



Welcome!

We are glad to see spring this year with a reprieve from the rain as well as the promise of warmer weather. We look forward to new beginnings, with optimism and hope.

The people we support have real life struggles, as you will read. Our feature this edition is on an amazing young man, Todd, who feels he could come from another planet. He, as so many others, finds hope, and trusts us to guide them on their life's journey, to keep from spiralling into crisis and losing independence.

The current landscape for a charity such as ours is not comfortable. As well as the charity's own costs continuing to rise significantly, many of the people we support find that the increased cost of living means they are struggling financially.

We are looking at more ways to make less go further as well as exploring new income opportunities, so that we can offer all the support we can.

Guideposts are all about people and connections. It is through people's optimism: our staff, volunteers, and the people we support, as well as people like you, who

support us, that we find a way through the challenges to continue supporting as many people as possible.

Thank you so much for your continued support.
Kathryn Courtenay-Evans, CEO

Together we support people's way to live a life worth living.

Inside:

Latest News & Updates	2
Art for Mental Health.....	3
Member Spotlight: Todd	4
Being Human	5
Supporter News	6
Plans for Outdoors	7

 fundraising@guideposts.org.uk

 **01993 899 983**

 www.guideposts.org.uk/donate





Latest News



Curiosity in Community

We have been lucky enough to welcome a plethora of speakers to dementia-friendly CONNECT groups in recent months.

Firstly Gloucestershire Fire & Rescue advised how to keep your home safe with extra tips for when someone with a dementia is in the house.

Next came community pharmacy services making sure everyone has the most convenient way of getting prescriptions, not to mention finding out about all the different services

pharmacies can offer now.

Lastly the term was rounded off by a down-to-earth session on composting! As you can imagine, people were apprehensive to dig in and get their hands mucky at first, especially with worms wiggling in the soil, but in the end we had lots of fun and laughter at this informative session.

Where else could you find out about fuels, pharmacists, and natural fertilisers?

Journeys of Discovery

Over the cold and wet winter months it is harder for many people to get out of the house to our services, so we have been working hard at giving them an extra reason!

Our teams have been working hard to provide visits to local exhibitions

and places of interest - including the Beatrix Potter exhibition in Gloucester, Stratford Museum, and calming Crystal Salt Caves in Borehamwood.

Going out to visit a local attraction can help someone who feels unrecognised or isolated to be seen and part of the local community, as well as an extra reason to make it out of the house!

We would love to offer more visits like this over coming months. If you would like to help, please donate at guideposts.org.uk/seen



Service Outreach: National College to get taster

Young people with complex disabilities and their families navigate a complicated world of specialist support. Everything changes when they reach 18, and after college it can feel like a cliff-edge with no-where to go. That's why Guideposts Day Services offer a variety of opportunities to meet people's different interests and needs.

Working with National Star College who support young people up to 18, this spring we are providing taster sessions to help the next step moving on from the college. We will help the young people have confidence that in their future life there is support, friendship, and a life worth living.



Arts for Mental Health



The Arts bring wellbeing in so many Guideposts services. Whether spending time focusing on a piece of work, working with colour, or enjoying exploring different materials, there are many benefits to be found.

Good Vibrations

We recently held a jam-session at our Community Mental Health Hub in Watford.

Looking for a home for a musical instrument led us to meet another local charity Good Vibrations, who were enthusiastic to hold a session with our community Mental Health community and carers.

They brought all sorts of musical instruments, and at first encouraged people to have a go, listening to what they responded to. Then they picked up on the popular beats and grew into a mass rendition of "We will Rock You".



The atmosphere lifted everyone's mood and allowed people to feel relaxed to express themselves and connect through the music.

One group member who is usually very reserved commented:

"That's really cheered me up. Music makes me happy."

How can you help?

A donation of £36 could provide canvas and paint for an uplifting work of art.

Perfection takes time

One member of our Community Mental Health services has spent the last 6 months working on a special piece of art.

This scene seems to evoke an Italian village, and perhaps transports him to a nice memory. It has taken dedication, care, and skill, and not only has he produced an amazing piece of art, he has been able to focus and help his mental health.



