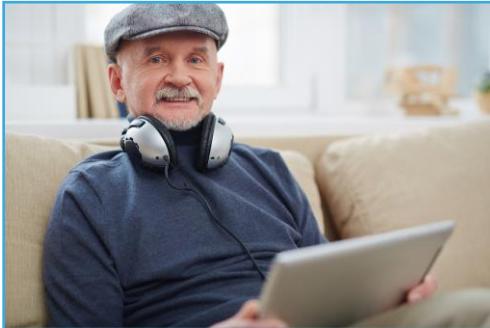


Your support continues to provide much help and hope to people in need, particularly during these difficult times.



**#Stay Connected**  
A service that gives you the tools and confidence you need to live well during self-isolation  
<https://guideposts.org.uk/stay-connected/>  
Guideposts



“ Thanks for being there for us at this difficult time – we can all make a difference and help each other through this – keep our spirits up please and everyone stay safe.”

We hope our Spring 2020 Newsletter finds you and your loved ones safe and well in these challenging times.

More than ever, we are grateful to all our charity supporters who give us the strength to work hard in being there for the people we support, despite the developing situation with the Coronavirus outbreak.

We want to reassure you that we are still doing everything we can to ensure we can be there for everyone who needs us, and with your help, are continuing to provide our vital service as far as possible whilst taking all measures necessary to keep everyone safe and well. Teams are calling, writing and messaging those who would usually join us in person at our services. We send out activity packs, recipes and advice on exercising at home. You can [follow us on Facebook](#) to stay up to date. All support staff are now working from home but can still be contacted by email or by phone. While it might take us longer to answer the phone, or answer emails, we are still here for those who need us.

Although our community-based groups are now suspended until it is safe again to restart, our amazing staff and volunteers are rapidly rising up to the challenge of implementing new ways to help hundreds of our beneficiaries access the support they need; keeping in touch and offering them and their carers emotional and practical help daily.

We have launched a new Service - Stay Connected – specifically designed to help people plan for and adjust to self-isolation, continue doing the things they like to do, and stay in contact with family and friends. If you think this could be helpful to you, please Call **0800 048 7035** for free advice – lines are open 9:00am-5:00pm Monday-Friday.

It is not going to be easy to ensure we can keep our vital work running in these forthcoming weeks and months, however we know that your support will be what keeps us going, so, thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

**Stay safe and keep well.**

Help people  
Stay Connected  
By keeping our Helpline  
running.

**#Stay Connected**  
HELPLINE  
**0800 048 7035**  
Guideposts

£5 covers the cost of one phone call, enabling a vulnerable person to access vital support and advice during self-isolation.

£30 can keep the helpline staffed and running for one hour.



In supporting Guideposts, you're helping hundreds of people with learning disabilities, mental health problems, dementia & carers to stay connected and continue to access vital support at all times.  
Thank you.



*"Thank you for the activity packs, Sam is really enjoying them. It gives him something to look forward to, to do and be proud off. He misses his Guideposts friends, but this means a lot as he knows you are thinking of him. Thank you so much for being there."*



“

We had to take action. Our new Stay Connected Helpline is about support, conversation, making contact with people and about solving problems that are causing anxiety, particularly for people who are less connected online. It's about reassuring them and letting them know they matter to people and to us.

The response to the art pack has been brilliant. One of our service users who lives alone said the art pack really helped her to fill her time while she was bored at home, it also reminded her of all of her friends at Guideposts and the fun that she has when she is there. She is looking forward to the next pack which we will sent out today.

The team has been able to help people from across the country. We were contacted by a group home for people with learning disabilities because a young man there was very anxious and frightened by the COVID-19 situation. They wanted to know if we knew of a service who could talk to him. And of course, at Guideposts, we work with people with learning disabilities, so one of our team spoke to him and will continue to talk with him whenever he needs. The conversation has given this man confidence. And it's given him more context and perspective on what is happening in the world at the moment so that he can manage his anxiety a bit better.

Last Friday, Guideposts in Gloucestershire took a call from a lady living in Scotland. She was distressed and needed urgent help for her elderly father who has Parkinson's Disease, loss of voice and lives on his own in Gloucester. Some sockets in the kitchen had come off the wall and were unsafe. She did not know what to do particularly in current circumstances. Liz, who picked up the call, reassured her and told her she'd try to help and ring her back. She contacted the editor of the local parish magazine, where the gentleman lives who gave her the phone number of a trusted local electrician. As he was able to help, Liz rang Louise back as promised and gave her the contact number. The job was done within the hour. Louise and her dad couldn't be more thankful for the help. Both feeling a lot less stressed and happier.

