

The Vision

Thriving communities that are engaged in shaping and improving health and wellbeing with their families, friends and neighbours, see the places below.

1 Dalgarno

Focus: Five Dalgarno 'wedge' estates, hosted by Dalgarno Trust

- 1 Webb Close, Dalgarno Way, W10 5QB
- Catherine:
catherine@dalgarnotrust.org.uk
or call 07511 915094
- Website: www.dalgarnotrust.org.uk

2 Notting Dale

Focus: Lancaster West, Silchester East and West and Bramley House estates, hosted by the Volunteer Centre Kensington and Chelsea (VCKC)

- 1 Thorpe Close, W10 5XL
- Ewa: ewa.kasjanowicz@vckc.org.uk
or call 07961 232431
- Facebook @nottingdale
- Twitter @ndchampions

4 Earls Court Light pilot

Focus: SW5 and SW10, hosted by Earls Court Youth Club

- 120 Ifield Rd, SW10 9AF
- Leny: Leonora.Ghazal@ecyc.co.uk
or call 07557 237697
- Website:
www.earlscourtyouthclub.co.uk

3 Golborne

Focus: Wornington Green and Swinbrook estates and Kensington, hosted by Venture Community Association (VCA)

- 103 Wornington Road, W10 5YB
- Ellen: (Community Champions):
ellen@venturecentre.org.uk
or call 07495 351312
- Instagram @golbornecommunity
- Facebook @Golborne-Community
- Twitter @GolborneChamps

3 Kensington and Chelsea Maternity Champions

Borough Manager, hosted by VCA

- Sonja: sonja@venturecentre.org.uk
or call 07495 702738

5 Chelsea

Focus: Samuel Lewis, Sutton Dwellings and Wilshire Close estates, hosted by SMART London

- 15 Gertrude Street, The Basement, SW10 0JN
- Marsha: marsha.sorrell-smith@smartlondon.org.uk
or call 07407 194694
- Facebook @ChelseaCommunityChampions
- Website: www.smartlondon.org.uk

6 World's End and Cremorne

Focus: World's End and Cremorne estates, hosted by Chelsea Theatre

- 7 World's End Place, King's Road, SW10 0DR
- Matt: matt@chelseatheatre.org.uk
or call 07597 565494
- Website: www.chelseatheatre.org.uk/activities



For information about the programme contact:
Programme Manager
Lesley Derry:
lderry@westminster.gov.uk



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF
KENSINGTON
AND CHELSEA

Introduction

Our Community Champions programme has always had a vision to achieve communities that are engaged in shaping and improving health and wellbeing with their families, friends, neighbours and wider community.

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and the disparities in those most severely affected, this has become more important than ever. Rewind a year and few of us could have imagined the changed world in which we would find ourselves.

Community and Maternity Champions come from some of our most diverse communities and have risen heroically to this challenge. They have been working tirelessly throughout this pandemic to offer support and assistance; mobilising and responding flexibly to the needs of their communities and, especially, the most vulnerable residents within those communities - all with empathy, humour, passion and creativity.

This year's report highlights and recognises the enormous efforts and contributions of our Champions in its many different forms throughout the pandemic. To really see those efforts brought to life spare a few minutes to view the film we made for our conference in November 2020:

[Champions during COVID: 2020-21](#)

Read on to catch a glimpse of how our Champions flexed and redoubled their efforts to support their communities, and continue to do so, through the most challenging of times and, for some, personal loss and tragedy. This report offers a few highlights from a relentlessly busy year and puts a spotlight on just three of our Community and Maternity Champions. The data infographics meanwhile illustrate the spike in reach achieved as a result of the extensive programme of online activity that has taken place.

