1,800 CUPS OF TEA A WEEK

KITCHEN TIMES
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It’s been a busy few months of events at The People’s Kitchen, here are some of the highlights.

**EVENTS**

01/ **PUPILS’ EFFORTS GET 10 OUT OF 10**

One schoolgirl’s dream to help the homeless and vulnerable on the streets of Newcastle led to her whole school joining in with her efforts.

Emily-Jo Cox has collected items for The People’s Kitchen for two years after seeing a television documentary about homelessness in the North East.

The 11-year-old recently asked if her school, Gosforth Junior High in Newcastle, could help her with her donation – and the entire school got on board. Even the senior pupils at Gosforth High School joined in with her campaign by collecting chocolate bars for The People’s Kitchen.

Elizabeth O’Mahony, head of Year 7 and 8 at Gosforth Junior High School, said:

“Emily only started at the school in September but sent a letter to the management committee asking if the school could help her collect items for The People’s Kitchen. We had no hesitation. Each class was given a box to fill and we were amazed at how the pupils and their parents embraced the idea and gave so much.

“It’s lovely to help a local charity and we are full of praise for Emily-Jo for coming up with the idea. At Christmas time we’ll be doing the shoebox appeal for The People’s Kitchen.”

Gosforth is just one of many schools throughout the North East that have been collecting goods for The People’s Kitchen.

Pupils at Wardley Primary School in Gateshead set up a contest to see which class could collect the most donations for The People’s Kitchen.

Charlotte, 10, a Year 5 pupil, said:

“I brought in hats, scarves and gloves to help homeless people stay warm. It’s nice to help people”

Ruby, who is in Miss Steward’s Year 5 class which won the contest, said:

“It was great. My class brought in the most to help The People’s Kitchen. We got it all sorted into different boxes and because we were the winning class we helped to fill the van up.”

Tom Baker, from The People’s Kitchen, attended a special assembly at the school to thank the children and talk about the work that the charity does to help vulnerable people.

The winning class were invited to have tea with him and helped him load the donated items onto the van – one of the biggest ever donations that a primary school has ever collected for the charity.

Any school that wants to collect items for The People’s Kitchen or have a representative visit to tell the pupils about the work the charity does can contact The People’s Kitchen via our website www.peopleskitchen.co.uk
The People’s Kitchen would like to thank everyone who helped the charity win the Community Matters Fund at the Eldon Square branch of Waitrose.

The People’s Kitchen was recently one of three local charities to compete for customers’ little green tokens. The tokens are given out to every shopper who then gets to choose one out of three local charities as they exit the store by placing their token into the collection boxes. A spokeswoman for the Newcastle city centre store said: “The People’s Kitchen was a very popular winner with our customers and the charity was awarded £395.”

“Customers love receiving the tokens and deciding which charity will benefit. It means they have some control over which local charity will win.”

Since its launch in 2009, the Newcastle city centre store has donated £1.4m to local charities nationwide. If any other shops in the North East would like to support the People’s Kitchen in a similar way please call 0191 222 0699.

Knorr has selected The People’s Kitchen for its Flavour For All campaign and it will receive cash support and help to train its volunteers to create nutritious meals that both save money and create less waste.

Chairman of The People’s Kitchen, Bob Eldridge MBE, said the charity was looking forward to “As a charity we produce 40,000 hot three-course meals per week. Our cooks are trained to develop the menu and supervise the cooking of ingredients which we receive from donors around the region from Harvest Festivals and various food retailers.

“Through the Flavour For All project we want to help more people who are experiencing food poverty access these all important flavousmes, nutritious meals by providing donations and workshops to soup kitchens and food banks across the UK.”

“With food insecurity and poverty in the UK rising at alarming rates, Knorr wants to give more people easier access to nutritious flavousmes meals.

“More than 8 million Brits live in households that struggle to put food on the table and 4.7 million regularly go a day without eating but, according to research, nearly a third of millennials think food poverty isn’t an issue in UK.”

“Through the Flavour For All project we not only want to help those experiencing food poverty, but also raise awareness of the issue in the UK and the great work food aid organisations and their volunteers are doing to tackle it.”

Knorr has an annual Flavours For All competition by an international food company to highlight food poverty in the UK.

On Wednesday 1 March 2017, several Friends took the first step towards independent living by taking part in the People’s Kitchen’s ‘Make a Change’ programme, run in partnership with homelessness charity Crisis.