”

SIGN UP  
TODAY

[www.unitylottery.co.uk](http://www.unitylottery.co.uk)

**unity**  
AMAZING THINGS HAPPEN WHEN YOU PLAY  
Guideposts Here for You  
WIN up to £25,000 supporting a cause you care about!

For every £1 you play, 50p will go straight to fund our projects!

With your constant support, Guideposts continues to bring joy, hope and optimism into the lives of people with dementia and their carers in local communities.

Julie's mum has dementia. Both attend one of our Lights Up Art and Memory Clubs in Oxfordshire. She wanted to share with you how much of a difference this makes in their lives and how lovely it has been to see the friendships growing amongst group members, knowing that none of this would have happened without Lights Up.



## Julie's Story

“

During 2019, a number of us had been going to Guideposts Lights Up sessions. There, we all take part in wonderful activities; singing, dancing and art are the most popular things, bringing us all together in one room. A couple of us decided to meet up outside of the project as the people that we were caring for with dementia were getting on so well together at the sessions.

We met, dressed for the out of doors, with hats and wellies and went out for nearly an hour, walking with the dogs - they linked arms and didn't stop talking the whole time. **This proved the starting point of a brilliant friendship, for us all!** We decided that it would be beneficial for a few of us to meet at a different time of the month doing some sort of activity. Just before Christmas, some of us went to a Christmas craft fair - a meet-up that certainly made us realise that this was the way to go. We then worked out that if we met on the 1st Monday afternoon of each month, convenient for most of us. 5 of us then went to a local Farm, taking a 3-year-old with us, which was an added attraction, alongside the bright displays, plenty of animals (including alpacas), buttons to push and listen to the stories being read. An ideal environment for us to go and totally safe, with the enclosed surroundings. Our first official meet-up was January 2020 – to an Antiques Centre and Tea Room. 12 of us met up for coffee & cake and then enjoyed a meander round the Centre reminiscing about the various items that were on display. In February, 12 of us went to The Old Shed, Charlbury - donned our wellington boots, hats & gloves and went for a walk around the forest. We split into 3 groups of different levels, which worked well and arranged to meet back at The Old Shed for tea and cake when we had finished. We nearly had to send a search party out for 3 of them (carers included!), but luckily, they found their way back!

For March, we had a lovely afternoon at The Warriner School Farm - 15 of us (including the 3 year old as before!), looking at all the animals, including the baby goats, calves and of course the lambs. We decided that children and animals are a great way to entertain our people and of course being out in the fresh air is great for all our well-being. **These monthly meetings are a great social event and we are all really good friends - supporting each other through our dementia journey.** We greet each other with hugs and everyone is very familiar with each other. We also go out at different times of the month which is working well; some of us went out to the Theatre one evening to watch Jane Eyre, meeting in the bar beforehand for a drink.



### STOP PRESS!

We are aware that due to Covid-19, our visits may have to be changed or even stopped, but we all know where to find our support if we need it – we will just have to use FaceTime, What's App, Skype or maybe even conversations on the phone! **We have been bought together and now have a bond to be able to help each other as and when necessary and look forward to planning the rest of our social events when it is possible again – watch this space!**



”

## The ART of the possible

Help us meet our £2590 target to fund Julie's Club for a further 12 months, continue to provide vital support and activities that foster invaluable friendships and bring great laughter and fun.

## # Guideposts Community

Guideposts staff & volunteer teams have been busy calling, writing and messaging those who would usually attend our many community groups & clubs. This is proving much welcome support for the many who live alone and have no other form of support. Teams are putting together and sending varied activity packs weekly and responses have been brilliant.

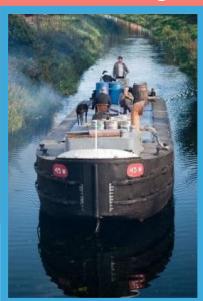


Daniel (left) normally attends one of our Friendship Schemes in Hertfordshire. Obviously, the groups and friends can't meet during lockdown, but that hasn't stopped the teams keeping everyone connected and keep activities going. Art is a big part of the Friendship Scheme activities, so teams have been sending activity packs to all members with things to colour and the most recent one around the Easter Theme.

Daniel proudly showing off the Easter Card he created with one of the packs.



