



(l-r) Karen and Oliver Bobroff; Debra Young, Juliette Katz and Freddie Dalah (the delivery bags are donated by G-Star clothes).

The Chicken Soup Run

There are numerous anecdotes and recipes about Chicken Soup and its benefits. Just do a browser search on 'Chicken Soup' and you will find innumerable recipes. There are even medics that tell us that chicken soup offers several health benefits.

However, when Lockdown was imposed in March at the onset of Covid-19, Chicken Soup suddenly took on a completely unique connotation.

Juliette Katz and her team snapped into action forming 'The Chicken Soup Run'.

JULIETTE KATZ'S STORY

At beginning of lockdown my concerns were not only for friends and family but also my neighbours and local community. I wondered what else could I do other than shopping and collecting medication. From a local WhatsApp group I learned of a gentleman who was ill with Covid but not hospitalised. I contacted him and offered him some Chicken Soup. The next day I received this message: *Juliette your soup is delicious. This is the sort of penicillin that will cure any coronavirus symptoms. In case you are interested this is the first proper meal I have eaten in 6 days and it tastes so good. Maybe I am on the turn after all!*

The Chicken Soup Run was born! Within three to four weeks we were delivering to over 50

very deserving recipients from all faiths, who were elderly, isolated, vulnerable, or unwell. Needing help, I reached out to friends. The outpouring of volunteers was incredible, their input invaluable. Bakers, delivery drivers, fruit salad makers etc.

Our deliveries contained soup, cholla (bread), croutons, homemade cakes, cookies, latkes (fried potato cakes) and fruit salad. Children in the community drew beautiful cards with heart-warming messages. For many recipients, seeing the same delivery driver every Friday was their only form of human contact and those relationships are still ongoing.

As lockdown restrictions eased, many volunteers returned to work or lived too far away. I wanted to keep the scheme afloat but needed help. So, I posted a message on our Oakwood Road WhatsApp group for volunteer drivers and the response was incredible.

DAPHNE BERKOVITZ'S STORY

Once lockdown started we were literally confined to quarters. As I am a carer for my hubby and have been for over 10 years, I suddenly found myself having to be reliant on others; not an easy thing to adjust to.

A friendly and supportive WhatsApp Group was formed in Oakwood Road and I started

to use the services of neighbours offering help.

One afternoon, an NHS volunteer came to our house to deliver a prescription she had collected for us. Her name was Juliette and we struck up a conversation about our personal circumstances and discovered she also lived in Oakwood Road. Consequently, there was a swift offer of a delivery of Chicken Soup which I gracefully accepted. It was a wonderful surprise to be greeted on a late Friday morning with a large carrier of food.

This dedicated team of volunteers have been brightening our lives with the generous food they make for us and deliver every Friday. Their wonderful act of kindness not only raises our spirits but makes us feel cared for and not alone, bolstering an appreciation of being part of a remarkable and special community.

CAN YOU HELP?

The committed squad of volunteers want to continue this valuable service as they are aware that restrictions will prevail for some time, causing continued isolation to some members of our community. However, they do need vital funds to ensure its survival. If you can make a small donation please do contact Juliette at julietterkatz@hotmail.co.uk.

DAPHNE BERKOVITZ

Quarantined – again...

The first time I was quarantined was over sixty years ago when I was confined to bed, itching unbearably and covered in chickenpox; catching it was considered a good thing even if then it wasn't called 'herd immunity'. Result: off lessons (mixed news), off games (great news) but exiled for weeks from the company of all my chums (definitely bad news). My principal memory is lying in bed listening to Test Matches from Lord's and Headingly, England v India, five days at a time of blissfully soothing commentary. I've been trying to recapture the experience, on a deck-chair, ever since.

Six decades later, I was in quarantine again, on return from France. I was lucky in the 1950s and I was lucky now – unlike any number of people who had their annual holidays cruelly cut short or, worse, rushed for home to find they were held up at the border, missed the deadline and had to quarantine after all. So, I have no horror stories to report from personal experience, which may be boring but there it is. Given we always knew our confinement was time-limited and short, there was something of the desert island about the whole thing, without any of the hardships.

Even stumbling into the over 70's bracket has its compensations: yes, we may stand a higher risk of becoming properly ill, but we're most likely already retired

or working from home anyway, so no life-changing shifts there. Food and indeed supplies of virtually anything under the sun were no problem either with the friendly Ocado delivery man just a click away. We couldn't have starved even if the internet had gone down permanently, as our neighbour texted us several times to ask if she could go shopping for us, or do anything at all to help.

While the novelty of Zoom get-togethers wore off during lockdown, they banished any sense of being cut off both then and during quarantine; what a magical weapon the mute button has become.

As for exercise, I wish I could escape the stigma of having had it all too easy and claim the only sky I'd seen for two weeks was through my windows and I'd had to make do with an endlessly repeating video of Joe Wicks's 'fitness' exercises, but we have a garden leading onto a paddock which we could circle every day until we got giddy.

And finally, how many times have you said to yourself "What an opportunity: I'm going to catch up on all those books piling up by my bedside"? Me too. And I still haven't read Proust. Lost time, indeed.

NEILL ROSS



Neill and Brenda Ross

CAROLINE MASSEL

Big push in 2021 for Combat Stress

The Hampstead Garden Suburb Combat Stress Committee is now concentrating on making a huge effort to raise as much as possible in 2021 with a variety of fundraising events.

As we've been unable to do any events this year, boosting funds for Combat Stress is even more important than ever as our fundraising capacity has been severely affected by the Covid-19 crisis.

In these difficult times it's important to be positive, so in addition to the events listed below, Chairman Ruth Smith wonders whether some of you might like to fill any spare 'lockdown' hours helping us to make some hand-made craft products which we can sell at our events in aid of Combat Stress. These items could be garden-related eg DIY paper plant pots for seedlings, clay hand-printed plant labels, decorated pots, bird food seed cakes or pet-related for the many dog and cat owners in the Suburb! Perhaps there's something you'd like to make or you have some crafting ideas that will sell well. So, if you'd like to help us with our craft project, please do contact Ruth at ruthafsmith@hotmail.com - we'd love to hear from you!

The events already planned for 2021 include:

- Nearly-new Clothes & Book Sale;
- Refreshments at the HGS Art Fair on 5 & 6 June;
- Private Garden Opening (David & Caroline Broome, next summer);
- Screening of Military Wives Choir' Film; and

- Concert on Saturday 9 October in the Free Church.

All of these events of course are subject to Covid restrictions but we're really hoping they'll all be running and look forward to welcoming you all to our events next year!

MARJORIE HARRIS



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