New Services: Talking Therapies

We have been awarded a place on the framework in Hertfordshire to deliver NHS Talking Therapies counselling for anxiety and depression, and are delighted to be live as of early 2026. Our experienced therapists use a psychological evidence based approach over 6-10 weekly sessions to help people suffering from clinical depression to manage their symptoms and improve their overall well-being.

To make this skilled counselling accessible to a wider group, in tandem, we recently launched **Good Therapy**. Our counsellors provide a warm, accepting and non-judgmental environment where people can feel safe to explore their thoughts, feelings and experiences, helping each one to build resilience, develop coping mechanisms, and move towards their goals.

"What we don't need in the midst of struggle is shame for being human" Brené Brown.



guideposts.org.uk/goodtherapy/





Member Spotlight Meet Todd

“ Hello, my name is Todd. I am 24 years old. I like finding works of art in everyday things like teeth. I love technology and my dream is to make robots and automatons, but the reason for this I have yet to decide upon.

I wrote some pieces for the Being Human exhibition, to inspire myself and others to make a better future, and I also want to send a message about my emotional and physical state and my personality.

I go to Guideposts Trust twice a week and I love it. I wish there could be a Guideposts but with animals. We could stroke and pet animals, and they could sometimes do art as well!

In my spare time I like to hibernate like my favourite animal, the bear. It makes me feel at peace. My favourite, ultimate interest, is researching phobias because there is a great deal to sort out.

I feel like an alien who's crash-landed on earth and hasn't got any way to relate to other people.

I'm an autistic person who finds it very, very difficult to be inside this world. It basically feels like I'm the only one who exists that has autism.

I see the world in black and white. Everything around me is really complicated and hard to work out, and I get confused and anxious.

When I look at a car, or a person, if it is moving, I have an extreme compulsion to destroy everything that moves. When they're not moving they begin to look blurry and, to a certain degree, sometimes, they begin to look invisible. It becomes really disorientating.

My brain, in that respect, keeps giving me a nagging sensation that if I don't move, they won't fight back. If

How can you help?

A donation of £85 could provide an inspiring trip to a local museum for one of our groups



someone attacked you in the streets, or threatened you, bearing in mind this is just my advice, don't look at them and don't interact with them, because if you can't see them, they can't see you.

I like soft, sensory things because they remind me of empathy and gentleness. The touch of softness is a symbol of that.

To me the true meaning of life is to not to live. It is to enjoy living and enjoy the things that you do and be different.

Because autism to me isn't just a different way of thinking and processing information. it's more like being an alien from outer space who's crash-landed. To me, it feels that I am that different.

Autism isn't bad or good, it's just parallel evolution.

In order for me to be comfortable in this world, everyone's got to be spot on. They've got to be polite, they've got to be empathetic and understanding. Everybody in the universe has got to have empathy and compassion in order for it to fit.

It doesn't matter who you are, what you are, what you look like, what you read. So as long as you're not hurting yourself or others, you haven't got anything to worry about. Showing your true colors and showing kindness is how to shine.



Event Spotlight

Being Human



Guideposts Community Hub holds exhibition at Stroud Valley Artspace

In November, Guideposts Community Hub exhibited at the prestigious Stroud Valleys Artspace. The exhibition was titled "Being Human" and included works in a wide range of media made by our service members. The community loved the opportunity to share their art with the local community, and to be seen and recognised by a wider audience.

"Such a wonderful and inclusive exhibition. Thank you. As a person with a learning disability, as well as being a teacher, I find it very inspirational."

Rupert



One of the artists was Todd (opposite), who has autism and a learning disability. The exhibition featured Todd's works of prose where he asks the question "what does it mean to be good or evil, and are these two traits determined by nature or nurture?" – an enduring question that many of us grapple with.



Having a learning disability can often, but not always, compromise someone's ability to read and write, to understand the concept of money, or verbally communicate in a coherent manner, but not necessarily their ability to comprehend the

age-old questions of existence, and what it means to be human.