The five-week programme, which ran every Wednesday for an hour and a half, aimed to equip Friends with skills for work and life through its tutor-supported learning. The course focused on goal-setting, IT, budgeting and health & safety – potentially life-changing skills. What’s more, the Friends leave the course with an up-to-date CV, greater confidence and a qualification presented by Hairy Biker, Si King.

The course is most suited to Friends who have some form of temporary accommodation and who are thinking about making a change but need support. The People’s Kitchen’s Welfare Coordinators played a crucial role in triaging appropriate Friends and supporting them throughout the programme.

We hope that through this partnership with Crisis, and through the ‘Make a Change’ programme, many of our Friends will free themselves from the social isolation that lack of skills and education can bring. With greater knowledge, confidence and self-esteem our Friends will have the power to break the cycle of homelessness and move on with their lives. We will walk alongside them on their journey. The Friends have now completed the course and have signed up to other courses run by Crisis, which will help them to develop their skills further. The ‘Make a Change’ programme is in its pilot phase, but if successful, will be repeated twice more in the spring and summer respectively.

Jonathan, who leads the Futures programme, says, “I am very satisfied with how this initial pilot project has gone and it is gratifying to see how our Friends engaged with the course and became enthusiastic as it progressed. We look forward to repeating the experience with Crisis in due course, giving more disadvantaged people the opportunity to become ‘job ready’.”

SCHOOL VISITS

The People’s Kitchen has for many years invited schools and other interested groups to visit us and learn more about our operations and a chance to meet some volunteers.

Groups of up to 12 are welcome by appointment and if donations are given so much the better. We find that pupils enjoy their day out and are fired with enthusiasm. Questions are many and varied, for example, “how much are you paid?” and “why are people poor?”

We also have volunteers who are happy to visit groups to explain our work.

To make an appointment, please contact us at info@peopleskitchen.co.uk
Generosity runs in the family

Christmas spirit and Christmas kindness came hand in hand in the form of Mike and Lorna Miller on Thursday 8th December 2016. They are the parents of Angus Miller who ran the London Marathon in aid of The People’s Kitchen and raised just under £5,000 in his solo effort. As you read on you will see that kindness and generosity runs in this family!

Mike and Lorna cooked enough lasagne, in their own home, to feed the Friends (70s) we help on the Thursday Outreach at The People’s Kitchen. They wanted to do it for Christmas as a special treat for the Friends and also because they had been so inspired by the passion Angus had for the work of The People’s Kitchen. Thursday was devoted to cooking the beef milo bolognese and béchamel sauce and putting it all together. They must have slaved over that oven and hob for many hours! At 4.30 on the Thursday Mike and Lorna appeared at the Alcon Centre looking rather tired from freshly-taxed living.

Needless to say the lasagne, made with the very best ingredients, went down a storm with our friends at Trafalgar Street that night. The compliments were flying and the queue for second helpings was never ending. They also brought in with them numerous clothing items, which they acquired from neighbours and friends.

We cannot thank the Millers enough. Not only did they give of their own time and money through this mammoth effort to help the vulnerable in our community, but they encouraged their neighbours to reach out and help by organising this big collection. The Miller’s kindness and consideration of others is so very much appreciated by our Friends and also greatly admired by us, the Thursday Outreach volunteers. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts, Mike and Lorna.

Sleeping rough on Victorian streets

A stonemason at Beamish Museum slept rough in the venue’s historic town streets for five nights to raise money for today’s homeless and needy.

Paul Marron raised an impressive £1,696 for The People’s Kitchen – well above the £500 target he had set. Paul, 55, who has worked at the museum for five years, said: “I would like to say a massive thank you to everyone for their generosity. I work at Beamish and see in my working life how life was tough for poor people in Victorian times and yet, today, there are still people sleeping on the streets. Nothing much has really changed in more than 100 years, except now I think it’s far easier to get into debt and for the world to change around you. Most of us are just a few pence away from poverty, and I think these days the difference between the haves and the have-nots is massive. That’s why I wanted to help The People’s Kitchen, they do such good work.”

Paul decided to help The People’s Kitchen after taking part in a fundraising walk two years ago for Walking with the Wounded, a charity helping wounded soldiers find new careers outside the military. He walked 350 miles from Edinburgh to Wylam and slept rough along the way. He added: “I was amazed at the number of people I came across who were sleeping rough. It really opened my eyes and I experienced what they had to go through. It was tough for poor people in Victorian times to heighten awareness. The money will be put to good use and helps us in providing a vital lifeline of food, friendship and a future for the most disadvantaged, homeless and vulnerable in and around Newcastle. Thank you for helping us to make a difference.”