Lesley Derry

Lesley Derry
Community Champions
Programme Manager



Community and Maternity Champions help safeguard their neighbourhoods from COVID-19

The Community and Maternity Champions swung into action as soon as the pandemic hit, undertaking the steepest of learning curves while moving activities online and continuing to share accurate public health messages in their neighbourhoods:

- Supporting vulnerable residents with phonline and, when possible, socially distanced face to face support
- Helping with shopping, prescription deliveries, food banks, food distribution networks and digital support
- Supporting the mass vaccination sites, community pop-ups and vaccine bus
- Aiding council and NHS response by feeding back insight from residents

One Champion, Comfort, who volunteered at the RHS Lindley Hall vaccine hub commented: *“It was good to be able to volunteer and to be given the opportunity to receive the vaccine. I felt great to be part of the millions of people who had received the vaccine jab. Glad also to say, I didn’t have any*

reactions after and would encourage everyone to take the vaccine when offered.”

Between February and March 2021, all the Community Champions’ projects took part in hosting and promoting a much appreciated series of online **Vaccine Community Conversations** over Zoom. Delivered in partnership with North West London NHS and some very proactive GPs from the **Community Immunity** initiative, the twelve sessions were attended by over 360 residents from some of our most diverse neighbourhoods and with the highest health

inequalities in our boroughs. Three of these were delivered



in Arabic with an Arabic-speaking GP, to some 91 residents. This session was recorded and edited offering a usable online resource for our Arabic-speaking communities: [Arabic COVID-19 workshop delivered by Dr Dina Ashraf - YouTube](#)

Many attendees were hesitant about having the vaccine and most had an array of concerns, anxieties and clinical questions which the GPs were able to help with. Feedback suggested that most participants left the sessions more likely to take up the vaccine as a result of these conversations:

“It was a good session, and my question was answered like many others here so thank you for organising this.”

“ Thank you so much everyone! Very insightful and helpful. ”

“An excellent and very informative session - an hour seemed too short thank you so much to the host, organisers and speakers” ... “Thank you, everything was clear and made sense to me and thanks for answering my question.”



‘Rise’, the first virtual Community Champions conference

Our 8th Annual Conference in November 2020 was also our first virtual conference as the programme adapted to a ‘new normal’. Given the title ‘Rise’, it denotes rising through adversity and rising to the challenges, personal and community issues presented by COVID-19.





Going virtual wasn't the only first, for the first time we had Community Champions hosting. Bibiana and Christopher rose to the occasion, providing a perfect co-hosting double act. Cllr Cem Kemahli, Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health at Kensington and Chelsea Council opened the event with warm words and welcomes. Following an action-packed morning, full of fun and tears, Cllr Tim Mitchell, Westminster City Council's Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health, closed the event with his reflections and thanks.

In the lead up to the conference the projects had been busy preparing videos, art, poems, photos and spoken word which premiered as films during the event. As these were shown, the chat section of Zoom lit up and showed how moved people were by the performances. Community Champion, Fionalees's Rise Again song performance at the end of the event raised the virtual roof!

[Let Us Rise Spoken Word](#)
[Rise Again - Fionalees](#)

Over 180 delegates logged on to the event, more than half of which were our Champion volunteers, the remainder our partners from all sectors. It was wonderful to see so many of our Champions embracing technology and enjoying the virtual experience.

Peter Merrifield from SWIM Enterprises delivered a thought-provoking keynote speech and Q&A on Black Lives Matter and the disparities amplified by COVID-19 from his research in North Westminster.

Some fun mentimetre evaluation tools were used to sum up how everyone felt about the conference. Comments included: *"What a superb morning, I am so impressed, it is a privilege to be invited to the conference and seeing the journey over the past eight years is wonderful" ... "I can't stop crying it is amazing so moved and inspired." ... "This is a fab film and demonstrates the depth and breadth of the work you all do." ...*

"Really beautiful... and such a powerful film to see everything going on. The Champions are incredible."

"This is emotional, I felt like crying with happiness to be part of this."

