

Braintree Area Foodbank Spring Newsletter 2018

Welcome to our Spring Newsletter

Firstly we would like to say a HUGE thank you for all of your help throughout last year. Whether you are a volunteer or have made a donation you have made a real difference in someone's life. We have seen immense generosity with donations coming from individuals, schools, churches, groups, and businesses. Since the 1st April 2017 you have donated 33 tons of food. Which has helped to feed over 2,500 people.

Our volunteers have been very busy helping over those 2,500 people who visit our centres and your donations have made this happen.

In this edition

- Thank you to our Volunteers
- Foodbank News
- Our Food In the School Holiday programme
- Our Eat Well Spend Less initiative
- A view from our Braintree Baptist Church Centre
- Keep up to date

We hope you enjoy this newsletter and if you would like further information please email info@braintreearea.foodbank.org.uk

Don't Forget the Foodbank Calendar

Just a quick reminder that the Foodbank calendar is available on our website. This makes sure your donation of seasonal food items gets to those in need on time.

Thank you to our volunteers

We have a network of over 200 volunteers many of whom have been with us since 2012 when we opened and without them Braintree Area Foodbank could not exist.

At our centres volunteers greet those in greatest need, both individuals and families and offer a friendly smile and warm welcome, a cup of tea and food parcels. Clients are able to discuss, with our signposters, what additional help could be available, seeking further information from our signposters if needed.

These are the people that are the face of our Foodbank but lots more volunteers work behind the scenes too.

All food donations are sorted and weighed by volunteers at our warehouse and these same volunteers box up the food parcels. There are the

volunteers who drive our van stocking collecting food from permanent collection points, collecting and delivering to and from our centres ensuring that the food gets to and from our centres there on time. There are the volunteers who liaise with the referral agencies and the administrators who work in the office not forgetting all the volunteers who help at our supermarket collections.



We would like to say **thank you** and recognize all of those who do make a difference to those in crisis.

Foodbank News

Foodbank Donation update

We cannot thank you enough all so much for your generous donations that you have made during 2017/18. These donations have come from individuals, groups, churches, businesses and schools.

During the Harvest period you donated eight tonnes of food and we saw a further six tonnes of food donated during December.



We also had a huge response to our Advent calendar appeal. Over 500

calendars, including 150 from Holmes & Hills Solicitors Braintree. Thank you to all who donated to this appeal.

Our annual December Tesco collection also went very well with donations totaling over 4 tonnes of food. Our volunteers enjoyed talking to those of you who stopped and had a chat.

New Donation points

We are pleased to announce that Braintree, Halstead and Witham Libraries now have a donation collection bin. Care Cleaners of Braintree have also become a collection point. Any donations can be made during their opening hours

For more information on how to donate and where to donate please visit our website www.braintreearea.foodbank.org.uk/givehelp

Stanstead Airport Food donation scheme

Have you ever thought of taking Marmite to friends and family abroad? Is there a particular make of food that we have in the UK, which they don't have elsewhere in the world? Every week hundreds of food products (over 100g) that are taken as hand luggage and are seized as people try to take them out of the country. These food stuffs had previously been disposed of as rubbish until the team at Stanstead Airport decided this food should be donated and not be wasted food. In an effort to prevent food waste, Stanstead Airport collects these food items and donates them to Uttlesford, Hertford, Harlow and Braintree Foodbanks.

Our visitors have certainly benefited from these food donations and we are thankful to the airport staff for enabling food to be shared and not wasted.

The launch of our first Food in School Holiday Clubs

School holidays can be a depressing time for families as they have to stretch their food even further to provide that extra meal a day.



According to the Trussell Trust there are about 170 non-school days a year which means there are 170 days where families are facing additional pressure and food poverty.

Research carried out by the Trussell Trust suggests that 78% of those who have visited a foodbank have either skipped meals or have not eaten at all and this situation is made worse during the school holidays which is why we have taken action to use the Trussell Trust holiday clubs model. The aim of these clubs is not only to provide food but to allow those attending to have fun, make new friends and not to feel socially excluded because of their circumstances.



Our first club ran in May and was then repeated in August 2017. We welcomed a total of 36 children and 15 adults during the

summer holidays. With many commenting on how much fun they were having and how they felt supported.

We also ran a holiday club during the Christmas break and we are planning to run a club during the 2018 summer holiday.

These groups are run by volunteers and some of your food donations supplement the fresh food we buy to make a complete meal for those who come. This is just another way in which your donations are so important.