The Being Human exhibition addressed not only the universal human and largely unconscious and unintellectual traits of needs, wants and likes. It also addressed beliefs, hopes and wonders.

Members of the Hub exhibiting were delighted to see their work admired and provoking thought in visitors. Among the many visitors were Simon Opher MP and local town councillors.

We hope that the exhibition will go some way to spotlight the importance of social cohesion, and of allowing everyone in our wonderfully eclectic country, especially those on the fringes, to have a voice. Because everyone matters, and no one should be left behind.

Pride in life stories

Many of the artists made memory books that were on display. One of these is by Vicky. In her book she says that she is proud of her brother for working his way up from sweeping the floors as a teenager to now working on computers within the same company, and she's also proud of her mum for obtaining a Duke of Edinburgh award many years ago, thus showing a strong sense of the importance of family and belonging.





Supporter news

Community Support

We have felt truly supported in our communities over recent months, with many local businesses and organisations fundraising, contributing and helping our cause to be seen and heard.



Local solicitors Parker Bullen celebrated their third birthday in Witney with a fantastic charity

games night; estate agent Parkers held a delicious, and spooky - it was on Halloween! - bake sale for us, and the fabulous Watford Fields Carol Singers brought the community together with their beautiful renditions of classic Christmas carols to benefit Guideposts.

"You can see how touched our service members are when they hear someone is supporting us."

Dawn, Service Coordinator

Probably our youngest supporters, West Witney Primary School have selected Guideposts to be their Charity of the Year. We are honoured to be in the hearts and minds of this special community.



How can you help?

Could you introduce Guideposts to your community?

- ▶ **Nominate us for your Charity of the Year**
- ▶ **Share this newsletter**

Painting by Numbers



Service members who like order and neatness have been delighted to have painting by numbers kits to fuel their activities over the last 6 months.

Kit provider DIY Art Club have been sending us their returned kits, which have been very well received. There's something for everyone in terms of complexity and subject matter, enabling moments of calm creativity for all.

Small trains, big hearts

A labour of love

When members of our Gloucester CONNECT group found out that support worker David had a model train set they were intrigued. He told them how he takes over 2 months to set up a special Christmas set each year, collecting money from visiting family and friends for charity, this year for Guideposts.

Many of the Connect group members were sad they couldn't visit to see the set in action themselves, so after David had worked on the set in his lounge, perfecting it, he then videoed it running so that he could show the group.



He showed the video at the group's Christmas party, and they were absolutely delighted. It encouraged generous donations too!

Thank you, David, and all our amazing supporters.



Plans ahead in the outdoors



Guideposts continues to champion the benefits of the outdoors for people to find occupation, enjoyment, and a therapeutic place.

Our **Outdoor Wellbeing Hub** has been growing in its present site for over 6 years, and during this time we have developed and enhanced the site, with significant help from partners Burford Garden Company.

The service members now fill more than 50 places every week, and we aim to support more people with the introduction of an **accredited gardening skills training course** for those who choose to gain formal recognition of their learning and skills, and wish to enhance their employability.

We also have plans to **develop our activities** to include heritage skills development workshops, outdoors relaxation and mindfulness sessions, sensory gardening activities for people living with dementia, as well as expanding our support for children



and young people with additional needs through the facilitation of forest school, bushcraft, and adventure play therapy.

To achieve these goals we need to both **improve the site** to make it suitable for all our current and potential service members, and address the **impacts of increasingly frequent extreme weather** events on the Hub site. Our large polytunnel, which hosts many of our activities, has suffered significant damage, the site needs enhanced flood proofing spaces for all the activities, and a more accessible parking area.

Achieving these improvements will only be possible through generous community support.

We will be launching a campaign for this development soon. In the meantime please get in touch if you would like to make a meaningful contribution.

fundraising@guideposts.org.uk



“When I come here, I’m part of a huge thing. I’m the happiest person, to have a job.”

Member of Dig'n'Grow



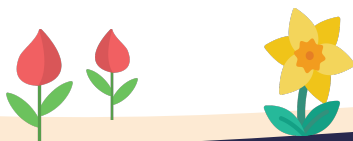
What does the future hold?

