

East Kent men^{cap}

Spring
Newsletter
2020



Illustration by
Sabrina Darwish

Thank you
FOR keeping my spirits
up



Lockdown
Special

Stay home,
stay safe,
have fun!



We are



A word from our CEO

Welcome to this special 'Lockdown' edition of our newsletter. For the moment, our groups and clubs are staying closed. As we can't all meet at our usual activities we wanted to bring a little bit of East Kent Mencap to you at home. Thank you to everyone

who has sent in stories, pictures and photos.

I know that it is not always easy to cope with change and I am so proud of everyone for staying positive. In this issue, you will see some familiar faces, and read what we have been doing to keep in touch. Members, volunteers and staff tell us how they have been keeping busy including cooking, crafts and exercise. And you can read the inspiring story of how our member, Natalie, is back home after spending six weeks in hospital with the virus. You'll also find enclosed some activities to enjoy, and a reminder of how to stay safe. We have a lot more activities and information on our website, which we are updating regularly: www.eastkentmencap.co.uk.

Here at East Kent Mencap we provide opportunities for adults and children with a learning disability in East Kent, enabling them to achieve the things they want out of life. We believe that everyone should be valued as equals and have their voices heard. We won't let the virus stop us from supporting our members, even when we can't meet face to face. Staff have been working closely with members to help them stay connected through technology. You will see from the stories that some of you are now having fun using Zoom and Facebook to chat to staff, and YouTube to join in activities. We know that not everyone can use the internet, but are looking at ways to make it easier. In the meantime, you can always leave a message on 01843 80 89 64 and someone will call you back.

Take care

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jason Gerlack'.

Jason Gerlack

P.S. A very big thank you to KCC Councillor Lesley Game who took the trouble to ring me to ask if she could help us and very generously agreed to fund the cost of printing and distributing this newsletter from her Member Community Fund. See page 11 for details of more incredibly generous donors.



If you or someone you care for has a learning disability and needs support, please do get in touch. We are here to help.

01843 80 89 64

@EastKentMencap on Facebook

info@eastkentmencap.co.uk

www.eastkentmencap.co.uk



During this challenging time our staff are still here, working hard to support, keep safe and provide opportunities for adults and children with a learning disability in East Kent.

We have 54 staff providing front line care as they continue to support many people living in their own homes and in our supported living services, and have continued to provide limited day service opportunities for individuals who desperately need this service.

During this period we have been calling members, dropping off activity packs, and posting online activities and videos for you to enjoy and get involved with from the comfort and safety of your own home.

Thanks to the ideas and involvement of our members, we are constantly developing new online activities.

We have started to run virtual sessions and have helped people to stay in touch and not feel so lonely.

We have helped people to discover new interests, hobbies and provided opportunities to share their stories with others using safe networks and media. Read on to see what exciting activities our members have been doing at home!

Activities at home!

Our members across East Kent have been brilliantly creative, resourceful and inspiring over the last two months! They have come up with activities to keep them busy at home, have helped with housework and kept in touch with friends.

Vanessa and her housemates did a crafting session together, and she created this beautiful mermaid!

Sara has been keeping busy with helping to clean the house and baking cookies for her housemates. She has also had a pamper session with Support Worker Clair who helped Sara have a manicure and nail polish.

Judith has been working hard on activity sheets that have been keeping her mind active!





Clifford has been enjoying playing with his Lego. Hilary came up with the idea to make rainbow cupcakes in honour of all the frontline workers!

Maureen made Toad in the Hole for all her housemates and Joe has been helping with the housework.



Keeping in touch!

Our Day Resource teams in Herne Bay, Sheerness and Thanet have been running day resource sessions on Zoom, and our GOLD group have a weekly schedule of Zoom sessions.

We are so proud of how our members have adapted to using technology to keep in touch!

Here are our Day Resource members and staff in Sheerness catching up.



Below you can see our GOLD members in one of their Zoom sessions, talking about what they've been doing during the week.

