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Welcome to Oxygen's newsletter

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This newsletter was compiled by Danica from the Oxygen team

www.oxygen-online.org



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Kingston-Upon-Thames Mayor's Charity 2020/21

Oxygen is delighted to have been selected as one of two charities being championed by the Mayor of the Royal Borough of Kingston Upon Thames, along with KCIL- Kingston Centre for Independent Living.



Cllr. Margaret Thompson

COVID-19 UPDATE

At Oxygen, we are continuing to work hard to adapt to the very different circumstances that have arisen this year. This has included adapting our work to comply with social distancing and lockdown measures and doing extensive work on risk assessments and policies across Oxygen (and Kingston Street Pastors) to ensure the safety of young people, the general public and our staff and volunteers.

We are continually assessing which aspects of our work can continue to operate or require further adaptation. In light of the announcement of increased lockdown measures in November we are limited in what we can do but we are thankful that some of the adaptations we have made over recent months will enable us to continue reaching out to vulnerable and disadvantaged young people.

At this particularly challenging and uncertain time, young people are more in need of support than ever before and we are committed to providing that support and walking alongside young people, showing them that they are valued and helping them to achieve their potential.

Youth Work Week: 2nd - 8th November 2020

We are celebrating Youth Work Week from 2nd to 8th November and will be sharing updates on our Twitter and Instagram pages. Both of these can be found via our new Linktree which is an easy way to connect with all our social media channels. Click the button below to connect with us.

Connect with us on Social Media



Director: Changes to the team

The last few months have been challenging for all of us, but for some more than others. It is with fondness we continue to remember Rev. Peter Holmes, the impact he had on the community and the role he played helping to guide me and Oxygen in many key decisions. One in particular, was the appointment of Rory as our Head of Youth Work back in 2015. As Rory left the interview Peter turned to the rest of the panel and said "Well that's it, no need to interview anyone else" such was his conviction that Rory was the right person for the role! A view shared by Me and the rest of the panel, and so Rory was appointed.

Having Rory join the team, gave Oxygen a sense of confidence in what we could do to support young people and a fresh perspective and aspiration for the future. Rory has been a real asset to the Oxygen Team and has helped Oxygen grow and develop as an organisation over that time. As head of youth work, Rory has proven very effective at building strong networks and relationships with strategic partners and promoting the work of the charity. Rory has led and managed the youth work team in such a way as to bring out the best in them, challenging, supporting and encouraging them and improving our work with young people. Along with me and Charlie as part of the Senior Management Team, Rory has helped Oxygen to develop significantly over the last few years, expanding our work at Kingsnympton, responding to knife crime and launching the Oxygen shop. It hasn't all been plain sailing, nor should it be, but Rory has been a pillar of strength and a wise head when times have been tough.

Oxygen is very much like a family and it has been a real privilege, not only to work alongside Rory, but to have seen him find love, marry Hannah and watch him take on the mantle of becoming a father to Abel! We are sad to see him leave and will miss him greatly. I want to thank Rory for his friendship, loyalty, all the hard work and dedication and I am sure that he will do exceptionally well in his new role with Essex County Council. I pray that the transition to their new home goes well and that Rory Hannah and Abel find a good community, in which they will be able to settle and grow their family. Be blessed!



Goodbye from Rory

So, I find myself here at the beginning of my last week with Oxygen and it's a strange mix of emotions. Firstly, I should say I'm starting a new role with Essex County Council so after 5 years with Oxygen it's time to move on both for personal development and family growth. It's an exciting time but also it's with great sadness that I am leaving. Especially as I am leaving in the midst of Covid meaning I haven't seen some members of the team/ volunteers in person since March. So, in many ways, it's a very unusual time to be moving on.

But it is also a great time to be moving on. I feel Oxygen is in a really healthy place, I'm so pleased that Alice and Felicia have started full time and there are other plans in the pipeline to increase Oxygen's capacity further than we have ever had before. As an organisation, we have seen such growth in my time with Oxygen. Our knife crime project, What's the Point?, has grown from being a project in one school to being in most secondary schools in the borough, running two annual conferences, and has led to a Home Office funded resource that is being used by other organisations across London and more widely. I've also been developing a primary school resource which was due to be piloted before lockdown, we've delivered to our first all-girls group and have developed relationships with community partners including Chelsea and Fulham football clubs. It's been great to be part of projects like this and be in a key strategic position to help develop them.

sector organisations in the borough. My personal highlights include the running of the knife crime conferences; attending YFC conferences; the Thames boat trip residential; supporting staff, volunteers and gap workers; and seeing the journey of young people, especially at our Rm1 project. I've loved seeing the growth of staff as well as young people. One great example of this is Troy, even now I enjoy catching up with him and all he's doing with his life. I would say, my relationship with this team will lead to great friendships for life.

Seeing the growth of young people has been so fulfilling. Working closely with many of our most challenging young people and seeing real change in their lives has brought me great joy and helping them change their lives for the better has been amazing. Working on youth work projects and taking them from inception to completion has also been amazing. My favourite trips have been residential. The one that sticks out in my mind was my first trip on the Thames Barge. Seeing Adam and Zainab put themselves out of their comfort zone jumping into the Thames and swimming in open water accompanied by young people who were also trying things for their first time. We also took all our young people from Kingsnympton to the Carrotty Wood outdoor activity centre for a free weekend and this was amazing. Being able to offer young people from deprived backgrounds a free holiday was one of the best experiences we could have had with them. We were lucky to be able to fund this with Carrotty Wood's generous bursary and a Jack Petchey leaders award.