To attend one of our school holiday clubs you must be referred to us by one of our current referral agencies.

Our First Eat Well Spend Less course

The Trussell Trust, who we are seeded by, recognizes that further support is required to

support those who visit one of the 400 Foodbanks that make up the network. They have devised a six week course that would cover topics on cookery skills, budgeting, hygiene and nutrition and we were pleased to be able to hold our first course during the last summer term.

Because it is an entry-level course participants did not need to know how to cook before they came along. Each session was two and a half hours long, covering two basic recipes as well as activities on the session's topic.



The recipes are demonstrated to participants before they attempted to make it themselves, covering dishes like a quick soup, basic tomato sauces and treats like crumbles too.



Designed to be very relaxed, participants cooking with us then taking home what they have made.

We also covered a range of subjects surrounding cooking and budgeting, including menu planning, portion sizes, money planning, 'supermarket psychology' and tips on picking up bargains. With small groups of participants, everyone can learn allowing them to share their own skills and experience too.

This course is fun and informal, and it's a great way for people to discover new tips and techniques on how to cook quick, healthy meals on a low budget. It also provides an atmosphere of inclusion rather than feeling embarrassed about their circumstances. From the positive feedback we received we will certainly be running another course this year.

To be able to run our first course we would like to thank all of the volunteers who attended the training courses to be able to run the courses, for the generous donation we had received to buy the equipment needed and Dorothy Lodge for her work on securing funding to enable support this project and to continue and thanks to the Children's Centres for providing us with a venue where we could run these courses from.

Please note that to be able to attend one of these courses individuals have to be referred to us by one of our registered referral agencies.

The view from one of our centres

Braintree Baptist Church

The work that our centres carry out is invaluable. They are on the front line helping those in food crisis. What follows is their perspective on helping those in food crisis.



'Food is the most basic human need. It is essential for survival. Currently benefit delays are a major issue, contributing not only to the physical distress of hunger but also to emotional and psychological distress. When you are hungry it is hard to address any other difficulties you may be experiencing and if hunger goes on, these difficulties become more complex and harder to resolve.

Even more concerning is the impact hunger has on children, affecting not only their physical development but their ability to concentrate and achieve. Hunger and poverty lessen their life chances.

In an affluent society like ours there should be no need for Foodbanks. So why have we volunteered to work with them? Our love for people and our concern for those experiencing poverty and hunger prompts us to help. A Foodbank not only provides essential food, but also a welcoming environment where people can talk and relax. Although we are not a counselling service, the opportunity to share anxieties and problems with people who will listen in a non-judgemental way, offers a life-line to some of our visitors.



There are almost as many reasons for volunteering as there are volunteers. For many of us feel that offering people love, empathy and acceptance is exactly what we feel compelled to do, Some have survived their own difficult times and feel that volunteering is giving something back. Some want to do

something to counteract the inequalities in society. Some want to do something useful in retirement. Whatever our reasons for being here, we have one aim in common - we all want to try to make a positive difference to people going through difficult times.

As volunteers we work as a team. We use our strengths. Some of us enjoy making the drinks, some of us are good at checking the forms and carrying bags, others set out the room to ensure it is warm and welcoming, some of us like talking to people. We need each other and we all contribute equally



Volunteering benefits us as well. We feel a sense of warmth when we see the change in people, the smiles on their faces when they receive the bags of food. We are humbled by the

trust shown as visitors share their worries. We feel joy when people's circumstances improve and they donate food for others as a thanks for the support. We benefit from the friendship, the support and the sense of community we find working together and we do feel we are part of an organisation that does make a difference'

The volunteers of Braintree Baptist Church

*Our Braintree Baptist Church centre is open
Wednesday's from 11am – 2pm*

Coming up

Between now and our next newsletter we will be busy working with our referral agencies to further help those who face food poverty. We will be organizing more school holiday clubs and rolling more Eat Well Spend Less courses.

Our work will continue to help those who are in food crisis through the work of our volunteers and centres and we are sure to be amazed by your continuing generosity.

In the year ahead we will have many exiting updates and information on how you can help us further. This will include a new fundraising pack for you both individuals and organisations to use.

We can't thank you all enough for the all that you do to support us and we hope you enjoy reading our Spring Newsletter.

The Braintree Area Foodbank Team

Keep Updated

To make sure your up to date on our shopping lists, seasonal donation dates or just to keep updated as to what we are up to please see the information below

www.braintreearea.foodbank.org.uk

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