

Morning Michael,

Just thought I would drop you a line a brief update on what's happened as a result of the Christmas Party. As you can imagine we keep track of all our clients and the impact of bringing people together has made a positive change on so many lives.

Two of the tables from the Christmas meal have now established themselves as solid friendship groups in both Felling and Whickham and by working together we have helped them build long lasting friendships. It's hard to quantify what this means but many of the people we are talking about didn't speak to anyone other than their GP or carer and as a result of bringing people together they regularly meet in each other's houses and ring each other often before bed just say goodnight. Simple things like this make life worth living and that's not an observation but direct feedback from the people themselves

I don't know if you recall but there were three gentleman who had not left their homes for over 8 months and were not only suffering from loneliness but had hit the spiral of depression and real fear of leaving the house. As a direct result of participating in the Christmas event these three chaps are now involved in the organisations "Tuesday Group". The Tuesday Group are a group of 16 older people who hop on our remaining mini bus pick a pub and seaside resort of their choice and spend the day together in each other's company, to quote the previous client "It's the simple things in life". To illustrate the impact of this, two of the gents were on their GPs suicide risk register and due to their new friendships and purpose in life they are no longer on that register.

As an organisation working alongside you and identifying need within our community has enabled us to bid for funding from a foundation that supports befriending services, so fingers crossed we will be in a position to help so many more people in a similar situation to those now enjoying their later years. Without the experience of working alongside you we would not have had the evidence or proof of concept to even place a funding bid.

The ripple effect of a good deed can be amazing and it's always good to let people know, so a big thank you from all at Age UK Gateshead

Hope you are well

Cheers

Ian

Ian Wolstenholme from Ageuk Gateshead