

SEPTEMBER 2021

# THE 'KEEP THE HEID' NEWSLETTER!

From North Ayrshire Justice Services Service User Involvement group



## WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING?

This month we have been discussing the idea of stigma with some of our service users. That idea that people are judged and discriminated against because of their mental health, addiction issues or their offending history. One of our service users spoke up about this after being referred to as "an addict" when they were attending a doctor's appointment regarding pain in their back. This was upsetting to them because they have been free from all illicit drug misuse for over seven years. It was disheartening to them that they are still viewed in this manner and although they spoke of trying not to let other people's opinions impact them, it still made them sad.

This seems to be a topic that comes up again and again with our service users and we wonder what it will take to change this? When can people move on from mistakes or struggles they've had in their past?

Never let the  
opinions of others  
become the  
measure of your  
self worth



# DOING THE BEST FOR YOUR COMMUNITY...



This month we visited another Community Food Larder in Ardrossan to learn a little more about what they are doing for the community.

The food larder we visited was the Whitlees Quaint Larder. When we arrived we spent time speaking to one of the volunteers who helps run the larder. She explained that most of the food larders are run following a similar model and are really focused on providing people the opportunity to get help with food and some toiletries whilst maintaining their dignity.

Anyone visiting the food larder will be asked to pay a membership fee of £3 per visit for families of up to four, and in return, can select a choice of food, including fresh produce, up to the value of £20. Larger families who require more food can pay £5 per visit to double their shopping.

Whilst at the Quaint Larder they showed us the community cafe they run at the community centre too. This is an amazing wee resource which is supported by volunteers from the community. Anyone can visit for a hot drink, lunches and home baking.

Although we'd recommend going before the local school lets out because it appears to be a popular spot for the kids to get some slushies and they descended on the cafe like they were going to battle!!

Much like the Wee Shoap in Kilwinning from last month's newsletter, this really is an excellent community resource and the staff are genuinely dedicated to help improve the lives of those living within their communities.

Anyone wishing to help support the work being done here can donate items to the Quaint Larder - non-perishable items are always gratefully received.

**“ALONE, WE CAN DO SO LITTLE; TOGETHER, WE CAN DO SO MUCH”**

**HELEN KELLER**



# A STORY OF RECOVERY INSIDE...



This month we spoke to Brian about what recovery has meant to him whilst he is serving a custodial sentence.

*"Hi everyone, my name is Brian and I'm an addict! Admitting this, whilst realising I needed help (and ultimately being finally ready to accept it) was, for me, the only way I was ever going to get free of drugs and begin the process of repairing my life.*

*By the time I had realised this, drug addiction had played a major role in my life for the best part of 30 years. This in turn led to a life of crime and prison – pain and destruction. I was so out of control I never thought about who I was hurting along the way. I was utterly selfish and impulsive, and I only ever thought about me and where I'd get my next fix from. I never thought about consequences. They were for later... when it was too late and the damage had been done. As long as I got what I wanted, that was all that seemed to matter at the time.*

*As time went on and my drug use became worse, I hated the person I'd become. I hated the life I was living – of course I did – but it was the only way I knew how to live at that time. Day to day, drugs ruled my life and I didn't know how to change it. I wasn't strong enough. I never had the courage, the willpower or the belief that I could do anything about it.*

*Of course I would say all the right things – usually when I was high – about this being the last time but they were just words because the minute I was straight again, it would be the same old, same old for me. I just couldn't stay clean for any significant amount of time and I would use any excuse.*

*Everything began to change for me around three years ago when someone who has become very special to me, came into my life. Someone who has cared for me and influenced me and who has supported me in the times when I was at my lowest. A person who has pointed me in the right direction, made me more self-aware and ultimately given me real hope for the future. One that can definitely be lived without drugs. I am very lucky that this amazing person came along at just the right time in my life and for that I will be forever grateful to them for it".*

Part Two of Brian's story will be in October's newsletter.

**"ONE OF THE MAIN THINGS THAT HAS CHANGED IS THAT I NOW HAVE HOPE... I HAVE HOPE AND BELIEF THAT I CAN HAVE A LIFE AWAY FROM DRUGS WHERE I CAN MAKE A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION TO THE WORLD".**



# LAST BUT NOT LEAST...



It's 'fake-away' chicken chow mein this month!

## Ingredients

Thumb-size piece of fresh root ginger  
2 garlic cloves  
3 tbsp tomato ketchup  
2 tbsp oyster sauce  
2 tbsp reduced-salt soy sauce  
1 large red pepper  
5 spring onions  
200g beansprouts  
1 large chicken breast  
3 packets of egg noodles  
1 tbsp sunflower oil

## Method

Remove the skin from the ginger using a peeler and grate 1 tbsp from the root. Put in a bowl, crush in the garlic and then add the oyster and soy sauce, ketchup and 3 tbsp water and stir them all.

Quarter the pepper and remove the insides and the stalk. Slice it into strips. Cut the ends off the spring onions and then chop them up.

Cut the chicken into bite-sized pieces.

Bring a pan of water to the boil and drop in the noodles. Turn off the heat and then after 4 minutes drain the noodles in a colander.

Heat the wok - it's hot enough when it starts to smoke. Add the oil and chicken. Keep moving the chicken around the wok until it is half white, half pink. Add the pepper and stir-fry for a further 1 minute. Pour the sauce into the wok and stir well until bubbling.

Add the noodles, beansprouts and spring onions a handful at a time, then toss into the sauce until it is well coated, stirring constantly until the beansprouts wilt. Serve in a bowl.

You can also add in lots of different types of vegetables and fruits - pineapple is one wee tip!

*"THIS RECIPE IS ONE I TURN TO ALL THE TIME.. IT'S A TREAT BUT IT FEELS HEALTHIER THAN ACTUALLY GETTING A TAKE-AWAY!"*

(MAD GROUP MEMBER)