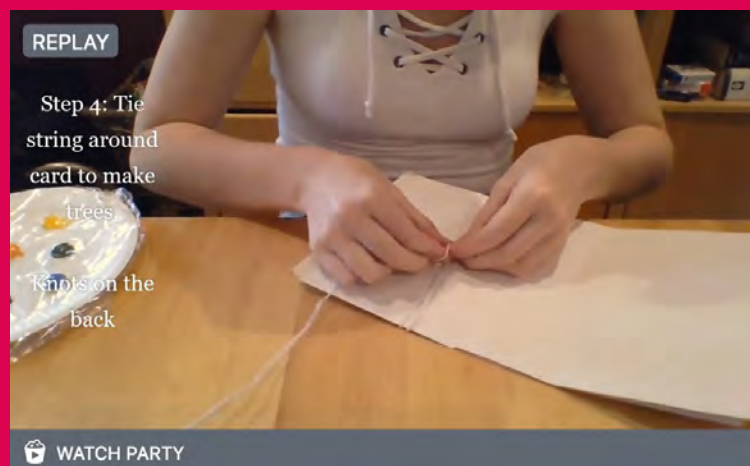
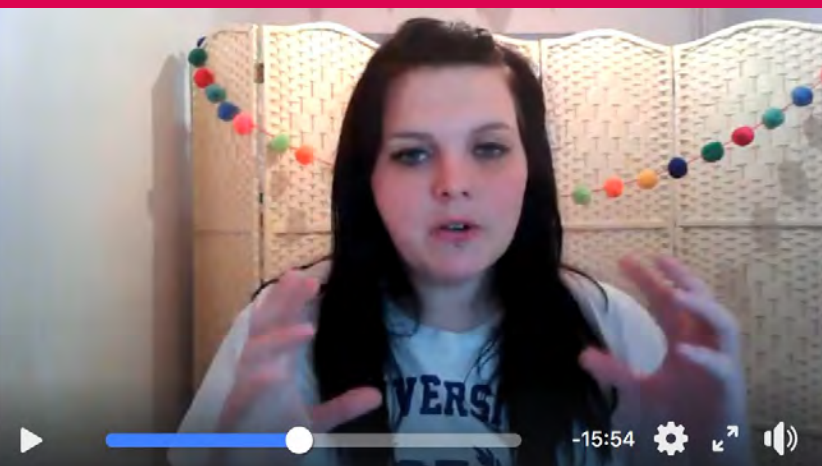
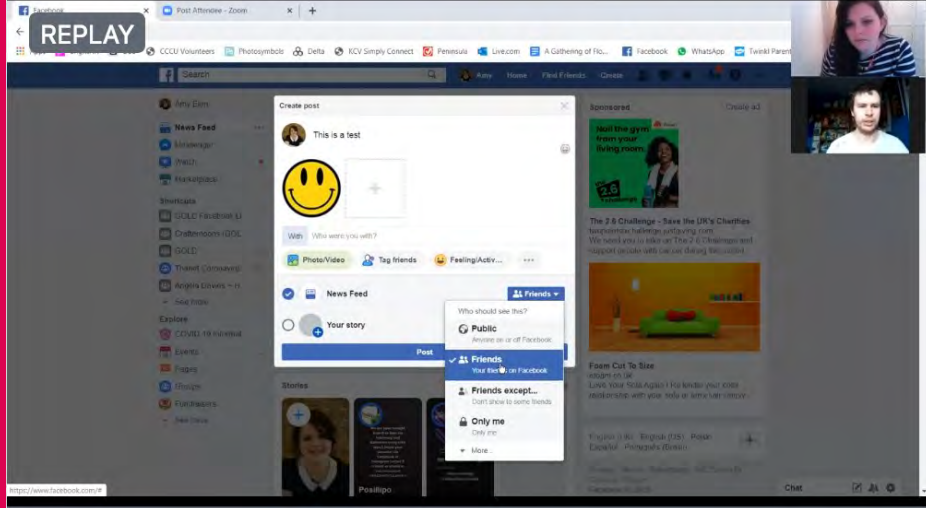


Our member Neil had his 40th birthday recently. Though we can't be together, our staff wanted to wish him a big happy birthday - so they did so on Zoom! Look at those smiles!



Our members have been helping each other to get to grips with new technology.

Ben, who is a member of our GOLD group, has been working with one of the GOLD staff members, Amy, to create how-to videos to help members stay safe online.



Our staff have been running sessions over Zoom, Facebook live and through recorded videos across all our social media channels. These sessions and videos have included craft, fitness, cooking, music, drawing, wellbeing, and weekly check-ins.



Follow East Kent Mencap on social media to discover the activities we are doing during lockdown!

Search for @EastKentMencap on





Living together

In Sheerness, two of our members who lived alone were very anxious about lockdown, so we invited them to live in one of our shared houses that had two spare rooms. They were supported to move in the next day with great joy, and have been having a brilliant time together!



In Thanet, housemates in one of our supported houses decided to have a lockdown party together and had a fantastic time, with good food, music and dancing!





In the garden

Our members who are lucky enough to have a garden have been making the most of them!

In Herne Bay, Jez has been mowing the lawn with the help of our Support Workers.

Paul has been enjoying the sun on his patio, also in Herne Bay.

In Thanet, David came up with the idea to create a fitness video in his back garden, inspired by the fitness videos that we have been posting on our social media channels! David set up the fitness circuit himself and asked a staff member to film him. You can watch David's fitness video on our YouTube channel—Head over to YouTube and search for East Kent Mencap to find our channel.



A message of hope

We wanted to share the story of our member Natalie, who spent 6 weeks in hospital with COVID, but is now back home. The article below is taken from the Isle of Thanet News. The full article can be found at www.theisleofthanetnews.com

Natalie, who is an East Kent Mencap regular attending sessions in both Margate and Ramsgate, first became ill on March 20 with a bad throat and temperature. A couple of days later she had stopped eating and was so weak she was struggling to get out of bed.

Linda, her mother, called 999 after Natalie deteriorated further. She said: “An ambulance came out and they said Natalie needed to go to hospital right away. They phoned ahead and when we got there she was seen right away. They took her to Sandwich Bay respiratory ward.