Paul, the popular Jack Russell dog, joined him on a couple of the nights of the challenge, which took place between 12th and 16th December 2016. Paul said: “Reg made it difficult on the last night – he pinched my sleeping bag!”

When asked if he ever reached a point where he regretted taking on the challenge, Paul said: “Absolutely not, it was a fantastic learning experience.”

This is one of many challenges Paul has undertaken to raise money for charities. He also climbed Denali in Alaska in 2008 for the Starlight Children’s Foundation and slept rough all December in 2010 for Macmillan Cancer Support.

David Yellowley, Trustee of The People’s Kitchen, said: “We receive many kind and sometimes unusual donations at The People’s Kitchen, what Paul has done is not only brave (in December) but a fantastic effort to raise such a huge amount. Experiencing the hardships that our Friends cope with on a daily basis also helps to heighten awareness. The money will be put to good use and helps us in providing a vital lifeline of food, friendship and a future for the most disadvantaged, homeless and vulnerable in and around Newcastle. Thank you for helping us to make a difference.”
David sadly passed away after a short illness. Although he was one of Alison Kay’s original homeless friends, after a rocky start he became a valued and long serving volunteer at The People’s Kitchen. He partook in all activities and events offered by The Kitchen not only as a user but as a helper. No task was too menial or boring and David would fulfil his obligations with enthusiasm and with humour. He partook in all activities and events offered by The People’s Kitchen.

Led by two experts from the System Gallery in Newcastle (Egle Dubinkaitė and Jacob Zoob), the Photography Club (called ‘Invisible’) was set up to inspire our friends (known as ‘needy’ or ‘invisables’).

We have had an interactive session using Polaroids to learn about composition, for example the rule of thirds which is applied by aligning a subject with the guide lines and their intersection points, placing the horizon on the top or bottom line, or allowing linear features in the image to flow from section to section. Having issued cameras and instructions, we then met to talk about the pictures taken and discuss the reasons behind what was captured. In later meetings we have had an interactive session using Polaroids to learn about composition, for example the rule of thirds which is applied by aligning a subject with the guide lines and their intersection points, placing the horizon on the top or bottom line, or allowing linear features in the image to flow from section to section.

We have also set different tasks such as using obscure objects in different places and a trip to the Side Gallery is looming to understand the work of professional photographers. The club has really enthused the members, giving a sense of purpose and challenges to think about the framing and perspectives of their pictures. Ultimately we aim to put on an exhibition in a local gallery.

DAVID KENNY
1952–2017

We were pleased that David was reunited with his long lost brother at the end. Unfortunately he could not continue this work as a kitchen porter for long due to ill health. His friendly personality endeared him to volunteers and users alike and all ill will towards him to staff and users alike and all ill health. Although he was one of Alison Kay’s original homeless friends, after a rocky start he became a valued and long serving volunteer at The People’s Kitchen. He partook in all activities and events offered by The Kitchen not only as a user but as a helper. No task was too menial or boring and David would fulfil his obligations with enthusiasm and with humour. He partook in all activities and events offered by The People’s Kitchen.

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Novel Psychoactive Substances (NPS) remain the focus of attention in many cities around the UK – including Newcastle. Despite the introduction of new legislation on 26 May 2016, under the Psychoactive Substances Act which made it illegal to manufacture, import, or supply these drugs, they remain prevalent on our streets.

“Spice”, “Smoke” or NPS, used to be sold as “legal highs” and taken because they give similar “high” effects to illegal substances such as cocaine, heroin, ecstasy and cannabis. Some people may end up feeling happy and giggly, but others can experience psychotic episodes, violent outbursts, extreme paranoia and breathing difficulties. On occasion, they have had fatal consequences and are now often referred to as being ‘LETHAL HIGHS’.

Northumbria Police remains committed to removing lethal highs from our streets. Several successful operations have already been conducted to target those who peddle these awful substances and they will continue to run. These drugs are highly addictive, and extremely dangerous substances that should be avoided at all costs.

Police have recently carried out an operation to arrest nearly a dozen people suspected of supplying NPS in Newcastle and officers in the city will continue to pursue those who target the most vulnerable people in society.