Conferences have been a great time together as a team and the annual YFC staff conference was a great time together growing and sharing in faith. The bonding experiences were amazing although it still upsets me that we never managed a team meal on the curry mile in Manchester. Sharing rooms with Adam and Charlie was always a massive laugh and we built amazing friendships together because of these experiences in spite of my snoring. One of my favourite memories was when we had a long conversation at lunch one day inspired by Troy asking how you got cream from a tomato, this was because cream of tomato soup had been served that day. Over the years we have had so many laughs and I will miss the team, volunteers, trustees, churches and most importantly the young people more than I can put into words.

I also want to take a moment to say a special thanks to John. John is a man who puts 500% of himself into Oxygen and is an incredible inspiration to me and my work. I'm glad he believed in me and gave me a chance at this job and has always encouraged me, I can't say we've never disagreed, but we've always worked well together and are often of the same mind. He is "Mr Oxygen" and is a man full of heart for everyone around him, more than a boss a true friend and helps Oxygen feel like a family.

Team Development

Over the last few months we have been busy adapting to the Corona-virus pandemic and supporting vulnerable young people and volunteers to cope with the changes to our world. With Rory leaving we have decided to appoint two new members of staff which will greatly increase our capacity to deliver our projects and develop our work with the most vulnerable young people at risk of crime, exclusion from school, and suffering with anxiety and poor mental health.



Meet Felicia

I am a psychology graduate, who has dedicated 4 years of my life to helping children and young people succeed academically, within a school and tutoring environment. Besides working extensively with young people, I am a musician and singer! As a member of the London Community Gospel Choir, I have had the privilege of gracing some incredible stages, such as the O2 arena for the BRIT awards and the Royal Albert Hall. I have been privileged to work on projects with The 1975, Ellie Goulding, Justin Timberlake and Stormzy. However...over all this, seeing young people grow academically, physically and mentally is where my heart lies and I am super proud to be apart of the Oxygen team and so excited for the future of this organisation!



Oxygen Shop update

now opening the shop on Mondays, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays. Our regular customers are very happy to see us open more. We have also been encouraged by how the Oxygen shop has continued to develop as a place where we can work with young people and teach them valuable skills and have deeper engagement.

However, from Thursday 5th November, all non-essential retailers will be required to close and we will be unable to open for a four week period. We will continue to keep up to date with all guidance and announcements and will notify Oxygen supporters when we are able to re-open.

You can still buy things from the Oxygen shop on line! We have been selected as one of several charities to be part of a new online store dedicated to charity shops called ReLuv.

We would like to say a massive thank you to all our loyal volunteers, customers and donors for continuing to support us through this tricky time. We ask for your continued prayers for the work of the shop and our ability to pay the rent so that we can continue running the shop in the future. Please do come and support us on New Malden High Street if you can. To find out more about the shop, including how to get involved in volunteering, please [visit our website](#)

We are soon going to be launching our online shop on

RELUV



Outerwear



Footwear



Bags



KINGSNYMPTON

Oxygen have now been responsible for the delivery of youth provision at Kingsnympton Youth and Community Centre for three years as part of a contract with YMCA and Achieving for Children. In that time we have improved the building, developed provision and supported young people to fulfill their potential. Building on our history of over 10 years working on the Kingsnympton Park Estate we know that many young people and their families on the estate face significant challenges and disadvantages. Running the centre with limited resources has proved challenging at times, but this work has also been immensely rewarding and beneficial to the young people and the local community at a time when youth centres have been cut in many other areas.

[You can read more about our work over the last three years here](#)

Kingsnympton Update

The young people experimented with different colours and patterns and had lots of fun doing this activity. We listened to music as a way to make the atmosphere fun and engaging. We also used different shapes stencils to create seasonal decorations and autumnal colours to reflect the season. The young people were excited to go home and share with their families their creations. The use of a more structured workshop proved to be successful and helped staff to manage the session more easily.



Training: 17th and 24th November

Do you want to do something to help a young person?

We all struggle with life at some point, but young people need our help, encouragement and support to overcome the challenges they are facing. At Oxygen we are adapting our services to engage with those who are most in need and show them they are valued, loved and that we believe they can make a difference.

We are looking for people who have some life experience and have a passion for seeing others discover their identity and achieve their potential. We can all influence those around us in a positive way and your support could really make a difference to a young person's life at a time when they need some guidance or just a friendly, listening ear.

If that is you then click [here](#) to begin the process of exploring becoming a

Are you concerned about a young person?

Do they need a little extra help to cope with life or move forward?

We may be able to help

[Referral form](#)



Kingston Communities Team - Test and Trace

Oxygen have partnered with Royal Borough of Kingston's Communities Team to help share information on Covid-19 restrictions and how to engage with the NHS Test and Trace programme.

We are incorporating conversations about Covid-19 and Test and Trace in our youth work activities and we will also be sharing information on social media helping to explain how services work and how young people and their households can access them.

If you would like more information on Test and Trace and how to share information on this service with young people, please contact us.



At Oxygen we are looking for gap year volunteers. If you are thinking about taking a gap year to develop skills, make a meaningful contribution and have fun then consider joining Oxygen.

[Click here for more info on taking a gap year with Oxygen](#)



Believing in young people

GDPR

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