

# THE BRIDGE BULLETIN



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Dear supporters,

I hope this latest bulletin finds you well. We're really enjoying getting to know The Bridge Trust Project and learn more about the amazing work that goes on both by staff and you, our supporters. Over the past couple of months, we've been integrating systems and staff, sharing best practices and finding ways to work closely together and learn from each other. Staff are now all settled into the Tower House offices, and are firmly part of the YMCA West Kent team!

We've been buoyed to see the amount of support that continues to come in for the work The Bridge Trust Project offers. This has included a legacy – a gift left in a Will – by a long-time follower of the work. The donation will provide help to those looking to move on with their lives, to leave our accommodation and live independently. The Support Services team can work with a former resident for up to six months. This gives each person the time they need to adjust to living on their own again – we know how scary it can be to go from living in shared accommodation to living alone, so donations such as this allow us to continue to provide vital assistance.

We love to hear the stories and updates of your fundraising and awareness raising activities, and would love to feature them in here and on our social media channels, so please continue to share these with us at [TGGcomms@ymcatg.org](mailto:TGGcomms@ymcatg.org). Thank you all for your continued support.

**Dave Ball**

CEO of YMCA Thames Gateway Group



## SIMON'S STORY



**Simon was supported by The Bridge Trust, pre-merger, and it's stories like this that show why local partnership working is so important.**

"The Bridge Trust was a Godsend for me. In autumn 2017, I had a heart attack. I had been working in a warehouse but had to give it up because of my health. I was living in New Hythe with my girlfriend of five years but things had been going wrong for a while and as it was her tenancy she asked me to leave.

I slept rough (well, with one eye open) for about a month and a half during February and March, sometimes in a McDonalds car park. At this time, I didn't see my son, now 16, who lives in Chatham with my ex-partner. I didn't want him to know, to see me like that."



"I was referred to The Bridge Trust by Porchlight and I think it was only a week later they had space for me. It was a Godsend, a blessing in disguise - the Trust was very supportive and my co-tenants (residents) were very nice people. Tonbridge was much quieter than Chatham and I preferred it, I wasn't worried about moving in as it was so much better than what I'd come from.

Nick (my support worker) helped me keep on top of my medication and keep my appointments. He was very supportive, understanding and thorough and I enjoyed his sense of humour, though he could be pushy (in getting me to do the things I needed to) when he wanted to be.

In February 2019, I was accepted for a council property closer to my son. Now I see him and I can have him round. I am still getting a few bits of furniture and carpet sorted but The Bridge Trust gave me some things; a toaster and a bed etc. which I wasn't expecting. Every time I switch on the kettle I think of them and think "thank God!" If you haven't got something, you don't miss it so I appreciate everything."

## A NEW CHAPTER

**Nick will be seeing me for a bit longer (as part of the Supported Move-on scheme). My cardiologist has now signed me as being fit to work, although not in a physical job like a warehouse and I'm looking forward to the next chapter of my life.**

My wish is that the Trust continues as there are many people like me and they help us pick ourselves up and move on. I'm not ashamed of what happened, it's my life, it's like everything; sometimes the sun shines and sometimes it doesn't."



# NIZELS GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB



Nizels Golf and Country Club have a collection of events running throughout the year to raise funds for The Bridge Trust Project. The vibrant ladies golf section recently held a truly patriotic themed Lady Captain's Day, which was aptly just after the jubilee platinum celebrations. Nizels ladies are well known for dressing up and throwing themselves into their competitive golf and costumes.

Two more events are planned to incorporate fundraising and general frivolity both on and off the golf course – a Spanish Summer Party on 29th July, which follows on from the key mixed charity day on Wednesday 20th July, when 120 players will be gracing the course.

Entry is £65 to include a fun packed programme – breakfast, 18 holes, halfway house, 2-course buffet, fabulous prizes, auction and raffle plus a chance to win an electric Nissan car, provided by local car dealer, Marshall of Tunbridge Wells.

For more details or to enter, email: [shirley@faircourt.plus.com](mailto:shirley@faircourt.plus.com)



## THE TONBRIDGE HALF MARATHON

£14 REGISTRATION FEE • £100 MINIMUM SPONSORSHIP

Sign up to take part in the Tonbridge Half Marathon on behalf of YMCA Thames Gateway Group and help raise vital funds for homeless people in West Kent!

The route is an accurately measured pan shaped course starting in south Tonbridge. It will take runners along closed roads with plenty of crowd support, especially through the attractive village of Leigh, both on your way out and again on the way back, and when you finish back in Tonbridge. There will be four water stations on the course with toilet facilities.

Location	The Judd School, Brook Street, Tonbridge, Kent, TN9 2PN
Date	Sunday 9 <sup>th</sup> October 2022
Time	10am

### INTERESTED IN SIGNING UP?

Our fundraising team will be on hand to support you and help you reach your fundraising target. You will receive a YMCA branded running vest for the day.

For more information or to sign up, please email our fundraising team: [communitysupport@ymcatg.org](mailto:communitysupport@ymcatg.org)



## HAVE YOU CONSIDERED LEAVING A LEGACY?

We have recently been left a large donation in a supporter's Will. For The Bridge Trust Project, this is so greatly appreciated as it allows us to continue housing more vulnerable people in our community.

If you leave a gift in your Will to The Bridge Trust Project, we can help those who are homeless to regain their independent lives and move into a safe warm home of their own. It won't cost you anything now but your legacy will live on long into the future and you can help ensure that, no matter what new challenges may arise, we will be here to help those who need us the most.

No matter how large or small, a gift in a Will can help transform lives - even a small percentage of what's left after your loved ones are provided for can make a huge difference to our work.



For more information on how to leave a gift in your will to The Bridge Trust Project, please contact our fundraising team at [communitysupport@ymcatg.org](mailto:communitysupport@ymcatg.org)



## FURNITURE UPCYCLING WORKSHOPS

YMCA West Kent, the branch The Bridge Trust Project is a part of, sells bespoke second hand, pre-loved, retro and antique furniture through our furniture store in Tunbridge Wells.

The store offers local people life-changing volunteering, work experience, training and employment as well as selling bespoke hand-made items made by trainees in our Horizon Project.

In addition, we run an Upcycling Centre in Tonbridge, where new skills can be developed by young people as well as you, the public!

A variety of workshops are offered here – from preparing and getting a piece of pre-loved furniture ready for upcycling, through to decoupage, distressing and ageing techniques.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION,  
PLEASE CONTACT:**

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