

volunteer voices

Your news bulletin from KMPT Voluntary services

Welcome to Volunteer Voices...

Happy new year and welcome back!

We hope you all had a well deserved rest over the Christmas break. Unfortunately 2021 has brought with it a third national lockdown in England and so once again we are limited with the volunteering opportunities we can currently offer. We wish we could bring better news and have you all back in your normal posts, but together we can work in partnership to ensure that we are still providing lots of extra activities and services to our patients, their carers and loved ones, even if we have to work slightly differently to achieve this.

You will see below that we are in desperate need of IT buddies and telephone befrienders to support and help those living alone to feel more connected while having to stay at home. If you are interested in taking on one of these roles, then please do get in touch with us.

While everyone is back to staying at home in order to protect the NHS as well as our loved ones and members of the community, we would love to take this opportunity for you to share how you're spending your time - are you trying a new hobby, have you been baking up a storm and could share a recipe with us, or have you found a lovely new walking spot that you could tell your fellow volunteers about? Let the team know so that we can try and spread some cheer during these uncertain and challenging times.

As we embark on a new year, we want to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of you for your hard work, dedication and patience over the last year. We wouldn't have been able to support our patients without you, and so every moment of help you offer us is so appreciated.

Stay safe and continue to be your incredible selves - we can't wait until the day when we can all be

back together again!

Food parcels thanks to the Salvation Army

The Salvation Army very kindly donated food to us before Christmas so that we could make essential, emergency food parcels to be given to discharged patients who might not have the means or ability to provide such things for themselves straight away.

Inspired by the food parcels, Helen Collins, Voluntary services manager and Louise Blackwood, Voluntary services administrator, decided to gather up items that the team had remaining in storage to make up Christmas parcels for our inpatients at Priority House, so they all had something to open on Christmas Day. They went down really well and brought a lot of joy to our patients.

Sometimes thinking outside the box can really bring a smile to someone's face - and so we would love to hear from you about random acts of kindness you have carried out in everyday life? If you have a story to tell, then email our Communications team: kmpt.communications@nhs.net



Join our book club!

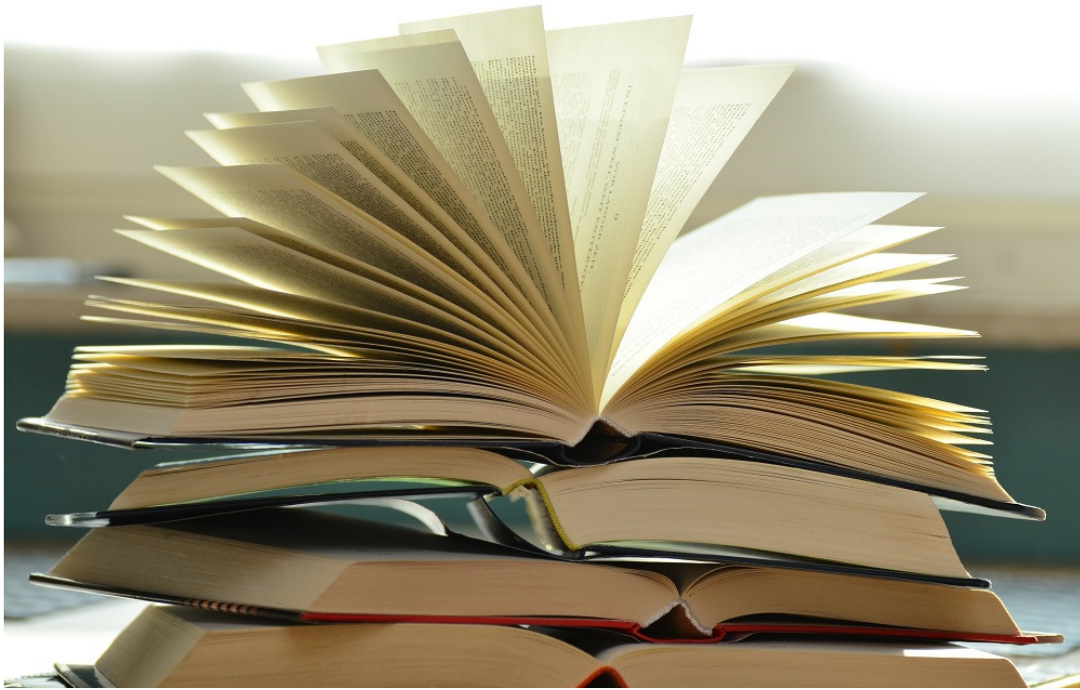
Voluntary services are starting a book club and you're all invited!

