

BOUNDS GREEN FOOD BANK VOICE



HELLO NEIGHBOURS

Spring is upon us, bringing to mind themes of renewal, transformation and vitality. We have all been up against Covid-19 for a year and are now gearing up for the end of lockdown and a return to the possibility of the life that we knew before the pandemic. At the hall this week we move from distributing parcels to opening our doors to guests again! The last year has seen the pandemic expose underlying social and economic issues, and their consequence in food poverty. The silver lining has been the establishment of mutual aid groups which have responded so effectively to the rise in food insecurity among our neighbours. When we first opened, the intention was to operate for just three months. We have found a way to carry on, and with the support we've received we're in an excellent position to continue to meet the needs of locals facing food insecurity and to address how this issue is perceived. Our work continues.

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NEWS & UPDATES

Easter

Our extra project in March was to provide some treats for our guests and their families over Easter. We asked for donations of either wrapped treats or to our fundraising effort so we could buy them directly to ensure that everyone gets something a bit special.



Advice First Aid

We are working with Citizens Advice Haringey, Bridge Renewal Trust and Haringey Food Network, to pilot a new project aimed at supporting people using Haringey Food Banks to access their rights. A pilot will run from Bounds Green Food Bank for three months before being rolled out across Haringey, as well as continuing in Bounds Green.

A group of us is currently being trained in advice skills, welfare benefits, debt and housing. We will work with guests to understand the different problems they face, deal with emergencies and make sure they are able to access the right ongoing specialist support. The project will run from St Michaels Hall from Thursday 15th April.

Sebby's Corner

We are pleased to announce our partnership with Sebby's Corner. Sebby's Corner is an organisation that collects and distributes baby equipment, clothes, toys and food. Guests are able to request what they need and Sebby's will bring the requested items to the Food Bank for them to pick up once a month. If you are in need of baby equipment, please talk to a Day Coordinator at the Food Bank. If you would like to donate baby items to Sebby's Corner, they have various donation points throughout North London. Please see here for more information:

www.sebbyscorner.co.uk



Volunteer Orientation Sessions

Over fifty volunteers attended the Volunteer Orientation Zooms. The sessions are there for new and veteran volunteers to get an overview of how our Food Bank operates, which includes finding out about the many behind-the-scenes groups that help keep things running. Another aim is to ensure that everyone gets a deeper insight into the values and ethos of our work. We know there's a lot more that needs to be done to ensure that we work in harmony towards our aspirations—so do watch this space!

We expect to offer the Orientation Zoom again soon. If you haven't been to one yet then we encourage you to attend; please use the email at the end of the newsletter to register your interest.

NEWS & UPDATES

Vaccination Day for Guests

By Cathy Brennan

As a result of a meeting I attended with representatives of Haringey Food Bank and the NHS, our Food Bank volunteered to pilot a pop-up vaccination scheme enabling Food Bank guests, of any age, to receive a Covid 19 vaccination. To ensure that they were aware of the project, volunteers carried out intensive outreach with our guests in the run up to the session. With the support of linguists, we provided information and advice in more than 10 languages. Feedback from the NHS was that the day was highly successful with more than 100 of our guests being vaccinated. On the basis of the pilot's success, I understand from the NHS that similar vaccination sessions will be replicated in other boroughs. The story continues—details in the next edition of Voice.



VOLUNTEER VOICE

Shirley, our unsung hero

By Joanna Burke

With the opening of the Food Bank in June last year, I've been collecting donations from residents who live in what's known as the Three Avenues (Braemar, Cornwall and Northcott). One of my wonderful neighbours is Shirley, who has worked tirelessly throughout her life to support a number of charities in all sorts of capacities, and in highly practical ways. With all her usual charitable events being cancelled during 2020, she immediately turned her efforts towards helping the Food Bank. All her delicious homemade jam (made from produce grown on her allotment) has been much appreciated by our guests, and at Christmas she made and decorated 42 Christmas cakes, as well as sourcing and wrapping more than 200 presents for our younger guests. In the last week, she has also made some Easter cakes for us. Shirley, a modest and unsung hero (with the added bonus of having a great sense of humour!), epitomises the kindness and generosity shown by people in our supportive neighbourhood.