We have been around for over 50 years, and intend to continue helping people, as long as there are people with needs in our communities.

You may know that over 30% of our service funding comes through donations from the General Public. The generosity of individuals like you, who want the world to be a better place for those who are isolated or don't know where else to turn, is incredibly important. A large proportion of this comes from gifts left in Wills, for which we are eternally grateful.

If you too want to make life worth living for disadvantaged people in the future, we would be delighted if you include a gift to Guideposts in your Will. Leaving even 1% to us allows 99% for those closest to you.

Thank you for your generosity.

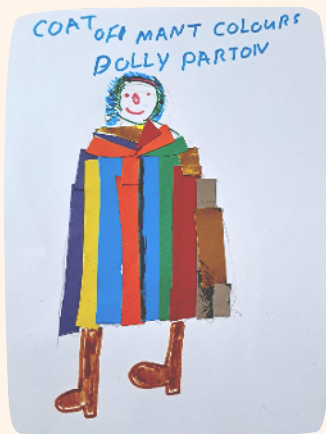


Guideposts
Trust

Your support brings joy

The activities in Guideposts services help people to find joy, calm, and connection - while often learning new skills or information to help them in their life.

Our Art for Wellbeing group started the year "Drawing the Lyric" for some of their favourite songs. We hope these inspire you to sing with joy too.



Draw the Lyric



Your are helping to make life worth living for many.
Thank you.

If you would like to support us further - making a collection, regular donations, or a special gift, please get in touch!

 guideposts.org.uk/get-involved
 fundraising@guideposts.org.uk
 01993 899 983

Guideposts Trust Limited Registered in England No 12823661 Registered Charity No 272619
Guideposts Trust was established in 1972 and relies upon voluntary and financial support for its work.
General Enquiries: 01993 893560 | Email: info@guideposts.org.uk | www.guideposts.org.uk

Support your way **Guideposts Trust**

**SCAN
HERE**



I would like to make a gift

You can make a donation online at www.guideposts.org.uk/donate using this QR code should you prefer.

Make a single donation

Please accept my gift of: £_____ £8 £36 £85

To donate via debit, credit, or CAF card, please fill out the details below:

Card number

Valid from / Expiry date /

For your security we do not request your CVV number on this form, but some banks are now requiring it. Please provide a contact phone number or email in case we need to contact you when processing your payment:

To make your donation by cheque, postal order, or CAF voucher, please make it payable to Guideposts Trust and enclose it in the Freepost envelope provided.

Gift Aid it

Please make every £1 you give worth an extra 25p to Guideposts, at no extra cost to you, by ticking this Gift Aid declaration.

If you have previously claimed gift aid but are no longer an eligible UK taxpayer, or wish to cancel your declaration, please update your details with us.

I am a UK taxpayer and would like Guideposts Trust to treat this donation as a Gift Aid donation. I understand that I must pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax in the tax year at least equal to qualify. Please treat all donations I make or have made to Guideposts for the past four years as Gift Aid donations until further notice.

Date: ___/___/_____

I am not a UK taxpayer / not eligible for gift aid

My Gift Aid status has changed

Would you be happy to receive acknowledgement of your donation by email? Yes No

If yes, please ensure we have your email address: _____.

Make a regular donation by Direct Debit

If you don't already, please consider supporting people for the long term through a Direct Debit.

I would like to make a gift of: £ _____ Annually Quarterly Monthly

Starting on the following date: ____/____/____

Name of your bank or building society:

Name of the account holder(s):

Bank sort code: ____/____/____

Account number: _____

Originator's Identification Number – 948160

Please pay Guideposts Trust Direct Debits from the account detailed in this Instruction subject to safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this Instruction may remain with Guideposts Trust and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank / Building Society.

Date: ____/____/____

Signature: _____

Second signature*: _____

* Only applicable to joint bank accounts

Please return this form to us in the enclosed envelope to
Guideposts Trust, Unit E, Two Rivers, Station Lane, Witney OX28 4BE, or donate online at
www.guideposts.org.uk/donate.

Thank you for your kindness.