Take a look at this short film to see the highlights:
[8th Annual Community Champions Conference Highlights 2020](#)



The Numbers

103



ACTIVE COMMUNITY AND MATERNITY CHAMPIONS AT YEAR END

3893



AVERAGE NUMBER OF UNIQUE INDIVIDUALS REACHED EVERY QUARTER

4903



VOLUNTEER HOURS WORKED

30513



ATTENDANCES, CONTACTS, VIEWS FROM ALL FACE TO FACE AND ONLINE ACTIVITIES, GROUPS AND PUBLIC HEALTH CAMPAIGNS



Spotlight on

Worlds End and Cremorne Community Champion, Maria

Maria, a Worlds End resident in her 70s who lives alone, is one of the project's newest Champions. In response to Champions' promotional efforts, Maria dropped in on one of the Community Conversations. This in turn led her to try the weekly Community Choir over Zoom which she still attends. She soon tried

most of the other weekly online activities on offer including the 'Time of Your Life' support group for over 55s – all of which she actively encouraged others to join. She commented, *"Thanks to these sessions, I no longer feel lonely or isolated as a result of lockdown life"*.

Through talking to project manager Matt and some of the Champions, Maria expressed an interest in becoming a Community Champion. She is now

volunteering with the project with the intention of supporting older people in the future. Maria said,

"I was amazed when I first came across the online sessions and how well supported the local community was through the Champions programme. After taking part in many of the online activities I jumped at the chance to volunteer and become a Champion myself. I've already started helping over 55s with physical activities and with lockdown easing I'm looking forward to doing so much more whilst I'm being trained up as a Champion."



Supporting older people in Earls Court

The Earls Court Champions Light pilot project was supporting older residents via a weekly Wellbeing Breakfast Club and chair-based exercise and self-massage sessions. With the first lockdown, the mostly over 70s had to stay at home; several of them shielding with a number of health conditions.

The Breakfast Club quickly adapted to become a weekly hot meal cooking and delivery service. Within two to three weeks vulnerable older residents were receiving a nutritious hot meal every week. Referrals from organisations such as Citizens Advice and local ward councillors soon resulted in a reach to some 95 older residents, several of whom were isolated to the point that they saw nobody else in the week. This was accompanied by a weekly wellbeing phone contact service followed up with signposting and referral to other services, prescription collections and personal shopping as needed. Those in financial hardship received free food packages and by popular demand, everyone received a recipe book produced by the Champions so they could reproduce the healthy meals delivered.



Loosening of lockdown allowed walking and photography to take place from September: a 40-minute photography walk round Brompton Cemetery got people out of the house and moving again. The walks ended at a local café with a socially distanced outdoor coffee and breakfast together. With the second lockdown, the food service resumed, accompanied by updates and guidance on COVID-19 and a weekly video series on how to self-massage in the home and other self-care exercises from a professional massage therapist.

Breakfast Club member John exemplifies the benefits. Having seen the promotional leaflet at his GP surgery, he decided to go along. He used to spend most of

his time at home on his own and wasn't aware of services on offer locally. Since becoming a member John has made new friends and takes part regularly in all activities. He is particularly engaged with the chair-based exercise, massage and healthy breakfast.

John says,

“I don't feel lonely anymore – these sessions are the highlight of my week because I now feel part of a community.”

Sewing classes at Dalgarno

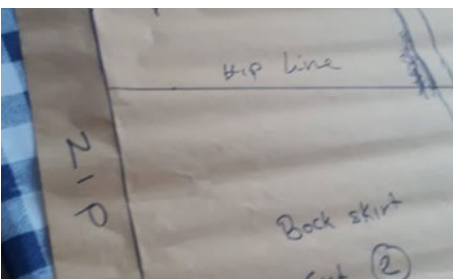
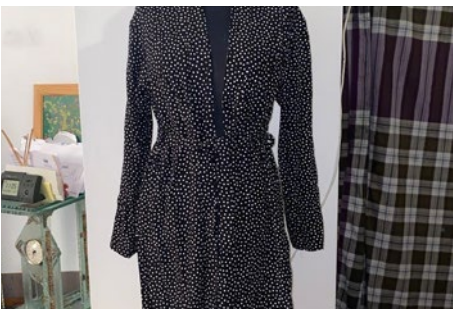
Dalgarno Community Champions got going mid-pandemic at Dalgarno Trust. With a dynamic new manager starting during a lockdown, the timing couldn't have been more challenging. Nevertheless, she soon got to grips with volunteer recruitment and online delivery.