NPS substances are manufactured for maximum profit. Psychoactive chemicals are mass produced in places such as China, the Far East and Russia. There is no regulation as to how they are made or what they contain.

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Manufacturers may use the same basic approach, but they produce very different chemicals. Thus, there is no consistency to the end product. Users of lethal highs can have no way of knowing what they are taking, how strong it is, or what side effects it will generate.

Cities as diverse as London, Manchester, Wolverhampton and Westminster are all experiencing real problems with NPS usage. Often sold as party pooper, or room destroyers; NPS packets will usually carry the warning “Not for human consumption”.

Since NPS are brightly packaged with appealing names, and cost as little as between £10 and £20 for a 3g bag; they have proven to be very popular with more vulnerable groups such as the homeless and youngsters. Their side effects can differ greatly depending upon the individual.

Any, or all, of the following can be experienced:

- increased heart rate, increased blood pressure, possible heart attack and even death
- paranoia, increased anxiety
- agitation, seizers
- vomiting
- uncontrollable body movements, even paralysis
- sweating, red eyes, blurred vision, dry mouth

It is not uncommon for people to find themselves in a “zombie-like” trance, and this puts them in very vulnerable position in terms of crimes against them or exploitation. Not enough research has been carried out for anyone to know the long-term effects of NPS usage or mixing NPS with alcohol. These substances are neither safe nor legal, and help is always available for anyone who has taken, or is taking lethal highs.

Contact Lifeline Newcastle: 0191 261 5610
For Families or Carers contact PROPS: 0191 226 3440
For Under 18s DnA Young Peoples Service: 0191 277 7377

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Following on from an article on ‘legal highs’ in our last edition of Kitchen Times, Neighbourhood Sergeant Michael Heaney gives us an update on how the ban on NPS has been effective.

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At a time in life when most people are putting their feet up and taking a well-earned rest, The People’s Kitchen chairman Bob Eldridge is embarking on a major fundraising cycle ride. Tying in with his 70th birthday celebrations, Bob is undertaking the challenge to cycle from Land’s End to John O’Groats in a bid to raise £10,000.

The experienced cyclist will start head out on the road on May 13 and hopes to take just 14 days to complete his gruelling journey. Bob said:

‘From the very toe to the very tip I’ll be covering the entire length of mainland Britain covering over 1,000 miles in just 14 days. I’ll be travelling north from Land’s End in order to take advantage of prevailing winds, following the Cornish coast, the wilds of Dartmoor and cross the River Severn into Hereford.

‘Heading further north I’ll pass through the Yorkshire Dales and Cumbria and then cross the border into Scotland. Before long I’ll be following the shoreline of Loch Ness, passing Inverness and heading for John O’Groats.’

Anyone who would like to donate to help Bob reach his target can do so via the Just Giving website: www.justgiving.com/bob-eldridge

Volunteer

The People’s Kitchen has transformed thousands of lives but this work would be impossible without the work of the charity’s volunteers. Our team of volunteers are like a large family, all working towards a common goal – to grow, collect, prepare and serve some 40,000 hot meals per year. We are in need of a number of specific roles at the moment, can you help?

Current vacancies

● 2 Operations managers
● 3 Monday outreach
● 5 Events team
● 2 Welfare co-ordinators for Thursday afternoons
● 1 Thursday afternoon food server

For further details contact dean.auld@peopleskitchen.co.uk or visit our website at www.peopleskitchen.co.uk

If you would like to support The People’s Kitchen, please complete this form and send it to:

The People’s Kitchen, The Alison Centre, 56 Bath Lane, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE4 5SQ

☐ Volunteering (see our application on the website)
☐ Donation (return this slip and cheque in an envelope)
☐ Gift Aid (request application from our office)
☐ Request a Visit (from a People’s Kitchen Volunteer)
☐ Legacy (complete details below and we will contact you)

Name: ____________________________
Address: ____________________________
Postcode: ____________________________
Telephone Number: ____________________________
Email: ____________________________

Registered Charity Number: 1036149

www.peopleskitchen.co.uk

Raise funds by shopping online

Did you know by shopping through easyfundraising.org.uk when shopping online you will raise funds for us at no extra expense to you?

Most major retailers, hotel booking sites, insurance companies etc donate. Don’t forget to go through the easyfundraising site first, then choose The People’s Kitchen and then continue as usual to shop.

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