



Happy New Year. Firstly, I want to say welcome back to all our staff, volunteers, clients and to you. Hopefully you've all had a relaxing break and had an opportunity to connect with your friends and family.

I want to kick off 2020 not with my take on resolutions, or new beginnings, but by focusing on some of The Living Room's unsung heroes of 2019: our dedicated charity shop team.

Our charity shops are an integral part of our service, not just because they raised over £45,000 in funds for us last year ensuring our continued existence in tough times, but because they work so hard to serve and support our local community.

Our charity shop staff and volunteers totally get our values, giving ex-clients the opportunity to dip their toes back into the world of work and regain their confidence. They're also amazingly creative with their holiday displays and help promote The Living Room to people who've never set foot inside our centre. Finally, they've helped residents in Chells secure affordable gifts this Christmas and ensure that unwanted items never have to go to waste, helping everyone in the community to do their bit for the environment.

If you've never visited our charity shops, I urge you to do so. They've got a great selection of items for adults and children, there's lovely people to chat with and anything you buy will help support a good cause.

Thanks so much to our charity shop team for everything you've done over the past year and I'm sure 2020 will be even better.

~ Adrienne Arthurs

## St Albans Sleepout

This year's St Albans Sleepout was a roaring success, with participants raising over £4000 for The Living Room. People from all walks of life joined us at Oaklands College on December 6th, along with supporters of Herts Young Homeless, Emmaus, Centre 33 and Open Door.

We're very privileged and thankful to be the only addiction service invited to take part and we're hugely grateful to our supporters (including clients, drug and alcohol partners and volunteers) for the hard work they put into fundraising for our General Donation appeal.

A special thank you as well to our St Albans Community Fundraiser Rob for managing our involvement in this year's event.



### A reminder of why we are here... A testimonial:

"The counsellors at The Living Room saved my life! I am full of admiration for the amazing job they do."

## Notes of Appreciation

Thank you to St. Peters Church in St. Albans for their donation of £4,000.

Thank you to the wonderful Sophie and Sanya from 'A Bloody Good Cause' for providing us with sanitary products and toiletries for us to give out to vulnerable women over the Christmas period.



Thanks to the generosity of people online and at Stevenage Asda, our December 3rd Giving Tuesday campaign raised £500.



We're also thankful for the toys and clothing that the Welwyn-based Afterskoolz Childcare donated for our crèche children.

Well done to Bryn for getting his hair shaved off and raising £462 for us in the process.



## Santa floats through St Albans

Thanks to the amazing volunteers who came out to support the traditional St Albans Santa Float on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> December. Organised by the St Albans Roundtable (a club for men aged 18 to 45 years old), the float has Father Christmas visiting different parts of the city bringing seasonal magic to the residents, young and old! It's also an opportunity to raise money for various local charities, to be distributed by St Albans Rotary Club.



## Lloyds Bank Foundation Visit

We were excited to have members of Lloyds Bank Foundation join us at the end of last year to see first-hand how we deliver on our promise to 'Break the cycle of addiction.' Paul Streets, Chief Executive, shadowing Francis Warwick, Grants Manager for East England, visited our Stevenage Centre to meet clients and staff and visit our crèche.

Lloyds Bank Foundation is a charitable trust that partners with charities who help people with complex social issues and is providing The Living Room with £75,000 over 3 years to help us provide recovery services for Hertfordshire residents.



## Father Christmas drops in

In December, Father Christmas flew in to our Stevenage centre to hand out presents to all the good little boys and girls from our crèche. Thanks to Bryn for playing Santa and thanks to the elves from the Salvation Army for providing the presents.

## The Living Room turns 20 this year

It's our birthday this year. The Living Room was first formed in May 2000 in Stevenage. In the 20 years since our founding, we've opened two more centres in St Albans and in Watford, two charity shops and received multiple awards.

We've got 20 exciting events planned to celebrate this milestone so watch this space for more details on the way soon.

## What else is on the Horizon?

A new course from the Hertfordshire Adult and Family Learning Service (HAFLS) starts at our Stevenage centre on Tuesday 7th January and over at our St Albans centre on Wednesday 8th January 2020. HAFLS will hold the creative writing course with clients for six weeks up until February 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>.