

## volunteer voices

Your news bulletin from KMPT Voluntary services

### Welcome to Volunteer Voices...

This is your new look news e-bulletin from Voluntary services which will help us to keep in touch with you, and show you all the amazing activities that our volunteers are doing here at KMPT.

We thought there was no better time to launch than Volunteers Week (1-7 June) as this is a national week of celebration for all volunteers, that includes you!

Here at KMPT, we are very proud to have an army of volunteers who allow us to provide additional support for our patients and their families.

Throughout the pandemic, volunteers have been vital in allowing the NHS to continue services and provide extra help for those who are having to shield.

We have been amazed by how well so many of you have adapted your normal work with us to adhere to social distancing rules and the restrictions in place. A special thank you to those of you who have volunteered extra hours and welcome to those of you who have joined us for the first time.

You are all amazing and we want to share your stories. Below we have introduced just some of the work going on across the Trust. This e-bulletin is for you, let us know what you want to see here and we will continue to adapt to meet your needs.

So if you have any stories, recipes, poems, pictures or anything else you would like to share with us, please contact Voluntary services and we will share them with you, our volunteers community.

Thank you for being such an important part of our KMPT family.

### Team Trolley!

We have a tremendous team of volunteers who, under normal circumstances, take the trolley of sweets, chocolates and lollipops onto the wards at St Martin's Hospital in Canterbury.

Muriel, Sandra, Charlotte and Daniel make up our little team. Muriel is our longest standing trolley volunteer and she has taken many a volunteer under her wing to show them the ropes. Sandra joined the team a couple of years ago and Charlotte and Daniel joined us last year.

They always arrive with smiles on their faces and plenty of enthusiasm, ready to prepare the trolley and push it to each ward. This is a role they do in all weather conditions, including rain and wind, which really shows their level of commitment!

Foxglove, Bluebell and Fern have enjoyed the weekly visits for many years and more recently Heather Ward has been able to reap the benefits, since it's opening in February.

Team trolley are reliable and dependable, which ensures our patients have regular access to the items on the trolley.

We thank them for the time and commitment they give to KMPT staff and patients.



[Find out more about the volunteering opportunities we have at KMPT](#)

### Sandra bakes up a storm in the MBU

Sandra has been volunteering for a few months at the Mother and Baby Unit (MBU) in Dartford, where she bakes with some of the mums there.

She volunteers for a couple of hours on Sunday mornings (when she's not working at Maidstone Hospital). She meets with two mums for each session and takes along a tried and tested recipe for them to bake together.

*"I really enjoy my time at the MBU. I have given the mums some tips on baking that I have picked up on over the years to make the baking even easier. Very often the mums and the staff take copies of the recipes to make them at home. I love volunteering there as I get to meet mums and their babies and not forgetting the lovely staff. I'd like to think that I help the mums in their journey to recovery, and I hope it gives them confidence to attempt baking when they get discharged from the unit. Maybe even making their child's first birthday cake! I can't wait to get back to seeing the mums after this pandemic, which will hopefully be soon."*

If you, like Sandra, have a skill that you would like to share with KMPT, then please let us know!



### A few weeks in the life of a volunteer

University of Kent student, Laura Smith, started volunteering in December with KMPT to support people living with dementia.

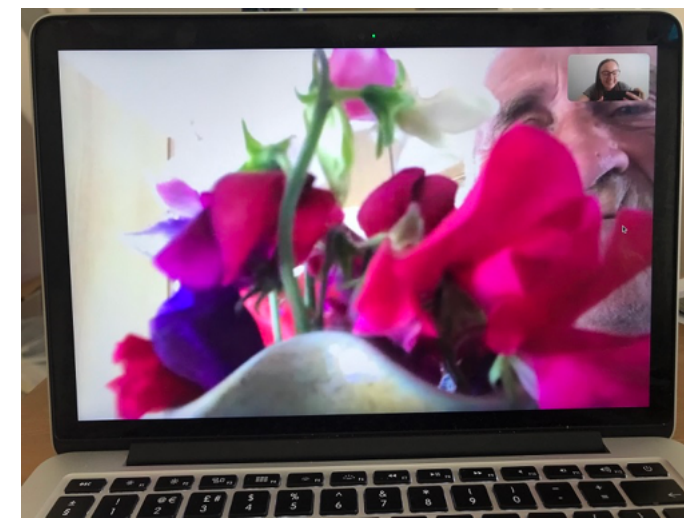
Just before coronavirus, she was asked to help and volunteer with a gentleman called John. He wanted to be able to use his iPad, and to email and use the internet confidently. Due to social distancing guidelines, she was no longer able to physically meet him, but Clare Streeter, our Liaison and Empowerment Coordinator, helped her to arrange this on the phone with John.

Over the phone, she was able to help John understand how to use his iPad more, and how to use the software Skype. John now has a way of not only hearing his family and close friends over the phone, but he can see them on the iPad. This has helped to reduce his loneliness during this pandemic.

John says, "Laura is very understanding and has a very relaxed voice presence. It has been absolutely tremendous."

Laura and John now speak every week. Through acts like this, we can help support those who are most vulnerable and isolated during this pandemic.

We would love more IT Buddies like Laura to help with our older patients and their families, so please let us know if you are interested in volunteering to help someone like John.



### How lockdown and furlough led to Marc volunteering at KMPT...

Mark is new to volunteering at KMPT - having been put on furlough when lockdown was announced he started to feel himself slipping into a very dark place. Then his best friend suggested he volunteer at KMPT as a delivery driver.

His assignments have involved delivering items such as sweets, therapeutic speakers and personal protective equipment (PPE) to hospitals in West Kent, as well as food parcels to vulnerable community patients. He loves meeting people on his rounds and finds how appreciative they are of his help and support very rewarding. As a result, volunteering during the lockdown has helped loads with his mental health.

*"I'm proud to say, I played a part in the fight against COVID-19 just like the stories of those who served or volunteered during WWII."*

If you too have volunteered during the COVID-19 pandemic, then get in touch with us and tell your story...



### The Friends for Mental Health East and West Kent

We have a great group of friends that continue to support KMPT with grants to our service user group.

The Friends for Mental Health is a charity that has supported people who have mental health problems for over 50 years: both people in hospital and those living in the community. Both of the Friends groups (East/West Kent) consist of volunteers who dedicate their time to raise funds.

They provide amenities and facilities such as shops, as well as organizing fundraising events and championing causes. Funds raised have been used to help those with mental health needs and their families - this includes paying for education classes or travel, funding art exhibitions and music therapy, supporting people when they leave hospital or setting up a new home.

They work collaboratively with the Voluntary services and other agencies to provide holistic support people with mental health needs.

Without groups like these and volunteers like yourselves, we wouldn't be able to achieve many of our amazing programmes and initiatives, so thank you.

[Learn more about our Friends of Mental Health groups](#)

### Julia's allotment project

Julia, who is one of KMPT's volunteers, decided at the beginning of lockdown to take on an allotment.

The plot she found hadn't been worked for more than a year and there was lots of rubbish to clear. After a lot of hard graft, Julia is now growing potato's, sweet corn, courgette, peas and some sunflowers.

Julia finds the allotment a very peaceful place to be where you can completely switch off and not think about all the scary stuff that is going on right now.

*"It's given us an opportunity for exercise which helps with anxiety and mental well being. Gardening is known to help improve mental health and it's certainly helped us."*

Let us know if you have taken up any new hobbies during lockdown to keep your spirits up!



[Top tips for looking after your mental wellbeing in lockdown](#)



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