



<http://www.malvernwelcomes.org>

Registered Charity 1174004

Malvern Welcomes

Newsletter

Welcome to our second newsletter of 2020

Issue 010

Responding and adapting during the Coronavirus crisis

Since the last Malvern Welcomes newsletter, the world has become a very different place in response to the spread of the Covid 19 virus. On behalf of Malvern Welcomes we send best wishes to all and hope that you and your families are keeping safe and well. We are sure that all are looking forward to the resumption of some sort of normal life in the very near future.

For the resettled families the current 'lock down' has led to big changes and a curtailment of most of their regular activities. The children are not in school, college English classes in Worcester have stopped (as have the language classes at the Eden Centre), any planned and always much enjoyed social events have been cancelled. We know we are all experiencing this, but it seems particularly hard for those who were doing so well in establishing independence and building up a new life in Malvern.

However, as with all of us, new skills are being learnt and social media is helping to maintain links. Of course, this is not new to people who have for some time been separated from their close family and friends.

Malvern Welcomes has responded by offering additional support. We have linked up volunteers with all the children to offer assistance with the school work being sent to them. We have been fortunate to have new volunteers who have come forward to assist with this, people with current teaching experience. This is all being done on-line with the benefit of Zoom - who had heard of that a month ago? (Well not me!- Sue). Even if not all sessions may involve school work, the children are given the opportunity to continue with English conversation.

Two of the families are being 'shielded' due to particular health issues. Malvern Welcomes volunteers are assisting them in their isolation by doing shopping, collecting medication and doing other vital errands. Most importantly we are maintaining regular contact with all the families – so vital in these difficult days.

We hope that when you receive our next newsletter, we will again be able to report on happy social events – garden parties in the summer sun and shared meals.

Sue Wolfendale and Ruth Forecast

Allotment News



Over the last few months a great deal of work has gone into transforming a piece of wasteland into an allotment. Sadly, due to Covid-19 restrictions, only two of the families are able to work there at the moment. Despite this, the first crops are starting to peep through in neat rows.

The families who are able to work are finding it a peaceful haven and are looking forward to tasting the results of their hard work.

Book Take Away Service

I run a not for profit book project that tries hard to spread the word about the importance of reading real books for readers of all ages. We thought that it might be helpful to offer free books to the ten children in the four Malvern families to enjoy. Hopefully this will also help with developing their English reading skills, especially as they aren't able to go to school at the moment. Every Wednesday we make a home delivery of age and interest appropriate books to each family, and so far they have been well received. Some of the children have been eager to show their newly acquired books to Malvern Welcomes volunteers when they meet them on Zoom!



Obviously we need to take care to clean the books, wrap appropriately a few days in advance, as recommended in NHS guidance, and then use gloves to handle the bags before leaving on the doorstep, ringing the bell and socially distancing! It has been a pleasure to then have a brief chat with parents and children before leaving them to hopefully enjoy an addition to their growing book collections. We believe in the power of books to improve everybody's lives, especially in difficult times like this. If you want to know more about our project, please contact me by e mail or take time to browse our extensive website which is designed for all people who love books.

Karen Argent karen.argent@btinternet.com

The Letterpress Project www.letterpressproject.co.uk

Exercise Classes

At this time, when it is not possible to go out it can be hard to stay fit. We have arranged online exercise classes which all of the women are 'attending' with enthusiasm.



Malvern Welcomes English Language Programme

It had initially felt like an almost impossible task to continue the English learning/teaching programme under the lockdown but, with colleges and schools closing, lessons with our English tutors were going to be more important than ever. Setting up video conferencing was quite a challenge, but it is a testament to each family's determination to actively continue learning that, despite more than a few technical hitches, all are now using Zoom confidently (with all security settings in place).

All adults now have regular English lessons with our tutors and all school children have 'homework buddies' to support them with their school learning. Some of the more recently settled children also have English language focused lessons.

Malvern Welcomes is so grateful to the dedication and flexibility of its tutors and volunteers involved in supporting families online during the pandemic. Meanwhile, virtual college and county organised English lessons have now started up too, through Messenger and WhatsApp, and Malvern Welcomes acknowledges the commitment of these tutors too.

Whilst continuing to learn English is essential for each member of each family for so many reasons, perhaps the most important aspect of these lessons is maintaining human connections, when restricted to staying at home, and this is equally important for all us tutors and volunteers, many of whom are self-isolating. Such motivated English learners are always a pleasure to teach - for the impressive progress they are making and also for the people they are - but it is especially enjoyable to work with them during these difficult times.

Sharon Baker
ESOL Coordinator

Special Heartfelt Thanks

In Malvern we have our own Community Heroes. We are grateful to many people who work in the local community and who are responding with such care at this challenging time - The school teachers who are working so generously to help the young people to continue their education - the receptionists at the GP surgeries who are always so pleasant and helpful when we need their help - the very busy and helpful pharmacies in Malvern. We and the families appreciate you all.



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