We will start by running the group virtually via Lifesize. We will share the login details with you once you've confirmed your interest.

To kick start the group, we'd love to hear from you about anything you're currently reading, anything you'd recommend, or anything you'd love to read in the future.

We're hoping the book reviews and topic conversations from the book club will become a regular feature in this newsletter too!

Please send an email to kmpt.voluntaryservices@nhs.net by 2pm on Friday 29 January if you're interested in joining!



Julie's special Christmas lunch

Linda is one of our wonderful volunteers. She currently supports Julie, who lives alone with dementia and is a member of our Forget-Me-Nots group.

Before Christmas, Linda nominated Julie for one of 10 free Christmas lunches that the Four Horseshoes pub in Dargate were offering to vulnerable people living alone.

She was delighted to receive confirmation from them that Julie had been selected as one of the recipients! Linda called Julie to tell her - and she was very surprised but delighted to receive the news!

Linda asked Julie's permission to give her details to the delivery service but a couple of days later, she received a call to break the sad news that they would not be able to deliver to Julie's address. Linda really didn't want Julie to be disappointed and so asked the pub if she could pick the lunch up herself and deliver the meal to Julie - an idea which they were delighted to accommodate!



On Christmas morning Linda phoned Julie to let her know she was on my way after collecting her gluten free Christmas lunch - which looked lovely! Linda arrived at Julie's and served the lunch to her (you can see a picture of Julie enjoying her lunch here), and although unable to stay long as she had her own Christmas lunch to prepare at home, she called Julie later in the day to ask how her meal and she said she'd thoroughly enjoyed it.

By organising a lunch for Julie, Linda was able to make what might have been a lonely day one full of joy! This is a brilliant example of how our volunteers working above and beyond - so thank you Linda for being truly amazing.

Become an IT buddy or telephone befrienders

With the nation entering lockdown again it could be a hard time for some of our patients. We are looking for volunteers to help support two services that could help the most vulnerable members of our community during this difficult time.

IT Buddy

Although our patients may have access to a computer, laptop or mobile phone they may not know how to use it to keep in touch with their friends and family (or even to attend clinical sessions). We are looking for volunteers with a patient nature and some basic IT skills to be able to teach members of our community how to use video chat applications such as Zoom, Lifesize etc. so that they can stay connected whilst isolating.

Telephone befriender

A lot of people are currently feeling very lonely and in order to help combat this, we are looking for volunteers to take on the role of a telephone befriender. You would be assigned a patient to regularly call and be a friendly voice and someone to chat to. For people who are having to isolate and may not have family support nearby, being in lockdown can be a very isolating experience and so we want to provide members of our community with someone friendly to chat to and help them to feel more connected with the outside world.

If you are interested in taking on either of these roles, please get in touch with Voluntary services by emailing kmpt.voluntaryservices@nhs.net or calling 01622 723210.

Special snowmen

Before Christmas, Zoe Young our Voluntary services coordinator east Kent, was approached by Justine Norris MBE, one of KMPT's Occupational therapists who works within the Crisis team, asking if we had volunteers who could knit some Christmas toys that could be sent to our patients in Christmas self-soothing packs.

We had a couple of lovely volunteers who put their amazing knitting skills to work and created these gorgeous snowmen!



Christmas donations

Friends for mental health east Kent has donated money to some of our wards and rehabilitation services, who requested help to be able to provide Christmas gifts and treats for patients. Many of our patients have no family to spend Christmas with and were going to be on their own over the festive period.

A thank you card was received from one of the rehabilitation houses on behalf of the patients saying how marvellous and thoughtful the Friends are and how very much appreciated their donation was.

You can see the thank you card below.

Thank You



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Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust, Farm Villa, Hermitage Lane, Maidstone, Kent, ME16 9PH

We'd love to hear what you think.

If you have any feedback about econnect that you would like to share, please contact the communications team at kmpcommunications@nhs.net

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