

NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER 2024

THE 'KEEP THE HEID' NEWSLETTER!

From North Ayrshire Justice Services Service User Involvement Project



WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING?

It continues to be a busy time for Justice Services - especially with the Courts trying to bring cases to a resolution before the festive break. However, we're still doing our best to make sure all of our members are supported as best we can.

One of our project members was speaking to us about how much he has gotten out of the cooking challenge and how he appreciates the efforts put in to ensure this continues to run even when the team are so busy. He said that he really looks forward to it every month and has really benefited from doing it. Some of our other project members have confirmed that it has encouraged them to spend time with their family cooking and trying new recipes which is exactly what we hoped would happen when we started this during lockdown four years ago!

We wish everyone a happy and healthy Christmas and New Year!



RELEARNING WHO YOU ARE AND WHAT YOU CAN DO...



In this edition we have part 2 of Tony's story:

I was then transferred to another prison and that's when the proper help started. I spent 2018 to 2024 in that prison. During that time, I accessed mental health services and I met psychologists and psychiatrists, did bereavement counselling and worked with occupational therapists to learn decider skills. This helped me learn how to cope with my anger and process in a healthy way. Psychology helped me realise the person I was previous was just negative and basically made me realise everything was wrong. Being able to talk about the negative stuff that was affecting me really helped. I still continued my education but started to help other people better their education too which helped build my self-esteem. I was able to build positive relationships with chaplaincy and with some staff in prison. I was able to start thinking about different employment ideas and thinking about a positive future. I continued to go to AA meetings too.

I was also working every day in the timber shed. In the community I had never managed to maintain employment so this placement gave me an idea of what it would be like to work when I was released. I learned new skills while working in prison like building benches and tables. I was introduced to pyro graphic wood burning which is fire art which I had never heard of before and I was keen to learn it. So, it made me realise that I was able to listen and pay attention and take in the knowledge about that subject. I was able to focus and learn and that was something I had struggled with previously due to my main focus being on alcohol and gang violence.

During my time in prison without having alcohol, I was able to think clearly and achieve qualifications. I completed Recovery Coaching Scotland which was all about trauma and addiction. If I hadn't done the work with psychology beforehand, I would have struggled with this course however that gave me a better understanding about myself and more insight. I got back into going to the gym and playing football which is great for my mental health. I was able to speak about my life story for the first time in church.



RELEARNING WHO YOU ARE AND WHAT YOU CAN DO...



Prior to being released I was able to look up extra supports in the community by finding a book in the library which listed numerous support networks and opportunities. I wrote to pretty much everyone in the book and heard back from half. So I got involved with Connected Community who are a church related support group where they can work with prisoners being released and support from the moment they walk out the gates of the prison. They collect you and take you to the appointments you have that day to help with reintegration. They work with you for up to a year and they continue to be a good support to me and they open up other avenues and options too. On the first day I was released after I had done everything I needed to, I went down for a walk along the shore and enjoyed being by the sea again.

I've also maintained a good relationship with prison chaplains and have a good relationship with my job coach from prison still to this day. I also have a good relationship with prison fellowship coordinators as support.

I now have community addiction support in place, employability support and I'm working with a Desistance Officer too. I have my Social Worker who put me in touch with someone to allow me to share my story and be involved in the Making a Difference service user project.

What I've realised is that the support in prison will not come to you. You have to want to change and to better yourself and believe in a positive future. Thinking back now, when I did a course in prison it helped me realise the ripple effect of my offending. It's not just the individuals in gangs you're hurting it's friends and family and the wider community. I have hope now for my future and that I can make a positive impact on others. If you can give up everything for addiction, you can learn to give everything towards something positive. I recently spoke at a prison fellowship event in Perth in front of 90 people about my experiences and how to help other prisoners in prison. I could never have believed I would do something like that or any of the achievements I've made so far.

Thank you to Tony for sharing his story with us!



"Your life does not get better by chance; it gets better by change."

Jim Rohn

INFORMATION ON ANOTHER SERVICE IN OUR AREA...



There are a high number of carers in our community and we know that a great deal of our service users are involved with formal and informal caring roles for family members, friends and partners.

Carers Gateway North Ayrshire wanted to share with everyone information about the services and support they offer.

They offer online self-help for carers and support with local services and events, advice on carers rights, help to provide contact with other carers and financial support.

Please visit their website for more information and to access all of their support:

carersgateway.org.uk/north-ayrshire/



LAST BUT NOT LEAST...



In December we decided to set a wee challenge to see if we could make an affordable Christmas dinner so that our members could see that it doesn't need to cost the earth. We managed to do this meal for £2.60 per head and the feedback has been really positive.

Ingredients

(to make dinner for two)

- 2 x Chicken/Turkey Leg Quarters
- 4 x Potatoes
- 2 x Carrots
- 2 x Parsnips
- 6 x Brussel Sprouts
- 4 x Pigs in Blankets
- Gravy (1 x stock pot/1 tablespoon of flour/200ml water)
- 4 x Stuffing balls
- 1 tablespoon of Cranberry Sauce
- 4 tablespoons of Vegetable Oil
- 1 x Rosemary Sprig

Method

·Heat the oven to 180 degrees and place a baking tray in oven with Vegetable Oil.

·Peel the carrots and parsnips and cut into chunks lengthways and leave aside.

·Next peel and quarter the potatoes, place them in a pan with boiling water for 4 mins to part boil, drain them and with the lid on the pan gently shake them, then carefully add them to the baking tray, along with the carrots and parsnips and return to oven. Add a sprig of rosemary.

·Next peel off any loose leaves from the brussel sprouts, wash them and put aside.

·After parsnips, carrots and potatoes have been cooking for ½ hour carefully take out pan and turn the vegetables in the oil so they are fully coated. Then add the chicken/turkey pieces to the pan and return to the oven and continue to cook for another ½ hour.

·After a further ½ hour of cooking, again take the pan out and add the brussel sprouts, stuffing and pigs in blankets to the pan and put back into the oven for a further 15 minutes.

·Next add the flour, stock cube and a little water to a pan and mix to a smooth paste. Then add the pan to the hob and heat on a low heat gradually adding water, stirring all the time.

·Finally, after the contents of the baking tray have cooked for a further 15 minutes take it out of the oven and serve on a plate with the cranberry sauce and gravy.

·Eat and enjoy!

“THIS WAS ABSOLUTELY AMAZING. I’M SO SURPRISED IT’S SO AFFORDABLE TO HAVE A MEAL LIKE THIS”

(MAD PROJECT MEMBER)

SOME PHOTOS FROM THE COOKING CHALLENGE THIS MONTH...

**MERRY CHRISTMAS
FROM EVERYONE AT
THE
MAKING A
DIFFERENCE
PROJECT!**

