

Kingston Churches Action on Homelessness

APRIL 2020 NEWSLETTER



Wishing all our clients and supporters and restful Easter weekend in these uncertain times

Community spirit in challenging times

We hope that you're all staying safe in these unprecedented and difficult times. We hope that even with so much uncertainty and many of us feeling anxious and worried, that you find those glimmers of light and hope that will help you through and make this time a little brighter for you. You're not alone.

Just like other charities, KCAH has had to adapt to the new circumstances brought on by the Coronavirus. Our staff team have gone above and beyond and although an incredibly anxious and pressured time, it is also one where team-work, community effort and joint working has made us so proud to be part of Kingston and KCAH. We have never experienced anything quite like it and we are so grateful for the compassion and determination of our community to ensure that our clients are not forgotten about.

General safety concerns relating to the Coronavirus meant that the roaming night shelter scheme and our early morning day centre had to close. Instead, our energies have been focussed on the multi-agency efforts of helping people who have been rough sleeping into appropriate accommodation so that they can safely self-isolate. To date over 40 people are now in hotels or other temporary accommodation instead of having to sleep on the streets. We have been blown away by the generosity of companies and individuals donating food and items for our guests. The joint effort has been fantastic and we are truly humbled by the best of Kingston in such challenging times.

The work continues and anyone sleeping rough can come and see our Housing Advice team at 11.00am Monday to Friday for further advice on accommodation. Thank you to our team of staff for their incredible commitment, hard work and heart at this time. We couldn't be more proud to be Team KCAH.

Thank you also to Kingston Council, SPEAR, Voices of Hope, Volunteering Kingston, Kaleidoscope, the Food Bank, Ark Consultancy, Kingston Voluntary Action, TK Maxx, Positano restaurant in Guildford, Ye Olde Ship in Guildford, The Antelope in Surbiton, The Albion in Kingston, Meat the Greek in Guildford, Travelodge and everyone else who has been part of changing the lives of some of the most vulnerable people in our borough as we help each other through.

**To donate food,
please email
kingstonaid@voh.org.uk**



Where there's a Will, there's a way

Without volunteers, we couldn't function as the organisation we are today and we certainly wouldn't be able to run our night shelters. Meet Will, one of our Haven-volunteers, who makes it all possible.

How did you find out about The Haven?

I found out about the Haven through Volunteering Kingston.

What made you want to volunteer?

I felt that I could be doing a lot more with my time and as someone who lives in the Kingston area, homelessness is an issue that really jumps out at you and I was drawn to the idea of doing something tangible in my community. I felt that I had spent a lot of my life in a bit of a bubble and I wanted to understand better the community I grew up in and the idea of doing this whilst being able to meet and talk to new people excited me.

What was your experience of volunteering at The Haven?

In short; very enjoyable. Honestly, going in, I didn't know what to expect and didn't really feel qualified as I wasn't sure that I would really be able to make any difference. I soon realised that for most of the guests there, just my presence and the realisation that someone cared enough to give up some time for them, was enough. Other guests loved to just sit down and have a chat and I would always look forward to going to the Haven because I knew I could just sit and talk with guests and volunteers alike. Before this is found it hard striking up conversation with people I didn't know but I feel as though my experience has given me new confidence as well as benefiting those around me.

What would you say to someone considering volunteering?

Just give it a go. If you have the time you certainly won't be losing out. Best case you really love it and you have found a way to affect your community in a way that you enjoy. Worst case you never come again as there is no obligation to sign up for more than one shift.

Has volunteering helped to increase your awareness/understanding of the issues surrounding homelessness?

For me, without a doubt it has increased both my awareness and understanding of the people in this situation and I certainly found it surprising how many of the guests were in work and just how friendly they were. There are certainly many myths surrounding homelessness which I have been able to dispel for myself volunteering at the Haven and I certainly have gained a greater understanding of the people in the community around me.

If you are interested in volunteering with KCAH, please email ailsa.o@kcah.org.uk



Please pray for

- Everyone affected by the devastating Coronavirus
- That Rev Peter Holmes, of St Peter's Church Kingston, continues to make a full recovery after being hospitalised
- All frontline staff, including the KCAH team
- Those of our service users now self-isolating indoors, as well as those still on the streets
- Those who are lonely, anxious and afraid at this time
- Those self-isolating in unsafe homes

A gift in your Will

Have you considered leaving a gift for KCAH in your Will? KCAH is dependent on donations and even a residuary gift of 1% in your Will can make a huge difference to our work with some of the most vulnerable people in our borough. Visit www.kcah.org.uk - 'Can you help?' - 'A gift in your Will' to find out more.

If you are leaving a gift in your Will for KCAH, please remember to mention our Charity number: 1075890

How to support us

Cheques made out to KCAH can be sent to the address below, FAO Matt Hatton, Operational Director

Visit our website www.kcah.org.uk - 'Can You Help' - donate money. There you can download a Standing Order form and also click on our Virgin Money Giving or CAF donation links

Thank you for your support!



KCAH, St Peter's Church Hall, London Road, Kingston, KT2 6QL Phone: 0208 255 7400

Visit www.kcah.org.uk and follow us on Facebook @kcahuk, Twitter @kcahtweets and Instagram @kingstonkcah

Reg. Charity No: 1075890