

Keychange Contact

ISSUE 12 SUMMER 2020

Brian James, Operations Manager

Creating Caring Communities is our reason for being and in no year has this been more important than in 2020. Over several years our intention has been to develop leadership teams that place the person we support at the heart of all they do across every community.

This has been a worthwhile investment as creating vibrant communities to support people has continued throughout these weeks of lockdown. Each of our communities has adapted ways of working with friends, families and volunteers, enabling contact where possible. Our investments in electronic care planning, Oomph! activity programmes, Altura Learning and outsourced recruitment have all helped us to be more effective and prepared for this year.

Community has become stronger over these months with many Keychange Communities getting to know neighbours as friends. Whether from families, supermarkets, neighbours or strangers, many gifts of gratitude have been received

for which we are grateful. We hope that our front doors can remain open wide to our communities beyond this current pandemic as the walls of residential services have become windows and now reveal who we are and how we care.

In the early weeks of the pandemic we had challenges with the supply and cost of PPE, testing, GP and District Nurse support, pressure from acute hospitals and a media message that indicated that the NHS mattered most. We pulled together and our voice became stronger as we benefited from each other's skills and our membership of the National Care Forum. Together we changed the way in which our communities are seen and eventually our ability to build a protective ring around our communities was recognised.

We have had our times of sadness as well as times of joy. Together we have come to mourn, share and learn and we will continue to do this in the months to come. Please pray that we may acknowledge every life impacted by this dreadful virus and that we might give thanks for how God has blessed us as a



community together.

We can not thank enough each one of the people at every community who have given their all over these challenging months.

Together we will continue to Create Caring Communities. ■

Esther Community and Covid-19

Adrienne Hennessey, Project Worker

Having discussed with residents at Esther their thoughts and feelings on the Lockdown imposed by the government, due to Covid-19, the two main themes that emerged were 'Mental Health' and 'Community Spirit'.

As expected there were many negative responses. However, the positive aspects were also surprisingly abundant.



Lockdown creativity at Esther

Housemates divulged that they have struggled with their Mental Health throughout the lockdown and at times they have felt angry, depressed and deprived of their freedom. Whilst they are totally aware that the lockdown has been put in place for the safety and wellbeing of the whole country, they are used to spending time away from the premises, and this restriction has impacted immensely on their emotional and physical wellbeing.

Although they have continued to receive full support from Esther staff, they have also been able to access additional online support from Mental Health Services; however, they feel that this does not compensate for the restrictions to their movements at this time.

The housemates were all keen, nevertheless, to express their gratitude at being able to utilise the garden and appreciated staff efforts in creating a peaceful and tranquil outside space, where

they could also exercise. A gazebo was erected to provide shade and privacy, as well as additional solar lighting and some outdoor games and equipment.

Staff also ensured that more indoor activities were provided, such as bottle decorating, glass painting and other exciting crafts. These events were enormously successful, and housemates who under normal circumstances would have actively avoided interacting with others in the house and would most certainly not have joined in any activities, all fully immersed themselves in the various activities, amid much laughter and delight at their accomplishments.

Despite some difficulties, as a whole our housemates dealt with the situation in a pragmatic yet mature manner and spent a lot more time enjoying each other's company and learning new skills such as cooking, gardening, accepting and sitting in a world unsure of the next steps ahead.

Donating Spare Time

"My name is Debs Edmeades, and I am a Volunteer at Alexander House in Wimbledon. My mother, Catherine was a resident there several years ago, and when she died, it seemed the obvious thing for me to do! I used to visit her most days – we live close by, which was one of the reasons for choosing it, though of course the main reason was because it just all felt right for my mum!

"My role as volunteer involves leading an informal in-house church service, consisting of prayers, readings and music. The residents love the familiarity of well-known hymns and psalms, and we accompany our singing with streamed music. My other role is conversation, and most recently Current Affairs. I learn so much from our group discussions with everyone contributing in their own way.

"My volunteering has taught me patience, a ready ear to listen, kindness and most of all compassion. Alexander House is a world away from my other life, running a busy household – it is my escape!

My phone is turned off, and my mornings are a complete pleasure, spending time with so many interesting residents, each with their own story to tell.