*“Feedback has been so positive. Many parent carers have contacted me to say how much their son or daughter looks forward to getting their letters and activity pack. One of our members is phoning me up regularly telling me which butterflies she has seen in her garden and another telling me how proud she was about being able to keep healthy in isolation, keeping a diary of how much fruit & vegetables she has been eating.*



*I have also been reading a book about Canal Boats over the phone at the same time every evening to one particularly lonely and very vulnerable member of the friendship group who is fascinated by canal boats. He wouldn't hear from or see anyone else, so it is wonderful to be there for him even at this time.”*

”

## Big shout out to our wonderful volunteers!

Volunteers are, and always will be, key to help achieving our mission at all times, and now, more than ever. Many of our volunteer befrienders phoned their friend who they knew lived on their own and had no family to support them. One who found out that their friend hadn't got enough food in, arranged and paid for some shopping and organised to have it dropped safely on his doorstep. Befrienders are also keeping in regular contact with their friends during this difficult and worrying time.

### The Butterfly Effect

The Butterfly is a very popular and inspiring theme amongst many of our Art Groups' members. Typically, a donation of £50 helps buy arts material for one of our groups for an entire month.

Currently, the same gift will go towards funding the tens of art packs being posted each week to help keep group members busy, happy and make them feel less isolated.





“ More than ever, we are being reminded of the power of nature, and the great value of being outside to help maintain some sense of wellbeing. ”



Stepping outdoors, in the garden, to the park for daily exercise is much needed to keep us sane, taking us away from the constant and often very stressful & worrying feed of information about Coronavirus. This period of confinement and restriction presents an opportunity for us all to realise there is as much wonderment in the small & commonplace. Gardens, parks, verges & paths all contain something of interest. Spring is a time when everything is growing & bursting into life. Birds are singing, leaves unfolding, bees and butterflies starting to be seen. Such joy to witness it.

**As a mental health and wellbeing charity, Guideposts has always recognised the incredible and transformative benefits of nature** and taking part in outdoors activities for all those we support, particularly children with disabilities and autism.

Helen, our Outdoors Wellbeing Centre and Forest School Team Leader in Oxfordshire, has seen first-hand the powerful benefits nature and the outdoors can offer to children and adults with disabilities and autism and how important it can be to their wellbeing and personal development. The Easter holidays would have been the start of the new Forest School sessions and of the busy gardening season for the adult groups. As this was not possible, Forest School and gardening packs were delivered on doorsteps instead; each packed carefully prepared by **Helen, & her mum**, one of Guideposts wonderful volunteers.



“ We had a wonderful day delivering the packs. Inside each, was gardening word searches, colouring pages, a plant to look after, a pot with compost and a packet of sweet basil to plant, fresh lettuce and radishes from the dig n grow garden, and 3 Easter eggs. Everyone including family, carers that came to the door was excited to see me even if from a distance. All so thankful for the packs. One child who rarely says my name usually, started shouting 'Helen' and 'dig n grow' as I got out my car, he was so excited, pointing out the tractors on the farm which he always talks about during sessions. Though sad not to be able to come closer he was so pleased about his pack. ”

*Giving my time to volunteer for Guidepost's Dig "n" Grow is so rewarding. Knowing I'm helping in a small way to keep things going there until the service users are able to go back and carry on where they left off is a heartwarming feeling. It's a pleasure to help out in anyway, and to support a wonderful charity & our community.*

It is only a few days since the pack were delivered and we are already receiving some great photos of the children getting on with the activities packs and some wonderful drawings like Charlie's (right) showing what they are spotting in their garden!



Parents and carers are also telling us how much their children had missed Forest School and how much fun and happiness the pack is bringing to their children.

None of this would be possible without the help of all our wonderful supporters.

Thank you.



## Give the gift of nature

Typically, £20 funds material & equipment needed for a group of 10 children to enjoy their Forest School session.

Until sessions start again, **the same gift** will go towards providing **garden activity packs** so that they can continue actively connecting with nature and having good healthy fun.



*Hope is such a small word. Only four letters. Yet when it is with two other words 'faith' and 'love' it represents the fundamental purpose of life. Why we are here, what we do and why we do it.*

## A message of hope - Matthew Jones (CEO)

Where has my bubble child gone? My father said to me a few years back. I was busy making our evening meal, using camping gear, up a Swiss mountain in a small alpine town called Adelboden (real Heidi county). We had ridden our motorbikes to this place, which is where my Aunt came from. She had succumbed to cancer and Dad and I wanted to ride to the place of her birth to meet folk who knew her and see where she grew up. The question from my Dad was because I have always enjoyed using my imagination, to play out fiction and fantasy in my mind. I have been a 'bubble child' all my life – I still am even at 47.

