

Celebrating a Year in the Life...

2021



Why do we exist?

We are passionate about seeing hope restored to people who are facing the harshest of life's battles that steal their hope away.

It may be recovering from violence and abuse, dealing with long-term mental and physical health challenges, finding a home and being re-established into community or breaking the destructive cycle of isolation and social anxiety.

In all of these things, we believe that hope is the seed of change.



We are made up of three strands:

Choirs & Active Breathing Course

All of the choirs that we run have the key aim of inspiring hope and creating change in people's lives. Through the power of hearts uniting to sing together, we have seen many people gain confidence and hope, and become part of a thriving community.

Food Provision

This work began after seeing the needs in our community from being involved in the effort to feed the isolated & vulnerable during the height of the pandemic. From the Food HUB, to BRITE Box, to our other food projects, this work continues to grow & adapt where we see there is need.

Women's Services

Our Sisterhood work began when we saw the need for a safe space for a community of women to gather and enjoy spending time being loved and loving each other. From there it's expanded more than we could have imagined!

The Sisterhood Choir was able to reopen in the new year and we saw huge growth as people came for the first time and loved it! Around 25-30 women a week attend this choir and they had a great time singing at a variety of locations over Christmas including John Lewis and Kingston town.



Sisterhood Choir



Choirs



We were also able to reopen many of our residential and care home choirs, including Raleigh Staywell Centre, Coxhill Manor, Galsworthy House, Whiteley Village and Sherwood Grange. This was a great boost for choir tutors, attendees, and care home staff.



Residential Choirs

Kingston Voices Choir was started in partnership with Kingston University and Performing Arts Community Engagement in early Autumn as a way to connect a lot of different members of the community together. We have had lots of new people which has been really encouraging, and they sang at Wisley Gardens with the Sisterhood Choir in December.

Kingston Voices

The Link Voices Choir is one of our newest choirs and is for Link members, which is a centre for adults with learning difficulties. They only started in the early Autumn of 2021, and held an informal concert for the whole centre at Christmas.

Link Voices

The Cobham Voices Choir started in early Autumn at the Cobham Community Centre. There's been a great turnout so far and held their first concert just before Christmas at Kingsgate Church Cobham, which many friends and relatives attended.

Cobham Voices



ACTIVE BREATHING COURSE

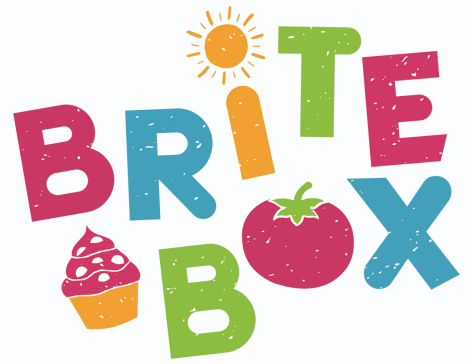
Active Breathing Course

One of our major successes of 2021 was designing and starting the Active Breathing Course. It is a free, six-week course specifically helping people recover from long-Covid and other respiratory illnesses in a fun, creative way. Since the courses started in April, we have:

- Run over 16 courses
- Established referral pathways from hospitals, GPs, social prescribers and also taken self referrals
- Successfully applied for grants to enable the course to be provided free of charge to people
- Trained 8 course tutors
- Supported around 200 people through the course
- Received amazing feedback on how the course has helped people...

Before the course, I had come to terms with the thought that I would be disabled for the rest of my life. This course gave me the drive to get well and I hope to be 100% within 3 months. Thank you for giving me the perseverance.

The tutor was super friendly and approachable, the exercises were accessible and we had a sense of comradeship amongst the other people in the group.



In Kingston, Richmond & Elmbridge, we delivered over 10,000 healthy meal kits to families, impacting the issue of child food hunger through fun, family activity.

10500

Food Provision



We also expanded into Southwark Borough, working with South London Mission and Anjuna Beats, who provide 150 BRITE Boxes each week to their community.



We delivered 3904 boxes of fruit and veg to those in our local community, either who were paying for the service, or receiving it at a heavily reduced rate to provide fruit and veg more affordably.

3900



We have delivered over 1000 individual meals to our local community to those in need through the HUB, which has now closed.

1000



Through our partnership with AFC we ran three, 3D cooking and mentoring courses working with 24 young people who were particularly at risk.

24

Feedback



Love getting a box weekly, always finding out new easy ways to cook delicious food in really easy steps using ingredients we wouldn't always use. It shows you how to make good sized meals.



We have loved our BRITE Boxes and the children wait with anticipation on what will be for dinner on Friday. My son has found a love for cooking and has already cooked the vegetable lasagna for his grandparents.



I just want to say a huge Thank you to you for all the food which you provided each week to us.



Women's Services

Kingston Women's Hub started in September 2021. As a partnership of organisations, we provide holistic support to enable women to thrive after experiencing domestic violence, abuse, and/or multiple disadvantages. We work alongside several other organisations including Kingston Council, Refuge, True Honour and Christians Against Poverty.

The Charis Team was also started in September 2021 and is run by some amazing women who have come through the Sisterhood Choir/Sanctuary. The team have all experienced domestic violence/abuse themselves and are now offering peer mentoring support, access to practical help and signposting to additional services. We have 7 amazing volunteers, who we're hugely proud of, giving their time to support women in need, and we're excited to watch this work expand as we start this year!



Our Sisterhood Sanctuary was able to return to its original format, bringing great joy to many of the ladies who attend. The group has grown significantly and has around 40 ladies attending every week for a session of creative crafts, lunch, pampering and community.



Feedback

I am blessed to be able to join in with such wonderful ladies.

The sessions are amazing, well run, and the ladies and volunteers have such patience

The sessions give me some rare 'me' time

Very supportive and understanding. Has done miracles to boost my confidence

A great place to meet if you're lonely

Our Volunteers



And finally...

Our teams of volunteers have given over 3355 hours of their time, prepping, packing and delivering food, cleaning, working in the office, tidying, serving meals, and many other random jobs! We couldn't do it without them!

3355

The Fishponds Community Garden was a new venture for 2021, where we partnered with Kingston Council, Id Verde and Friends of Fishponds to create a new community space in Fishponds park. So far we have created:

- A new sensory garden with the help of volunteers and John Lewis
- Cleared an entire bed and mulched it
- Been supported by many local people and organisations
- Received funding from multiple local organisations to create new spaces in the garden in 2022.



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