



RALLYING CRIES



Clockwise from top left: Human Appeal's meals for staff at Royal Oldham Hospital; Rebecca Fewtrell with her son Logan; chefs Melissa Hemsley and Asma Khan cooking for schoolchildren with Olio

CARES IN THE WORLD

Community organisation Manchester Cares had made over 200 phone calls to older neighbours at the time of writing, to ask what they need and to provide connection in a disconnecting time. It's piloting a project called Phone a Friend, in which younger volunteers are matched with older neighbours to have regular phone conversations.

Eighty-two-year old Gorton resident Phyllis was matched with 30-year-old Aphre for the pilot. After their first call, Phyllis said: "We got on really well and I told her about the donkey sanctuary as she has hasn't been in Manchester long and she said she was going to take her son there. I can't believe we spoke for 21 minutes and we only just met - I'll really look forward to our next call."

On 1 April it will launch its Alone Together project, in which hundreds of younger and older people across Manchester will be invited to join in an activity each day of the month, with activity packs posted to 600 older Mancunians.

Activities include writing a poem on Maya Angelou's birthday on 2 April, making Easter bonnets on Easter Sunday and dancing to the radio in your glad rags on 30 April (manchestercares.org.uk).

MINISTERING TO YORK

Rebecca Fewtrell, singer, record label owner and founder of the York Proms summer picnic concert, has launched York Virtual High Street, a website featuring shop pages for retailers forced to close and also a way to direct people to buy gift vouchers for restaurants and cafes for use after the crisis has passed, to help with their cash flow and to help rebuild. It will also include a creative space, to include live streams of music events that would otherwise be cancelled (yorkhighstreet.com).

APPEALING MEALS

Volunteers from Manchester-based charity Human Appeal had distributed 600 meals to the homeless and NHS staff by 25 March. Meals were delivered to five hospitals – Royal Oldham Hospital, Salford Royal Hospital, Manchester General Hospital, Royal Manchester Children's Hospital and Wythenshawe Hospital. In partnership with Myriad Foundation, 100 meals were also given to homeless people in Piccadilly Gardens (humanappeal.org.uk).

NEURO-DIVERSE SKILLS

Neuro-diversity coach and consultant Rachel Morgan-Trimmer held a webinar bringing together neuro-diverse people to discuss their problems and how to solve them. "We had people with autism, for logic and problem-solving, people with ADHD for generating a lot of ideas very quickly, and dyslexics, who are brilliant at seeing the bigger picture. As well as concrete advice, we were able to give people hope – hope that being unemployed or being unable to run their business wasn't the end of things, and we could help them survive or find a new direction." She is about to launch free half-hour mini-coaching sessions for neuro-diverse people (0161 448 8846, rachel@sugarcat.co.uk).

NON-SCHOOL LUNCHES

Food waste app Olio has launched the nationwide #Cook4Kids campaign, encouraging everyone who can to cook and prepare simple meals and share them with neighbouring school children – using a no-contact pick-up.

Olio enables members to upload meals to the app so they are available to be requested and picked up by neighbouring parents – all with zero contact to avoid spread of infection.

High-profile chefs have pledged their support for the campaign, encouraging people to #cook4kids with @olio_ex and sharing simple, nutritious recipes that can be easily followed to provide local children with a fresh, tasty lunch or dinner (olioex.com).

Send more information on help for the community to kevin.gopal@bigissuenorth.co.uk