I mention this because I have relied upon this ability to escape over the past 5 weeks as I have been working in self-isolation at home. I have only ventured out to drop emergency medicine and food to vulnerable folk. I have relied upon my imagination to provide mental escape from the situation we are all in. To provide a safe place to dream, to create and to give birth to hope. It doesn't mean I can't live in the real world nor thrive in it. I made Dad a perfectly good curry that night up the Swiss mountain using basic camping gear and how much fun is a 'spork', to eat with (I would probably use them at home if I could get away with it as it cuts by 2/3rds the amount of cutlery you have to wash up). It is just a really important mental gift I enjoy. And, it has enabled me to deal with the seriousness of this pandemic.

How are you coping with COVID? Do you dream, imagine, stimulate your mind to be elsewhere or to provide an alternate reality? How do you give yourself hope? Are you getting that DIY project finally completed? Are you learning a new skill – piano? Or reconnecting with old friends and taking time to help neighbours? Routine has become so important for mental wellbeing. This pandemic has so many bad things about it, sometimes for our own mental health, we need to escape, to dream of a better world post pandemic, to garner hope that our time on this planet can be meaningful and purposeful.

I also get huge energy and hope from others. We have been conducting a daily COVID-19 conference call with all the teams to make sure the Charity is doing all it can to help as many vulnerable people as possible. Teams' commitment and dedication to keep their mission going provides me, and us all with such hope and positivity and I look forward every day to finding strength in their feedback, anecdotes and stories of hope and support they are achieving daily.

Our main objective is to keep our mission going, ensuring vulnerable people who would normally access vital support through our many community services still access it, continue to feel connected, included, maintain good mental health and wellbeing and limit the risk of breakdown or crisis. Central to this work is supporting carers. Today, we are once more reminded that their role shouldn't be taken for granted or forgotten and how vital their role is in supporting their vulnerable loved ones - day in and day out. I helped my mum care for my gran for 14 years. Gran had dementia and living through this part of her life journey taught me so much about resilience, selflessness of caring and the power of love and hope. But that isn't to say Carers can keep going without needed support themselves. That's why every day, everyone at Guideposts are walking alongside Carers, albeit at a distance, helping them take the steps to rein in stress and regain a sense of balance, joy, and **hope** in these challenging times.

**Hope** is such a small word. Only four letters. Yet when it is with two other words 'faith' and 'love' it represents the fundamental purpose of life. Why we are here, what we do and why we do it.

I have no doubt that once again, just as with our founders, 47 years ago, it is to hope that we all, at Guideposts, turn to at this time and what continues motivating our action so that our charity and mission can survive the financial turmoil, keep the effort going for those who need it most, continue providing support programmes that give people hope. Hope for a better world, in which they can be supported to reach their potential and in turn provide support to others. Hope the world learns from this nightmare, that coming together and supporting each other is the key to threats like COVID-19.

**It is not going to be easy to ensure we can keep our vital work running; however, we know that your support, all our supporters, will be what keeps us going.**

**Thank you. Stay safe and keep well.**

## Planning for the future

Guideposts wouldn't be able to plan for the future, establish and run these much-valued services in our local communities, or survive during challenging times without all of our supporters and your continued generosity. Almost a third of all of our work, most specifically for people with dementia and carers, is funded by the legacy gifts kindly left to us by our supporters who have chosen to leave a gift to us in their Will so that their generosity can continue changing people's lives beyond their lifetime.



Without legacies Guideposts simply would not be able to help as many people as we do, nor be able to offer them the long-term support so many often need.

**Every gift, large or small** is truly life changing for the **all the people** we support.

For more information about making a **Gift in your Will** in support of Guideposts, please tick the relevant box on the order form accompanying this newsletter and we will be pleased to send you our **Legacy Guide**.

You are the #GuidepostsCommunity  
With your continued support, our community will continue to grow



1. Tell a friend about Guideposts and the difference your support makes.
2. Give As You Live – shop online through their search or through Amazon Smile and raise money for Guideposts.
3. Take part in an event or encourage a family or friend to do so in support of Guideposts.
4. Give a gift in celebration, for example, ask for donations to Guideposts in place of presents or create a Facebook Fundraiser.
5. Give as you work through Payroll Giving or a variety of fundraising events – why not 'Dress Down Friday', hold a bake sale, take part in a sponsored walk, hold a charity ball?
6. Sign up to take part in our Unity Lottery and raise 50p per play.
7. Give in memory – celebrate the life of someone special, make a donation to mark a meaningful date.
8. Go online – visit our website, follow us on socials @GuidepostsUK and share what we do, visit our Youtube channel and hear stories from the people you help support, or donate goods for us to sell in our eBay store.



**Guideposts**  
Here for You

We couldn't do it without you.  
**THANK YOU**