



COMMUNITY
CHAMPIONS

GET IN TOUCH Rohini, Jenny, Sam or Denise
9.00—5.00 Monday - Friday
Phone us 01858 439262
Email: champions@vasl.org.uk
Or call in to First Floor, Torch House,
Torch Way, Market Harborough LE16 9HL

Diary Dates Community Gatherings, for Project Members only

15 January 2.30 - 3.45pm MH Golf Club,
Gt Oxenden Rd, LE16 8ND, visit from Helen
Murray, Market Harborough Library.
5 February 2 - 3.15pm The Roebuck,
Rockingham Road, MH, LE16 7XY

New Volunteer Training 23 January 10am - 4pm

**Volunteer Newsletter
January 2019**



Your Local Charity Improving Lives

The 2019 Community Champions Calendar is now available please contact the office if you would like one, free to volunteers and clients.

December Gathering 50 people met for the December Community Gathering. Volunteers had helped set up the room with festive table cloths and they hosted tables, bringing drinks to each client to enjoy with their mince pies and shortbread. There was time to chat and catch up with friends and talk to new people. Rohini gave a few short notices and thanked everyone for their participation in making 2018 another successful year for the Community Champions project. Denise distributed calendars and Jenny and Sam mingled to catch up with everyone. The Christmas tree lights sparkled as the 12 ladies from Kibworth Ladies Choir sang carols and encouraged everyone to join in. Some people, including the Choir ladies, had donned festive wear – and looked wonderfully colourful in their Christmas jumpers, T shirts, earrings and elf costumes.

Our Christmas celebration was enjoyed by all, although it was suggested a microphone would be helpful in making sure that everyone could hear what was said. One client even recognised the midwife who had helped her deliver her child a few decades ago, what an amazing coincidence!

A Big Thank You to everyone who helped make the event so special. "Thank you all for a lovely afternoon. Lots of friends chatting, laughing and singing. Lovely choir too. Very special. Just lovely to know you all care".

"Once again a great gathering. It was lovely, also the girls with their singing was really good to start the run up to Christmas. Lovely cakes!!".



VASL news * The 2018 Annual Review is now on our website see this link: vasl.org.uk/annual-review-2018 This explains how VASL projects help local people.

* Shopping on Amazon? VASL is now registered as one of the charities that shoppers can ask Amazon to donate to. It costs nothing to the shoppers and Amazon give 0.5% of the value of your shop to us. Here is the link that will take you straight through to your Amazon account to support VASL: smile.amazon.co.uk/ch/1141274-0

Local info **Friendship Lunch** 2nd Wednesday of each month 12 - 3pm 9 January, 13 February The Royalist, Western Ave, MH, call 01858 438080 to book, £7 for 2 course meal, raffle etc.
Tea @ Three January 27, 'New Year, New Discoveries' tel David 07505 968767 for details
Angel Ears Bereavement Support Thursdays 7-9pm Jan 17, Feb 28, March 28 meets at Enigma, Coventry Road, MH, all welcome tel Nic 07534 26309 for details



Community Champions is funded by the Big Lottery



VASL Registered Charity No. 1141274

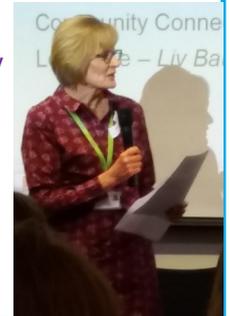
Company Registration No. 7517828



Leicestershire Loneliness Summit

Volunteer Helen and Rohini represented VASL Community Champions at the summit which brought together 90 people interested in tackling loneliness across all age groups. Speakers from The Red Cross and the BBC Loneliness experiment gave global and national perspectives about the extent and types of loneliness, and possible ways of tackling it. All agreed loneliness was a societal problem and unique solutions are needed for each individual. Local examples of action were then given by MP Neil O'Brien, the Derbyshire Community Connector Service and Community Champions. Helen explained why she chose to volunteer with Community Champions "I really liked the focus of building a community and enabling older people to acquire digital skills". Peter, the client was unable to come on the day but his story was shared and well-received. He says "you have done so much for me – I love my volunteer visits, the training and the gatherings – there's always a lot going on!". VASL would like to say a huge thanks to Peter and Helen for their involvement in such a big event, they are fantastic ambassadors! LCC have signed the Campaign to End Loneliness Pledge and have launched a 'Within your Gift' campaign encouraging LCC residents to reach out to lonely people:

www.leicestershire.gov.uk/news/helping-to-tackle-loneliness-is-within-your-gift



About 60 people, volunteers and staff, met at the VASL Volunteer Christmas party. This was a chance for VASL to thank every volunteer for the time and passion they give VASL to help improve the lives of young carers, carers, lonely, isolated or housebound older people. Volunteers felt really valued and enjoyed the raffle, ambience, drinks and buffet, Nickie's speech, the powerful VASL film and the chance to talk to staff. All the party ingredients came together to create some magical Christmas sparkle. A big well-done to the Business Support Team, Jo, Crystal and Nickie, who organised the event. Volunteers commented: "Such a lovely get together last evening. Huge thank you to all who contributed to our party, so appreciated, so many people with big hearts. You have made such a difference to my life. Given me confidence, made me feel good about myself and helped me make new friends. Most of all, to know that as I get older and things change, I am not alone. I can only say thank you". "Just to say a very big THANK YOU for last night. I really enjoyed myself meeting new people and the food was great. Without you and your staff there would be a lot of lonely people in and about the Harborough area, it is a pleasure to serve you". "VASL makes a huge difference to the purpose and satisfaction of the Volunteers - believe me, you have!!".

Volunteer Party

Wendy from the East Carlton Knit and Natter (KaN) group delivered 40 beautiful handmade Christmas cards which will be posted on to some clients. Rohini asked Wendy to thank each member of the KaN group for their kindness and passed on a Community Champions calendar as a token of our appreciation. Rohini reflected "These cards will be cherished by clients and bring much joy. It is a really thoughtful gesture and shows what caring communities we have in our area". "The KaN group enjoyed making the cards and we had an interesting discussion about loneliness in our local communities and thought about what we could do to help. It is a massive national issue and could affect anyone" said Wendy. A speaker from our team will visit the KaN group to explain what we do to help people reconnect with their communities physically and online.

Knit and Natter Cards

Denise said "I really enjoyed meeting Wendy and the cards are so creative, I love all the festive images and the message which reads 'this card is sent with many good wishes not just for Christmas but the whole year through' is perfect". This initiative reflects the true sentiments of Christmas beautifully.



Have you been given a piece of technology for Christmas, but you're not sure what to do with it? Our digital volunteers can help with mobile phones, tablets (e.g. iPad) and laptops. They visit you at home and take things at your pace. They are VERY patient! We have helped people from 62-97 years old, so don't use age as an excuse! There is no charge and it just takes a phone call to get some help, call Jenny on 01858 439262.

Digital Support