I love what I do there, and I am happy to report that my daughter Emma is now also a registered volunteer at Alexander House! She has started a group enjoying

Music Appreciation.

"It's lovely for me after years of raising a family, and a busy job in business, to now be able to volunteer, and particularly somewhere close to my heart. What a great way and place to donate spare time!"

Debs' volunteering is so much appreciated by the community at Alexander House that she won the Keychange 2019 award in the Outstanding Supporter & Volunteer category (see front page article in KC11). Her article was written and the photographs taken before lockdown, but thanks to the wonders of technology, the church services and Current Affairs conversations have been able to continue.



Debs is currently Keychange's Outstanding Supporter and Volunteer – here she is holding the award she won in November 2019.



People living at Alexander House love singing with Debs when she takes the regular in-house church service.

'Covid Positive' Book at Wayside

Jenny Harber, Manager

We have all been dealing with the effects of the Covid-19 lockdown these past weeks with all the difficulties and demands. However, we have also seen many good things happening. We have been keeping a "Covid Positive" book to record these good things. Here are some of the extracts:

- A resident had to self isolate for three weeks. Other residents went shopping

- and did cooking for her and were phoning her to keep her company.
- Lots of communal meals took place, including a BBQ, which the residents organised themselves.
- Residents shared what they had managed to buy in the shops.
- Dancing exercise group in the lounge run by residents. They organised the room so they could keep social distancing.
- Ex-residents have contacted us to see if we were OK and to offer donations.
- The local borough council donated Easter eggs, a neighbour gave us strawberry plants and another neighbour donated meat. Local churches and shops have dropped off food parcels including one supermarket that has donated 36 boxes of food over the last few weeks.
- Residents have led their own Bible studies and have been reading the Bible.
- All residents are encouraging each other in following government guidelines.
- We asked if anyone had a wii console to donate. Someone responded within minutes and residents have been using this for exercise and stimulation.



Generous food donation at Wayside

Poem by 'E', who lives at Wayside

*In this world is a lot of sorrow
We pray that there will be a tomorrow
Losing loved ones way too early
Grief and pain in your heart
So much loss death do us part
God is with us everywhere
And he will help our hearts repair
Pray to Jesus up above and he will
Surround us with his love.*

Prayer Focus

As we pray for all those who live and work in our communities, and their families, we share thoughts from the frontline, submitted by a staff member at Rosemary Mount in Worthing:

"We all need to step back, calm down, look around

Be grateful for the life we still have, be grateful for our loved ones, whilst others may have lost someone

Thank God for our families' safety, near and far

Just be grateful, live each moment and appreciate more."

Keychange Noticeboard

Bill, who lives at **Romans**, was joined by staff for the weekly clapping for all keyworkers and NHS staff. Neighbours came out and clapped for the staff.



◀ A staff member's son and daughter made a card for each person who lives at **Rosemary Mount**. This and many other gestures and gifts have made a huge difference to our community during the current crisis.



One Thursday at the Clap For Carers, our newest care staff Danielle had a surprise when her family turned up with a banner and clapped the **Rose Lawn** team.



▲ Residents at **Erith House** enjoyed making these Valentine decorations and choosing words of God's love from the Bible to top them.



Fair Havens – One day the ice cream van turned up on the drive. This was welcomed by residents and staff alike, and all staff were treated to a free ice cream as a thank you to key workers.

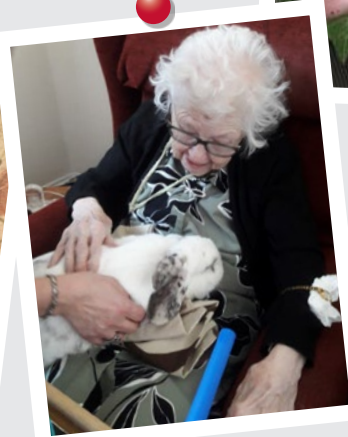
▲ At **Alexander House** we celebrated Burns Night on 25 January, complete with authentic haggis while Scottish bagpipes played. Our Scottish resident read out the Burns poem 'Silver Tassie'.