The weekly sewing session was one of the first things to return by popular demand over Zoom. The ten strong women's group adopted the new way of working very quickly and any problems created by technology were soon outweighed by the benefits of being able to be in the supportive and social group.

As well as a place for learning new skills the group soon became a respite space with conversation

covering everything from lockdown life and home-schooling challenges to the impact on household income and views on vaccines. The women made lounge wear, hats and even pyjamas over the last three months of the year. Three participants commented, "Thank you for the lovely sewing class. It's good to learn new skills." ... "Many thanks to Aishca for teaching us online as this is more difficult than face to face."

“Thank you for your time. I really enjoyed the lessons. I was able to challenge myself and learned many new skills along the way.”



Community Conversations at Worlds End and Cremorne

Worlds End and Cremorne Champions project activity quickly switched to online delivery from April due to lockdown measures, developing Chelsea Theatre's 'virtual venue' to continue engaging with residents at a time when support was most needed.

Beginning with three online Zoom sessions, activity soon grew to 10-12 weekly health and wellbeing sessions, many of them designed to support physical activity at home, as well as the ever popular Community Choir. Some of these activities achieved record attendance numbers due to the convenience of new online/virtual mediums, while those needing digital support were helped to access sessions.

Amongst these, a weekly, and later monthly, online **Community Conversation** was introduced in response to the first lockdown. Continuing all year, it sought to highlight public health and NHS messaging about fighting COVID-19 as well as covering a range of wider health and wellbeing topics. Facilitated by the Community Champions project manager, guest speakers discussed their subject areas and answered questions from residents. The sessions were very well received due to their ability to deliver accurate and up to date health messages directly to the community.

Community Champions promoted and actively participated in the conversations and, in turn, cascaded

the latest health information amongst their resident networks. Each session was promoted through local mutual aid groups and resident association WhatsApp groups, as well as being emailed to more than one hundred local community stakeholders.

With an average weekly attendance of 30, interest and participation was significant. The model demonstrated its strengths later in the year when over 70 residents attended the first of three **Vaccine Community Conversations** (see page 3).

Many residents commented that these sessions became their main source of information in relation to COVID-19. For example, following a Vaccine Community Conversation, a resident revealed they were an undocumented migrant and, having learnt that they were eligible for the vaccine under the Government's amnesty programme, committed to having their first vaccine. Earlier in the year, a Cremorne estate resident disclosed they felt on the brink of suicide having struggled to access mental health services. Community Conversations enabled them to be connected to West London CCG who

immediately took action to source support. Another Cremorne resident, a single parent, suddenly found herself needing to access emergency food support for her young family. She had never been in this position before and did not know who to turn to; however due to Community Conversations promotion via WhatsApp she was immediately signposted to the nearest Food Banks and registered for support.

One resident fed back: *"Hi Matt. Just dropping you a quick line to say that I was thoroughly impressed with your community conversations this morning. To get 70 people turn up so close to Christmas is an achievement at any time, but to get that amount during a pandemic you should feel really proud of yourself. On top of that it was really high quality and well-organised and well facilitated."*

A colleague from NHS Imperial College Healthcare Trust commented, *"Hi Matt. It was fantastic to join your last Community Conversation. It was really powerful to see so many people attend and for them to be able to get answers to their questions and concerns when they needed it."*





Storytelling in Golborne

Maternity Champion, Jaya, had previously been delivering face to face storytelling workshops to parents and carers, and babies and children from the Wornington Green and Swinbrook Estates.



She amplified the stories with rhythm, voices, facial expressions, gestures, tone and volume in order to add interest, support bonding and inspire creativity. During the first lockdown, Jaya began recording her stories live over YouTube so that parents could not only watch in real time, but also watch later to suit their schedules and as many times as they wished. She used her memories and imagination to create stories based on her own childhood experiences, as well as adapting stories she had been told as a child by her parents and grandparents. She used this approach to encourage parents to reflect on their own culture, memories and history to create stories of their own to pass on to their children.