MEET A BGFB TEAM: FOOD SOURCING

By Gill Dix

A few years back I came across a tv programme about surplus food. A small group of people were going out with torches late at night and taking what looked like good quality food from wheellie bins at the back of supermarkets and using it to make soups and stews for homeless people. It stuck in my mind, but I had my family and my day job so put it to one side. When Bounds Green Food Bank opened, I was keen to help and so volunteered, sorting goods and serving guests.

During the pandemic I could see how the need was increasing so I contacted the Food Sourcing team and offered to help. It turns out there was no need to wear head torches or go out in the dark of night to help with food sourcing. The management of surplus food in Britain seems quite well organised. And Ishraq, who leads our food sourcing work at BGFB, is on top of the situation with multiple suppliers and charities who coordinate food distribution.

But there is still work to be done by approaching firms and shops who haven't organised what to do with their surplus goods. Food sourcing involves writing and politely nagging people to help. I've had some successes and some failures.

Probably the most visible win was the supply of



sticky doughnuts and savoury snacks from Greggs. A call to the head office and some chasing calls led to us being offered the surplus from three local Greggs stores. With the fabulous help from our volunteer drivers, we collect food just as the store is closing. The staff in Greggs are great to deal with—it turns out they hated wasting food as much as we do. I hope the guests are enjoying them.

To counteract the sweet doughnuts, I'm now talking to people who supply toothpaste! But also looking for more bread and fresh produce suppliers. If you happen to know anyone who is in manufacturing, or has a shop that may be willing to donate, please let the team know. My hunch is there is more out there that we can provide for our community, we just have to track it down.



IN OUR NEIGHBOURHOOD

Dealing with Food Waste

By Patrick Maher

It is wonderful to be able to recycle the veg and fruit waste from the Food Bank. The huge amounts that come to the Food Bank mean that a small proportion will spoil and not be used. When there is food waste, Anthy, one of our dedicated volunteers and a Day Coordinator at St Michael's Hall will ring me. 'How will we get rid of the boxes of celery, grapes and broccoli?,' she cries. This is where we all jump into action and make our way to the Food Bank. Yes, we see a mountain of stuff! After taking a breath we provide the solution. She is so delighted that it can be recycled. We make sure that veg and fruit waste doesn't go into the council bins. First we fill up the composting boxes in our communal garden at Rosecroft beside the Prince Pub. Thirty-five elderly people live there, and they appreciate how we keep the garden, and recycle the food waste. It's not waste to us: it contains the nutrients for next year's flowers and veg.

Sometimes there is so much we need a car for help. We rely on other volunteers who are car owners, or as a last resort, use a local cabbie. The larger quantities are taken to an allotment garden and a community garden in Park Road, Crouch End called Meadow Orchard. We mix the waste food with wood chips and hay we cut from the meadow. This becomes compost full of nutrients to grow more vegetables and salads. We also recycle some of the cardboard that the food comes in. We layer the cardboard around the fruit trees and on beds to reduce weeds, keep the soil damp and at a constant temperature, and it breaks down, unlike plastic covering.

Meadow Orchard is a haven of peace and tranquility with native willow, alder, fruit trees, grassland and space for gardening. We hope you'll come and visit after Covid restrictions are lifted: we're around most Saturdays.





FUNDRAISING

By Emma Killick

We have other projects planned for this year: providing footwear in May, back-to-school packages (including uniforms) in August, children's winter coats in October, and festive gifts and hampers in December. If you have fundraising or event ideas, please get in touch at boundsgreenmutualaid@gmail.com. If we do it together we can ensure that we reach those in need.

JOIN OUR COMMS TEAM

The BGFB Comms Team is Expanding

Do you enjoy writing great social media copy? Are you a graphic design whizz? Can you help us create great leaflets and posters for the Food Bank? The Comms team sub-group are responsible for all social media management, creating and designing internal and external comms and maintaining the BGFB website. Our goal is to help more people hear about our Food Bank and its work—this could be volunteers, guests and donors! We'd love to have a few more volunteers in our sub group to help us reach this goal. So if you are interested in joining us, please put a message in the Feedback WhatsApp group and we will get back to you.

NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS

Thanks to everyone who has contributed to Voice this month. We'd love your help to keep everyone in our community updated, so please send us your news, art, and photos. And if you've got ideas on what you'd like to hear more about, please get in touch.

CONTACT US

To donate, volunteer or get general information visit:

www.boundsgreenfoodbank.org

To respond to any of the call-outs above please contact us at the Food Bank:

**boundsgreenmutualaid@gmail.com
or call the Helpline 07933 680 869**