

**Update on Horsham Y Centre Chaplaincy**

Hello! It has been quite some time since I was able to send you an update from the YMCA DLG Chaplaincy at Horsham Y Centre. We’ve all had a very turbulent year, and the young people we support at the Y Centre have had the brunt of the job losses, isolation, and deepening mental health struggles, many of whom were already experiencing these struggles pre-pandemic. But, they have prevailed, the staff have poured their hearts into supporting them during a year of no visitors, not even other professionals, and social isolation, and things are starting to look up, though we are of course taking every precaution.

Lives have been challenged and changed, and we’ve had to say goodbye to some of our volunteers too, including our volunteer Chaplains, who have been sorely missed by the residents over the pandemic period. But the good news is we are bringing regular Chaplaincy volunteering back over the coming weeks, in as Covid safe a way as possible. To those of you who may not be familiar with our volunteer Chaplaincy – here’s some insight:

Our volunteer chaplains are people of faith who give freely of their time and energy to cook a meal and sit and eat with the residents of the Y Centre, to listen and to build supportive relationships and, where asked, talk about faith or spirituality. It is really a precious time for the residents, many of whom look forward to these nights all week! The volunteers too speak of the positivity and joy they get from being there with the residents and listening to them. It really is a time for bringing God’s love into these places just by *being* with them, providing a need, a meal and a ‘homely’ atmosphere that they don’t get anywhere else.

*“It’s very rewarding to cook for the young people and to get to know them. The obvious benefits they are getting from the social opportunity of eating together is lovely to see.”* **Volunteer Chaplain, Horsham**

Chaplaincy will be happening every Thursday evening from 7.30pm at the Horsham Y Centre. Please let your churches and congregations know we are starting up again and if there are any you know who may be interested in volunteering in this capacity, please pass the information on.

Please do hold the Y Centre, and its chaplaincy evenings in your prayers, that the lives of each of the 50 young people may develop and flourish in their time there, and for the continuing presence of God’s love through volunteer chaplains, both current and future, to the young people supported by the Y Centre. Please also pray for the staff who work tirelessly to help them along their way.

If anyone would like to consider or feel called or ‘nudged’ to volunteer as a chaplain at Horsham, please do get in contact with me Samantha.burton@ymcadlg.org or 07557855779.