Trying out different styles of storytelling such as faster or slower; linking words to actions; the sessions supported social and motor skills and speech and language development of younger children, at a time when the pandemic prevented parents from engaging in regular early years services.

The sessions supported the wellbeing of parents who were isolated during lockdown and offered some respite from the day-to-day challenges of being at home all day with young children. Feedback from parents known to the project suggested that the sessions created a valued resource that parents could return to for repetition to support children's learning as well as enhance confidence in their own storytelling and reflective skills.

One parent fed back,

“ My son giggled and rubbed his tummy when the Rumble in the Tumble section of the story came up. So, he connected the actions with the words which was great at helping him learn new words and their meanings. ”

Another parent said, *“I was at a train station and my train was delayed – I didn't have any books or toys with me and my child began to get fractious. I found I had the confidence to make up a story to entertain him, something I would never have done before”.*

Addressing food poverty in South Kensington

During the first lockdown, Chelsea Champions, along with RBKC and SMART, responded to an evolving food poverty crisis to start a Food Bank on the Sutton Estate for vulnerable residents and those who were shielding.

The Champions helped to pack and deliver food parcels. One of the main developments from this was the Food Parcel Service, an emergency food distribution service for under 65s alongside a partnership with Age UK to make food referrals for over 65s.

Working on the ground helped with community insights to see what other local support could be offered. Several Community Champions offered to help each week, gaining community intelligence, identifying

residents that needed financial support, signposting to emergency grants and supporting many residents with enduring mental health issues. Here's what some residents said:

Monica (who had the virus) said: *"I have no words to express my huge gratitude for all your support. I'm still in shock for the food that was delivered yesterday for my kids and me. You bless us all so much. Please let me know if I can do anything for you or your team".*



A Wiltshire Close resident said:

"I can't believe it, thank you so much. We were down to our last £2, this is going to help so much. My husband stopped paying child support and I'm disabled. I'm embarrassed to ask for help but don't know what to do."



Online support groups at Notting Dale

Two months in to the first lockdown Notting Dale Champion, Lais, started a weekly group on Zoom to provide an emotional cushion for residents, who often reported feeling overwhelmed and stressed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Having decided that the group should have a positive message Lais named it ‘Good News Chat Group’. Each week Lais presented inspiring and uplifting stories, often illustrated by YouTube videos, which then became a starting point for discussion. The group was supported by colleagues from the Grenfell Wellbeing Service, who shared their expertise on emotional wellbeing.

The benefits of this group are best summed up by participant, Malcolm:

“I had really no idea what to expect when I started, but I’ve found it surprisingly rewarding and have participated in every session. I’ve found some aspects positively helpful. Recalling how things felt in May, when normal social contact had been suspended and no-one knew when it might resume, it would have been all too easy to fall into a state of lethargy and depression. Having the Good News Chat Group, and a small number of other things, to look forward to at a regular time each week was something I found surprisingly helpful in giving the week some sense of structure. It’s also offered social contact, in a relaxed and friendly way, which was very welcome for someone like me who lives on their own. Lais has managed to find intriguing and thought-provoking topics to discuss, that I wouldn’t otherwise have encountered. A lot of thought and effort went in to choosing and introducing the videos each week, for no material reward, by Lais, who

is a volunteer. That kind of unselfish altruism is in itself inspirational and has helped refresh my faith in human nature”.

Later in the year, Notting Dale Champions began a weekly **Diabetes Support Group** over Zoom in partnership with Age UK Kensington and Chelsea and local health professionals, Dr Joan St John and Razia Amin, diabetes nurse consultant. Participants discussed food, medication, physical activity and received tips on making the most of medical care available. There was always an opportunity to ask questions and those with more complex needs received additional support outside of the sessions.

