



Evergreen Leaves

"But blessed are those who trust in the LORD ... they are like trees planted along a riverbank ... their leaves stay green and they never stop producing fruit." - Jeremiah 17:7-8 (NLT)



NEWSLETTER OF EVERGREEN CARE BEXLEY



EVERGREEN CARE BEXLEY

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Charity No. 1154595

DATES FOR YOUR

DIARY

Befrienders Get Together

Thursday 6th Oct
5-7pm, Refresh Centre at
Belvedere Baptist Church

Induction Day

Saturday 15th Oct
9-4pm, Belvedere Baptist
Church

Harvest Festival and Barn Dance

In aid of Evergreen

Saturday 24th Sept Kelsey
Farm, Water Lane, Sidcup,
DA14 5ET

3pm Saturday Service
4.30pm Outside adventure
play

6.30-9.30pm Barn Dance
And evening buffet!

For tickets contact
Pam 020 8304 8339

Volunteer Fair

Tuesday 20th Sept
11-1pm Crayford Manor
House

Living with Hearing Loss Course by DeafPlus

Thursdays until 29th
September. 1.30pm-3.30pm
at Bexley Deaf Centre, 20
Whitehall Lane, DA8 2DH.
Call Faye 020 8315 2550
Faye.routledge@deafplus.org

Government Consultation on Attendance Allowance Your help needed!

The Government has started consultation on abolishing Attendance Allowance. This benefit is a lifeline to many older people who are unable to access services from their local council.

Attendance Allowance has been a vital means of support for older people with a disability or long term illness. This benefit gives those who claim the ability to remain independent for longer, and it reduces the risk of their circumstances deteriorating. It helps vulnerable people afford extra care, home support and help with grocery shopping. These forms of care/support may be the only opportunity for conversation and social interaction that the claimant has. Attendance Allowance can also go towards heating the home in the cold months, travel costs, and much more.

Withdrawing the Attendance Allowance could cause disaster to those who rely on this support, and the repercussions can spread, affecting those closest to the claimants.

Please sign the petition and spread the word to your friends and contacts.

<https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/attendance-allowance-abolished>

For more information visit

evergreencarebexley.org/attendance-allowance/

Evergreen Members Recognised in BVSC Awards 2016

Bexley Voluntary Service Council held their annual Volunteer Celebration Award at Bexleyheath Marriott Hotel on 16/06/2016 to celebrate and recognise the excellent work that volunteers do, freely giving their time to make a positive impact in the community through local voluntary organisations. Attendees included The Mayor of Bexley, Councillor Eileen Pallen, and guest speaker James Bank of Greater London Volunteering.

Congratulations to everyone nominated for awards across the eight categories including Office Support, Community Volunteers, Trustee Award, and Caring Award. To our delight, three of our volunteers were nominated - Befriender Danita Hooker, nominated for the Caring Award, Volunteer Coordinator Jan Cooper, nominated for the Office Support award... and finally, Chris Bryant who won the Trustee Award!



BVSC Awards 2016 Cont.

So many volunteers give their time freely to Evergreen and our clients, and it is thanks to them that we are able to reach so many people and make a lasting difference. Congratulations, and thank you to you all.

Befriending Service - A Testimonial of another Successful Friendship

The privilege we have serving our clients is second to none. Below Pam, one of our lovely Befrienders, is enjoying time with her client, Mary.



On asking our client, "Do you enjoy your Befriender?" she replied, "Yes, I so look forward to her visits, she is great company, she has sorted out my cupboard and sold wool, and clothes for me, she is like a friend."

Mary's son had this to say: "We have seen that our mum has considerably benefitted from help, support and friendship from Pam and the Evergreen Care Bexley team, and it is a TEAM. We have no doubt that others will also [benefit], and would have no reservations in recommending Evergreen Care Bexley if individuals and/or their families are considering using this support service."

Update from Befriending Lead Jane Goddard

It's now 8 months since I first started working for Evergreen.. It is always humbling to visit our amazing clients and to listen to their stories and lives. They have so much to give and share.

So much wisdom and perspective is gained when seen through the eyes of an older person. It weighs heavily to see the loneliness across our Borough, proven by the increase in referrals we receive, and the need for more Volunteer Befrienders, but the joy it brings from seeing the difference we are making outweighs the pressures, I am overwhelmed by the happiness and changes our Befriending service makes.

One particular comment that stands out from our recent visits is from a gentleman who said:

"My befriender brings the outside world in."

We had our first Volunteer Coffee morning on the 22nd June. This was a time for volunteers to get together over a cup of coffee and share experiences. I am hoping that this will be quarterly, with another two before Christmas. I wanted to really express our thanks and appreciation to our volunteers—without them the difference they make to so many lives through our Befriending could not happen.

Our volunteers engage with clients in conversation, activities, knitting, games, reading, all sorts, the list goes on and on—it really is an ordinary friendship.

When I sent out a questionnaire in July to all Befriending Volunteers, I wasn't sure what the response would be. I have had many returned and the comments have been so encouraging and helpful to address any concerns Befrienders may have.

I asked questions such as:

- *What is it like Volunteering for Evergreen?*

- *What have you enjoyed so far?*

Here are just a few comments that stood out to me when reading the replies...

- *My befriender has been a perfect fit.*

- *The fact I make a difference.*

- *The relationship is two way and helped us both.*

- *Purposeful activity and enjoying serving others.*

- *Enhances my life and enriches it!*

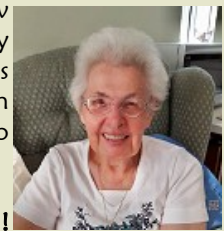
It highlighted to me that we all need to be active in intentional community engagement when we walk out our front door in the morning, check on a neighbour to see if they need any shopping, ask how they are... Those few seconds/minutes of interaction mean so much to a lonely, isolated person.

Thank you so much to all our volunteer befrienders, and everyone who is helping spread the word about Evergreen. There is so much more work to do, but with your help, anything is possible.



A Great Big Thank You To Christina Hulme

Befriending is in high demand, and we want to make sure we get it right from the start to help form a lasting friendship that is mutually beneficial for both the client and volunteer. With the help of Christina, no one is forgotten about. Christina maintains contact with our clients who are waiting for a Befriender, and sometimes she might be the only person they have spoken to in a day! That's not all she does for Evergreen... She is part of the Evergreen Knitters team, knitting baby clothes for newborns, up to one year, and all proceeds are donated to Evergreen. So if any babies you know would benefit from lovely hand-knitted clothes contact the Evergreen office and we will help you.



Thank you for all you do!

Befrienders' Tea Meetings

Our befriending service was the very first service we launched back in 2014. The benefits of this service for our clients are just as rewarding for the volunteer. We arranged a befrienders' tea morning earlier in the year where our volunteers gathered to relax, share experiences and have a great time getting to know one another, and this was a further means for us to provide the support to our befrienders.

Following the success of the last meeting, Evergreen's Befriending Lead Jane Goddard and our Volunteer Coordinator Jan Cooper are delighted to advise these meetings will be offered more regularly. We hope these meetings will continue to be just as well attended as the last, if not better! We also hope this brings an opportunity for others to come along and find out more about the work our volunteers do.

Befrienders, and anyone interested in becoming a volunteer, it would be great to have you with us at our next meeting.

Our next meeting will be on Thurs 6th October from 5-7pm at the Refresh Centre, 50 Nuxley Road, Belvedere, DA17 5JG. A further meeting will be confirmed before Christmas, but don't wait until then!

