IMAGINE NORFOLK TOGETHER newsletter

The Rag Man

There was once a man made entirely of rags. His head was a dishcloth; his clothes a waterfall of fabric; his eyes cracks of blue silk and his mouth a crescent of scarlet velvet.

When the rag man arrived, children threw things at him, and parents, who thought nothing mattered more than being clean and tidy, locked their gates. He went to live in the park.

Then one day people started talking. "What's happening to the Rag man?" His locks of hair had been reduced to just a few strands. Even his face looked thinner. A woman, whose husband had recently died, said, "I feel so guilty. I should never have accepted the piece of cloth he gave me to dry my tears, but it reminded me of a shirt I made for my husband." A man, whose house had burnt down, said, "I was in despair and the Rag Man gave me a dish cloth. I felt better at once." And so, it went on.

The mayor stood up, "The Rag Man has been giving himself away to help others. It is up to us to give back what he has lost." People came from all over town and left clothes they no longer needed. The Rag Man became as colourful and as ragged as before and the townspeople recognised in his costume pieces they knew.

I came across this beautiful tale in an abridged version of 'Meet me at the Museum' by Anne Youngson[1]. It reminded me of a meeting I attended last week with a business network. One of their principles for success was to be generous. They believed that by helping others, they too would be helped. They called it 'Giver's Gain'.

When I first read Five Ways to Wellbeing, a report by the NHS[2], I was struck how being generous was highlighted as a key element to improving one's wellbeing. They called it 'Give'. Their advice was to:
Do something nice for a friend, or a stranger. Thank someone. Smile. Volunteer your time. Join a community group. Look out, as well as in. Seeing yourself, and your happiness, linked to the wider community can be incredibly rewarding and creates connections with the people around you.

It is hardly surprising that there is plenty of evidence to show that generosity is a key to happiness. Two thousand years ago Jesus made it one of his principles for living: "Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."[3]

Recently, I was asked to think of something positive that might have come out of the pandemic. What came to mind was the wonderful community spirit that so quickly emerged, and the way people volunteered their time, energy, and money, to help others. Generosity, displayed through numerous acts of kindness, was a feature of every community.

As our communities recover from the pandemic, it's my hope that our communities will continue to be places blessed with a spirit of generosity. If it is to be true of my community, I must ask myself, am I still willing to give?

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[1] Youngson A, 2018, *Meet me at the Museum*, Penguin Random House
[2] NHS Consortium, 2011 *Five Ways to Wellbeing*, New Economics Foundation
[3] Luke Chapter 6 verse 38, NIV

News
CAP King's Lynn Debt Centre AGM
King's Lynn Night Shelter AGM
King's Lynn Library: How's Your Father?
CAN: Energy Advice 26th October

Reports
Happy Days
Faith, Hoops and Charity

Resources
Wellbeing Service

Newsletters
Working Together: Sector newsletter

Funding
Working Together: Funding News

NEWS

CAP KINGS LYNN DEBT CENTRE

Lifting the Weight of Debt

You've heard of CAP?
But what exactly do we do?

Does this question apply to you?
Great news- we would like to invite you to an CAP evening where you can find out the answer to that question as well as enjoy tea, coffee and some delicious cakes.

Thursday 21st October @ 7.30pm
@ Kings Centre, Kings Lynn, Wellesey Street, Kings Lynn PE30 1QD

As a part of our annual AGM we are going to be celebrating all that has been achieved through the work of Kings Lynn Debt Centre despite the challenges the pandemic. We will be sharing information about what we do, changes to the CAP Debt help service as well as what we envision for the future of Kings Lynn Debt Centre.

I would really encourage you to join us for this evening to hear in person for yourselves about this incredible ministry that aims to see peoples lives transformed in your local community.

King's Lynn Night Shelter AGM

An Invitation to our AGM

11am Wednesday 27th October, St John's Church in the Walks
We warmly welcome friends and supporters old and new to our 2021 AGM. The meeting will include a chance to hear reports on our work over the last year, find out more about our future plans and ask lots of questions. We'll be joined by our new Bishop of Lynn, Rt Revd Dr Jane Steen, and the meeting will be followed by a time of informal discussion over refreshments. We hope you'll join us! RSVP to Lucy McKitterick (Co-ordinator) nightshelter.steering@gmail.com / 01553 776109.

REPORTS

The other day, I came across two reports that confirm that 'giving does us good'. Happy Days shows how regular volunteering improves wellbeing. Faith, Hoops and Charity reveals that volunteering weekly is as good for our wellbeing as attending a weekly sport activity. And attending a weekly religious activity (like going to church) has a similar positive impact. Doing all three once a week is the best of all!

Happy Days

The main finding from this report is that there is a positive association between volunteering and life satisfaction. In other words volunteering does us good!

Happy Days report

Faith, Hoops and Charity

When it comes to health and wellbeing, once a week works - this appears to be the rhythm of human life.

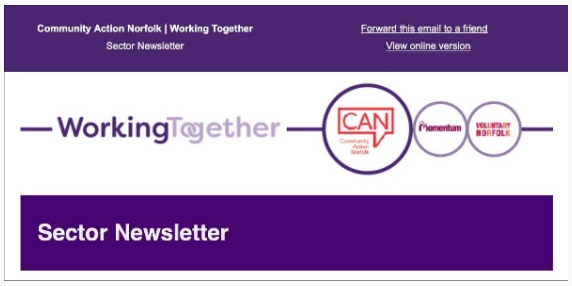
In this paper, State of Life measured the health and wellbeing benefits of weekly religious attendance and physical activity alongside previous work on volunteering.

Read the report

RESOURCES

Norfolk & Waveney Wellbeing Service

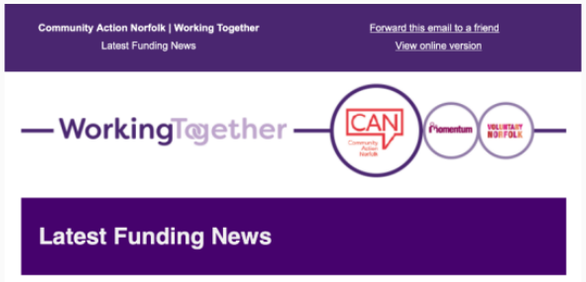
NEWSLETTERS



Sector newsletter

FUNDING

Funding News



Funding News

LET'S TALK...

I would love to hear from you to discuss any of the following things:

- How you are getting involved in your local community, and any good news stories about the difference this is making
- Events you are running, which welcome the local community
- If you would like me to visit your church, church meeting or group
- Anything you would find useful in future editions of this letter
- Just to say hello!

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Imagine Norfolk Together is a partnership between the Diocese of Norwich and the Church Urban Fund. We support local churches creating stronger communities through social action.

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