Feedback received from one of the participant’s support workers sums up the benefits:

X reported,

“ It’s great! My diabetes is now much more stable and I’m able to exercise. I enjoy the course because the hosts, the doctor and nurse are not only very knowledgeable but also very nice. ”

The support worker continued,

“ X said she liked the fact that she could ask questions and found particularly helpful the one-to-one support call you arranged with specialist diabetes nurse Razia, who picked up an important change in X’s insulin medication which was passed on to her GP. Thank you for all your valuable work and the difference it makes to our members’ lives. ”



“I just wanted to thank you for X’s participation in your online diabetes support group. I have seen the effort she puts in to managing her health and diabetes. She lives alone and a lot of her routine and time goes in her attempts to maintain a healthy diet, monitor medication and cook from scratch. For a while X was feeling upset, not able to control her insulin dependent diabetes no matter what she did. Just prior to the group I could see how this situation was getting very frustrating and difficult for her. After X attended just a few sessions I observed a big change in her feeling happier and more empowered with her ability to manage her condition.”



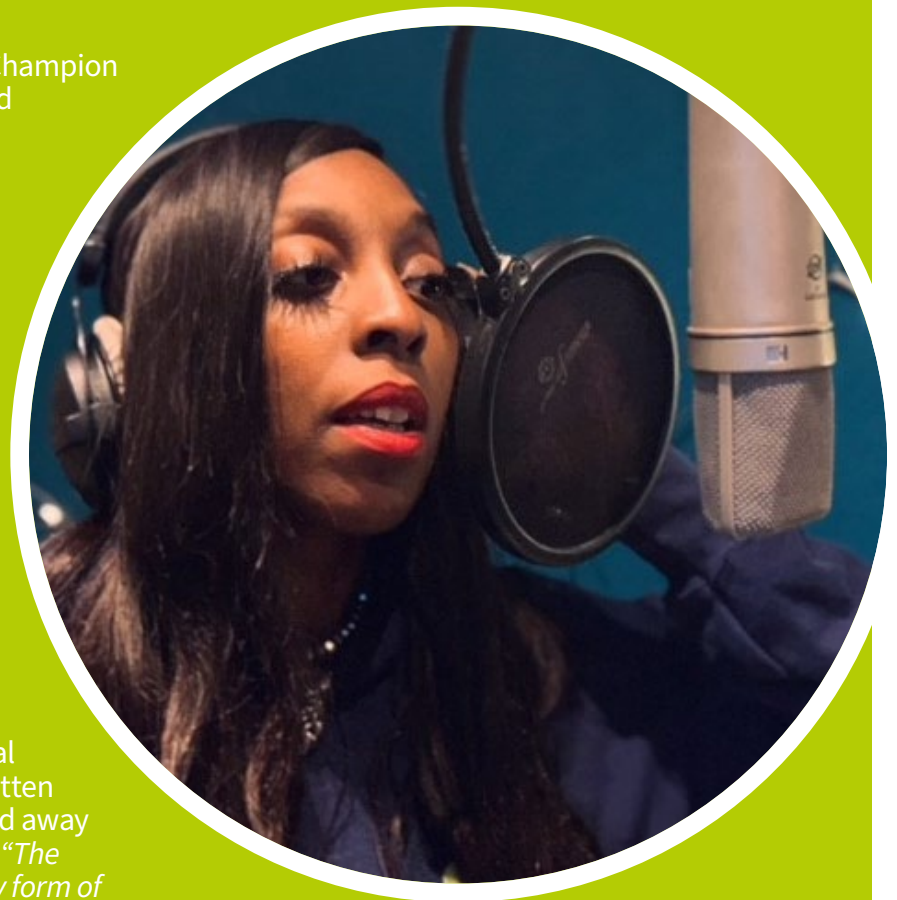
Spotlight on

Golborne Community Champion, Fiona

Fiona became a Golborne Community Champion six months before the first lockdown and wanted to volunteer by offering vocal coaching workshops. Fiona is a local resident as well as a singer-songwriter, vocal and spoken word coach. Spoken word is another form of expression that can support wellbeing and, having found out there was interest amongst residents, Fiona worked with project manager Ellen and the other Champions, to start some workshops. A later series of workshops with Champions reflecting on their thoughts and experiences during the pandemic led to a spoken word performance at the November 2020 virtual conference. View 'Let Us Rise' in the Conference feature (page 5).

