

As well as celebrating the imminent arrival of summer we will be soon be celebrating National Volunteers Week from the 1st to 8th June. To mark National Volunteers Week, and as a thank you for all your hard work, we will be holding a 'Cake and a Cuppa' drop in party at our offices from 5-8pm on Thursday 6th June. It will be a great opportunity to meet other volunteers and of course eat some cake. Please let me know if you would like to attend so that we can make sure there is enough cake to go round.

Catherine Bamford, Volunteer Manager

Volunteering Anniversaries

We have a couple of volunteers celebrating their 'volunteer anniversaries'. Mike Pye is celebrating 5 years as a home visitor. Brenda Kettlewell has now been volunteering for an impressive 10 years. As well as being a home visitor Brenda helps out with activities and fundraising.

Dementia Friends

Anne from Dementia Friends recently delivered a very informative session on dementia. The word 'dementia' describes a set of symptoms that may include memory loss and difficulties with thinking, problem-solving or language. These changes are often small to start with, but for someone with dementia they have become

severe enough to affect daily life.

Dementia is caused when the brain is damaged by diseases, such as Alzheimer's disease or a series of strokes. The specific symptoms that someone with dementia experiences will depend on the parts of the brain that are damaged.

Anne used a brilliant 'bookcase' analogy to describe the effects of dementia. Imagine an 80 year old person and to the left of them is a rickety bookcase with a shelf for each decade of their life. The shelves contain the events and memories associated with that decade with the most recent on the top shelf. When dementia strikes the bookcase shakes and the events and memories fall off, starting with the top shelf. This explains why it is common for people with dementia to

go into their kitchen and put their electric kettle on the stove, because they are expecting the kitchen to be a 1950's kitchen with a stove top kettle. Simply buying them a stove top kettle instead of an electric one will make their life easier and safer.

On the other side of the person is another bookcase, again with a series of shelves which contain the feelings associated with each memory on the other bookcase. This bookcase is solid oak and when dementia hits doesn't move as much so the events may have been forgotten but not the feelings. If someone visits the person with dementia and they have an argument then they are likely to forget the event but still have the feelings of sadness and anger but don't know why. Equally if they have a loving and happy visit they might retain those feelings but again forget the event. A video of the bookcase analogy can be found on YouTube, just search 'alzheimer's disease bookcase'.

The key messages from the session were that dementia isn't a natural part of ageing, it isn't just about losing your memory and most importantly that people can still live

well with dementia. For more information on dementia visit the Alzheimer's Society website www.alzheimers.org.uk



Sad News

Unfortunately we have had some sad news. Ken Wood unexpectedly passed away on 1st May. He had volunteered as a home visitor and fundraiser for 7 years. It was a pleasure to know Ken, he was always polite, cheery and helped whenever he could. He had lots of interesting stories to tell and will be greatly missed by everyone.



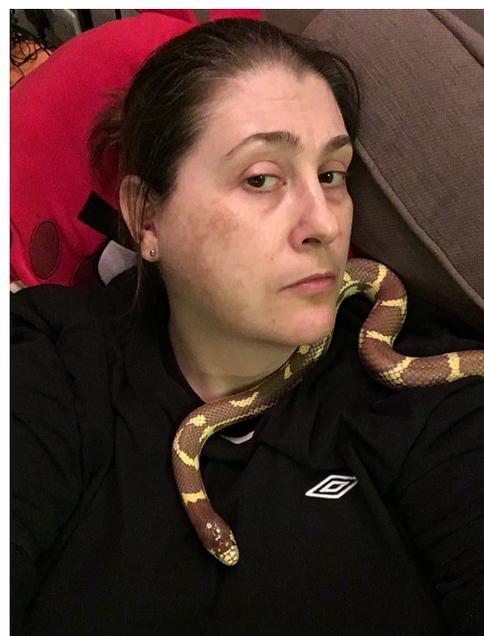
Volunteer Spotlight — Jo

I joined MySight as a home visiting volunteer five and a half years ago. Because I work full time and often have to travel quite a lot for work my spare time is precious, so I wanted to make sure some of it was used to do something really worthwhile rather than just waste it. MySight York appealed to me because my family were friends with a severely sight impaired gentleman when I was little, and I used to love guiding him and learning how he managed his day to day life, so I thought it would be nice to get back into doing some sighted guiding. And I can't lie, I also hoped it would give me the chance to meet some cute guide dogs – which it definitely has (but only while they were off duty, of course)

I have been paired with the same lady since my first day, and we get along like a house on fire. We have very similar personalities and the same sense of humour. Both of us have been through some really good and some really tough times since we were paired, and we've become good friends through this.

Being a volunteer has helped me to learn new things, meet new people and get involved in things that I would never have done otherwise,

such as playing boccia and iceless curling, and attending poetry events. When I'm not volunteering or working, the rest of my spare time is taken up with looking after my two pet snakes. I have a male Corn snake who is red and brown and is called Christian, and a female California Kingsnake who is yellow and brown and is called Banoffee. Both were unwanted pets that I took in as rescues. They are unusual pets to keep, but they're surprisingly fun to have about, and I've made it my mission to show everyone what fantastic and interesting animals they are! I also have one other mission, which relates both to my snakes and to MySight York. I plan to convince the knitting group to knit my snakes some woolly tube jumpers to keep them warm next winter! Is anyone up for the challenge?



Volunteer Training

We are hoping to organise our training differently this year as we understand that it can sometimes be difficult to attend sessions especially if you work. We are looking into on-line courses and arranging some sessions for a Saturday. If there is a specific course or session you would like us to run please contact Catherine.

Upcoming Training and Events

Cake and a Cuppa

Thursday 6th June, 5-8pm

Pop in and join us for a cuppa and a cake (or two).

Sighted Guiding Refresher

**Saturday 21st September,
10.30-12**

Refresh your guiding skills with this fun practical session.

Booking is essential as places are limited (and we need to make sure there is enough cake!). Please contact Aneta to book a place.



Contacts

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MySight York

live well with sight loss