“I contacted East Kent Mencap to ask them if they could help as Natalie was in ICU and must have been so frightened by all the beeping and the strange voices. Within a couple of hours staff member Tris had done a CD with messages and songs that meant a lot to Natalie and had put it through my letterbox.”

Linda contacted QEQM a couple of times and when she reached a consultant on duty he said the CD and player could be brought in. He also got a video link set up so Linda could see her daughter.

She said: “It was fantastic. The staff on ICU thought the CD was so lovely they said they were going to suggest doing it to other families.”

After several weeks in ICU, eventually she was strong enough to be moved to Quex Ward. In Quex Ward the road to recovery began. Natalie had to learn to walk and talk again. She had twice daily therapist sessions. Linda was by her side every night and East Kent Mencap staff member Maria was there every day.

Linda said: “Maria was amazing. Mencap are amazing. The NHS staff were all amazing.”

Natalie was clapped out of QEQM hospital by staff on Friday May 8 and is now continuing her recovery at home with visits from physio, occupational therapy and psychology staff.

“Natalie is in good spirits now. She has been chatting to her friends at East Kent Mencap and is getting stronger.

“I just want people to know that it is really hard but there is hope and I want other people to take inspiration from Natalie and see that they can get through it and they will be able to rebuild their lives.

With many thanks to Kathy Bailes from the Isle of Thanet News who researched and wrote the story.

A note about PPE – Personal Protective Equipment

During the epidemic, staff have to be extra careful to keep themselves and the people they are supporting safe from spreading the virus. We understand that it can be strange to see someone wearing a mask but, as you can see from this story, it is so important. This photo, taken by Natalie’s mum, shows Maria in PPE, at Natalie’s bedside in hospital. Wearing PPE means our staff can continue to give personal care and keep safe from infection.



We are still here supporting our members, as always

Stay Safe

Stay Alert

Wash your hands



83 people

receiving direct support from us everyday.



1208 pieces of PPE have been donated, including gloves, masks, aprons and visors.



156 members

regularly called by staff.



86 activity packs

posted to members.



18,406 viewings

on our Facebook page.



2.9k followers

on our Twitter account.



£2330 donated

in response to this crisis.



30 activity videos

delivered online and watched by more than 30,000 people.



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Thank you for supporting us!

A HUGE thank you to our incredibly generous supporters who have supported us during the pandemic with gifts of PPE and donations. We also thank those of you who wished to remain anonymous. You are all amazing!

The Mayor of Margate Councillor Mick Tomlinson

Councillor Lesley Game

Mr Trevor Shonk

Mrs Hughes

Mr and Mrs Revell

The Labon/Allain Family

Brian Whitehead

Jodie Wonford

Tris Kennedy

Angela and Adrian Stuart

Aeryn Atkins

Bernard Sture

Relief Aid

Nicky Hildersley from Discovery Planet

Kelly Stanley

Ashley Taylor

Redline Clothing

All star Products

The Sportsman, Cliffsend

Chatham House School

Kim Ashe

Troy

Hayley Philpott

Carol Stokes

Jane Brooks

Dawn Coles

Thor Davidson

Benjamin Day

Sonia Wells

Mr Davis

Jen Barlow

We would also like to say a big thank you to Kathy Bailes, editor of the Isle of Thanet News, for her continued support of East Kent Mencap through her reporting of our members' stories.

Rain or shine appeal

Thank you to everyone who has donated to our Rain or Shine COVID Appeal so far.

In response to the epidemic we have had to adapt our systems and services very quickly.

Our frontline staff are doing an amazing job of looking after 83 of our tenants and people with complex needs, providing personal care and support. Staff are also supporting a further 156 people with a learning disability through regular phone calls, receiving activity packs, and conversations on WhatsApp, Facebook and Zoom. They have been filming activities, sending messages and going out of their way to reassure and help people.

A major new expenditure is that we now need to ensure we have PPE for our 54 staff who are delivering frontline services. To help keep everyone safe, we have invested heavily in PPE and new technology.

We had to postpone our fundraising events and this is impacting on our income. We are incredibly grateful to everyone who has already supported us so generously. If you are able to, please donate to the East Kent Mencap's Appeal to help us continue to offer our vital services so that people in isolation know we care about them and are there for them when they need help.

Online donations are a secure and, especially during this time, safe way to demonstrate your support for our charity from any location. You can make donations via our website, where you have the opportunity to set up monthly, or one off payments. Regular donations mean that we are able to benefit from a steady and predictable source of funding which has an incredible impact on the lives of our members.

Donate via our website at www.eastkentmencap.co.uk/donate

You can also donate through our Facebook page. Search for East Kent Mencap.

Donations of this kind make an invaluable difference – and for that, we are extremely grateful.



Registered charity number: 1188118

Registered company number: 12263702

Find out more about our events, clubs and services by getting in touch or visit our website

01843 80 89 64

info@eastkentmencap.co.uk

www.eastkentmencap.co.uk