Fiona herself performed her own original song, 'Rise Again' at the Conference. Written the night her brother Carlos sadly passed away in April 2020 from COVID-19, Fiona says, *"The song is for all who have gone through any form of adversity and is a heartfelt and gripping account of what truly happens when you are in the midst of the darkness, which effectively leads you on a quest to attain enlightenment"*. View Fiona's talented and moving performance in the Conference feature (page 5).

When asked about her experience of volunteering as a Community Champion, Fiona reflected, *"Being a Community Champion has really made me connect more with the local community. I have had the opportunity to meet some wonderful people who have come from many different backgrounds."*



The best bit, above all, is engaging and helping others to unlock their true potential by gaining confidence in their art. I stand proud in wearing my Community Champions sweatshirt and I am grateful and humbled to be a part of this awesome conference today. I too have gained confidence whilst being a Community Champion and I always feel guided and supported by my Community Champion Project Manager, Ellen".



Yoga at Chelsea

Project manager Marsha reflects, “As the new year started, we were entering a pandemic and our main challenge was to come up with new ways of continuing our wellbeing activities in lockdown. We suspended classes immediately and focused on working out alternative methods. By the end of April, ten

activities were live and two Maternity Champion sessions started in May in collaboration with Golborne Community Champions project. Most classes were run live on Zoom, except for two, which were pre-recorded on YouTube and Facebook. The majority of the online activities have had great feedback and good attendance from our residents.”

distanced face to face outdoor yoga take place in the lovely Sutton Estate’s Sunken Garden, giving the residents an opportunity to be outside in the fresh air.

Participant Veronika said, “I’m having the best day for weeks Marsha, thank you so much for organising it and Tania, you are an absolute sunshine, thank you so much for sharing your energy and skill with us.”

A Sutton Estate resident with mobility issues and long-term mental health issues said,

“ This service is a lifesaver for me - thank you all for your hard work. ”

Amongst its 10-12 weekly activities throughout the year, Chelsea Champions moved its popular yoga class online within two weeks of the first lockdown starting. Demand soon grew from residents across its three estates who were isolated at home. Over the year three more online classes were added at different times and days of the week, including hatha and yin yoga and a parent and baby yoga session. The lifting of lockdown last summer, also saw several weeks of socially





Spotlight on

Notting Dale Community Champion, Lais

Lais has been volunteering with the Notting Dale project for several years, always engaged and enthusiastic about improving residents' health and wellbeing. When the COVID-19 pandemic started, the daily news was really frightening and depressing. Lais observed how it affected people's mental wellbeing and decided to create a Good News Chat session to offer an emotional cushion, so much needed at that time. Throughout the summer she would research topics that were inspiring, interesting or funny, and present them during weekly Zoom sessions.

Participants learnt about sometimes new and unexpected topics such as the last traditional paper mill to exist in the UK; laughed watching a hilarious video of a toddler helping to bake a cake; and were inspired by the different ways people around the world tried to cheer and support each other during lockdown. They often commented on how much better they felt after each session - more optimistic and hopeful. Some of them, presented with a topic that was very interesting and new to them, would end up doing additional research.

Later in the year, Lais got involved in promoting the COVID-19 vaccine. She supported a pop-up clinic on Lancaster West Estate as well as the vaccine bus on Portobello Road, helping to take people's temperature, ushering them and sharing information about the vaccine. She also supported several individuals with additional health needs, who were confused about how and when they can be vaccinated.



Here's what Lais says about her recent volunteering experience, *"Volunteering during the pandemic made me feel part of the community and engage with it in a meaningful way. The effort and time dedicated for each meeting were paid off when I saw each smile and listened to the discussions generated from what was presented. Likewise about vaccination centres, to see that I can contribute to my community is rewarding and it was what helped me move on in such strange times."*

With Thanks To...



For information about the programme contact:

Programme Manager, Lesley Derry: lderry@westminster.gov.uk

info@communitychampionsuk.org www.communitychampionsuk.org