteering:

Jennie Eckett: "Carers in Hertfordshire has been a superb choice for me! I've had great support with continued training opportunities, such as attending courses to increase my skills and expand my knowledge. I have been a Mentor for 5 years and more recently jumped at the chance to be active during lockdown by making Keep In Touch calls to carers. I always feel valued for what I do."

Mandy Preedy: "In my experience, I have been working with kind, caring, lovely people, and very well supported with excellent training opportunities. Volunteering at Carers in Hertfordshire has given me the opportunity to learn new skills, meet a variety of people, and learn about the help available to carers to pass onto people in other groups."

Dave Manser: "The main change during COVID-19 is that I contact carers by phone rather than face to face. I have kept in touch with my mentee and carers who attend the local Hertswise Dementia group I help run. The people I speak to find the support given useful and appreciate it."

Thank you to all our amazing volunteers!

Keeping well Ideas

Lots of people are reporting difficulties sleeping, particularly with the change in routine, the uncertainty, and the constant news updates.

We have an online 'Introduction to Better Sleep' workshop. This workshop is run over four videos and provides an introduction to what sleep is, why we need it and what factors contribute to a good night's sleep. You can access the videos via our YouTube Channel at the link below:

<https://tinyurl.com/IntroToBetterSleepWorkshop>

Fundraising

This is Kirstie. She has been made by the Yarn Bombers of The Secret Society of Hertford Crafters, who are helping to raise funds for Carers in Hertfordshire. She represents all the volunteers



who have been making calls to carers and she will be sitting in the window of our Hertford office soon.

You can donate to the Yarn Bombers' fundraising campaign at: uk.virginmoneygiving.com/YarnBomber

They are also hosting an online auction of their other knitted key workers, available at this link: jumblebee.co.uk/celebratingkeyworkersandcovid19heroesauctionoffiguresnumber1

The auctions close on Wednesday 10th June.

To see more of the Yarn bombers work visit: <https://www.facebook.com/secsocietofhertfordcrafters/>

If you know of any organisations in your area who might be interested in doing something similar to raise money for us, please contact the Hertford office.

Volunteer Steering Group Committee

Alex chaired the first Volunteer Steering Group (VSG) meeting on Zoom on Friday 15th May. Vicky, Brian, Jackie and Marion attended, along with Amanda Feron, Hub Volunteer Coordinator.

The agenda was packed, as Alex brought a lot of reports - including the Volunteer Impact Survey and the End of Year Lottery Report for scrutiny and discussion by the committee. Amazingly, volunteers have supported more than 5,000 carers in the last year. What an achievement!

As always, we benefitted from the volunteers' questioning, experience, and ideas whilst working together to ensure that we are meeting the terms of our Lottery bid, making a difference to the lives of carers, and developing our volunteers' confidence, wellbeing and skills.

We discussed gearing up the Hubs again, with the aim of continuing to improve whilst taking into account any changes imposed on us by COVID-19. The group felt that there may be a loss of confidence amongst some carers, especially those who have been self-isolating for a long time and whose cared for may be in the vulnerable group. We talked about recruiting and developing volunteers to take on responsibilities in Hub groups during this time, especially for groups that do not have leaders at the moment.

Lots of training opportunities have been offered to volunteers, including those for: New Mentors, the Bereavement Group, IT, Safeguarding, Domestic Abuse, Mindfulness and Communication, and four Volunteer Network Meetings.

The group considered whether we were involving all our volunteers in training and generated ideas to get more volunteers on board. An idea was agreed to look into setting up training logs. We also looked at ideas about the interest group we will develop next year.

Thank you to all the group members who were able to attend and who have supported us in the first year of the project.

If you are interested in joining the VSG group or becoming a Hub Group Leader, please contact us for more information.

Amanda, Hub Volunteer Coordinator