Residents at **Seats** sent messages via Facebook to their families during the lockdown.



▲ **Cressingham House** – Easter table decoration

◀ Some bunnies visited **Walmer House** in February and amused the people living there.



Keychange Centenary Celebrations

2020 is our Centenary Year and in the last edition of Contact, we mentioned that the **Keychange and Christian Alliance 100 Years Celebration and Thanksgiving Service** would take place on 17 November 2020 in central London. But because of the current coronavirus crisis and not knowing how long the effects of the pandemic will last, we have taken the difficult decision of postponing

the Thanksgiving Service until May 2021. This decision was not taken lightly but we anticipate in particular that travelling on public transport in central London could be problematic for months to come. There will be more details about the May 2021 service in due course.

We are still aiming to go ahead with local centenary celebrations at all our communities across Keychange in 2020.

We are also still planning to publish a Keychange Centenary Devotional Book, and a reprint and updated version of Keychange's history.



A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

In God's Hand for 100 Years



Phil Martin
CEO, Keychange Charity

I have this postcard on my desk at home. I remember reading it on 1st January 2020, at the start of our Keychange, Christian Alliance 100th year.

The poem was written in 1908, then privately published in 1912, then came to prominence when King George VI read it as part of his Christmas broadcast to the Empire in 1939.

The Christian Alliance for Women and Girls (now Keychange) started in 1920. For the last 100 years we have sought to tread safely into the unknown and put our hand into the hand of God so that He will guide us.

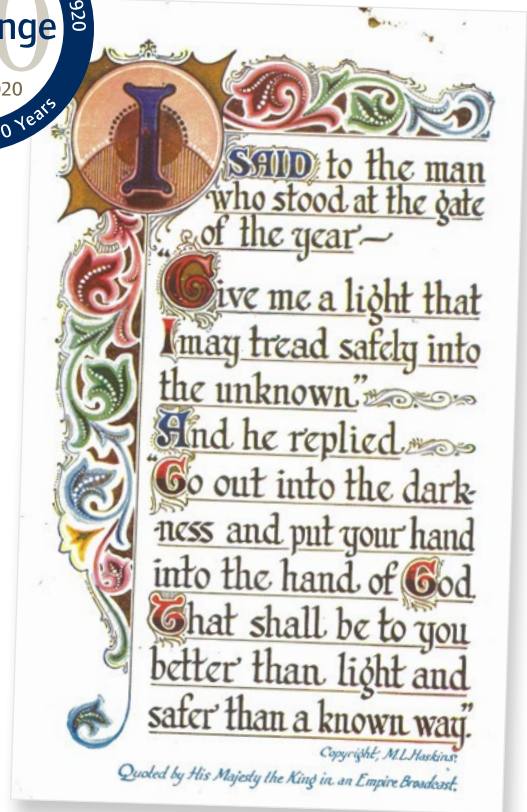
Little did any of us know on 1st January 2020 what kind of a year lay ahead! It certainly has been a year of "the unknown." The Covid-19 Pandemic has

caused huge changes to our lifestyles, freedoms and behaviours. We are very thankful to our Care & Housing Communities Leaders and their staff teams for their commitment, dedication and care which have helped reduce the impact of Covid-19 across Keychange.

Our 100th year has been a year of the unknown, but we are very aware of the hand of God guiding us, helping us and strengthening us to deal with these unprecedented challenges.

As we continue to Create Caring Communities and provide the best quality care and support to everyone living in a Keychange care community or housing community, so we continue to trust God for the future of Keychange and our mission for another 100 years.

Thank you for your support; we hope and pray that you are able to keep safe and well. ■



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Signed..... Date:

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Keychange Communities



Care Homes

- Erith House, Torquay
- Sceats, Gloucester
- Rose Lawn, Sidmouth
- Fair Havens, Southampton
- Walmer House, Torquay
- Cressingham House, Wallasey
- Alexander House, Wimbledon
- Rosemary Mount, Worthing
- Romans, Southwick

Housing Communities

- Esther Community, Exeter
- Wayside, Reigate

keychange.org.uk
esthercommunity.org.uk
waysidehostel.org.uk

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