

Providence Row GAZETTE

• COMMUNITY MAGAZINE •

RESILIENCE

This week, the Gazette reports on more impressive stories of resilience playing out in real life. Peer mentor Wayne tells how Providence Row's peer mentoring programme helped him uncover hidden talents. Wayne has turned his unpromising early years into a determination to help others - and two job offers into the bargain.

Wayne's belief that consideration for others is therapy in itself is echoed in Liam's story of a teacher's maxim that happiness is elusive until you least expect it. Paradoxically, substituting pursuit of our own peace of mind with thoughts for others can bring us real contentment.

The people of Whitechapel have a special resilience finds Jo as she takes a journey through the history of the area. Over the years, Whitechapel has welcomed many industrious artisans who have come here in search of a better life. Home to Providence Row since its foundation in 1860, Whitechapel has survived its own troubles too. Read on.

CONTENTS

2. Peer Mentoring: Wayne
3. Resilience isn't just about the individual!
4. What do you know about Whitechapel and Brick Lane?
7. Tales from Tails
8. Art & Fun

What is it with cats and hats? Luigi loves sparring with feline rival Leo about his bobbly head gear. But Cat in the Hat author Dr Seuss' ode to persistence and resilience brings some wise words.

Just when we thought we'd got the better of Sam's conundrums, his latest posers confound us yet again. Can you do better?

PEER MENTORING WAYNE

By volunteer
Frances!



Wayne is clear that anyone considering undertaking the peer mentoring programme should not hesitate. 'I say "Go for it." It boosted my confidence, helped me prepare for work and helped me show others that they too can change. The programme could be one of the best moves they ever make.'

In the last two issues of the Providence Row Gazette, we heard from two of our three recently qualified peer mentors. Here we talk to the third member of this impressive group.

Wayne Black cuts a striking figure, tall, confident and upbeat about his future while acknowledging his past. 'If my 16 year old self could see me now, he would be bowled over,' says Wayne. 'I am very positive about what lies ahead. I've successfully completed the Providence Row Peer Mentorship programme and I've been offered two employment opportunities. I'd love to take up both but I'm going to have a make a decision.'

Wayne's early life was not so promising. 'I grew up in a world where crime was a way of life, leaving school well before I should have and making my own way,' he says.

'I suppose it was inevitable that I would end up in prison and over the years, I've spent long periods behind bars,' he says. But during one particularly long sentence, Wayne decided to take advantage of some of the resources available for inmates who want to learn and maybe create a different life for themselves when their sentence ends.'

His decision involved concentrating on new activities. 'I got involved in helping to put together and editing reading material for prisoners,' Wayne says. 'I also became known for speaking up for the prisoners, representing them with staff, keeping an eye out for them.'

Like many others, Wayne was caught up in drugs and other addictions. But like many others, he managed to kick his habits through one of the 12 step programmes. 'I've been clean of addictions since late 2017. I want to keep it that way' he says.

Out of prison since June 2020, Wayne has been involved with Providence Row peer mentoring programme. In some ways, his endeavours whilst in prison have been put to good use he says, 'I found I had some useful skills that mean I can help others, I especially enjoyed trainer Nadia's style, picking up on my strengths and potential.'

'I was already familiar with some of the drug and alcohol topics but understanding the causes of homelessness, safeguarding issues and insights into hysical health and ill health will be invaluable in whichever role I decide to take on.'

For more information about the peer mentoring programme at Providence Row, please see:

www.providencerow.org.uk/pages/54-peer-mentoring

For help with addictions, see:

<https://tinyurl.com/nhsaddictionhelp>

RESILIENCE

BY VOLUNTEER LIAM



ISN'T JUST ABOUT THE INDIVIDUAL!

A wise teacher observed that her pupils lacked a sense of shared identity. She felt they acted like individuals, with their own needs in mind, sometimes to the exclusion of others' needs. So she devised an exercise to illustrate that an alternative way exists, that is, the group when it acts in concert, is more powerful than the individual, and this is what she did...

The next day the teacher brought a large bag of white balloons to school. She asked her class of 35 pupils to inflate the balloons and then write their name on one of them.

After they had written their names, the children went to the Assembly Hall and threw the balloons into the air. The teacher moved through the hall making sure the balloons were well and truly mixed up.

She then told the children they had five minutes to find the balloon they had written their name on but, no matter how thoroughly they looked, not a single pupil found their own white balloon.

The teacher told the children to stop looking. Instead, she told them to pick up the balloon closest to them and give it to the child whose name was on it. In less than two minutes, every pupil was holding the balloon they had written their name on.

The teacher said to the children, "These balloons are like happiness. Sometimes we won't find it when we're only searching for our own but, if we care about someone else's happiness...it will ultimately help us find our own."

What do you know about Whitechapel and Brick Lane?

Whitechapel in Tower Hamlets has ancient roots in the character and resilience of its people and places. Alongside Whitechapel, Brick Lane and Petticoat Lane Markets, it is also home to Providence Row the centre for homeless people. Whitechapel originally got its name from the whitewash made of lime and chalk with a bright white finish used on the outside of a local church.



By volunteer Jo!

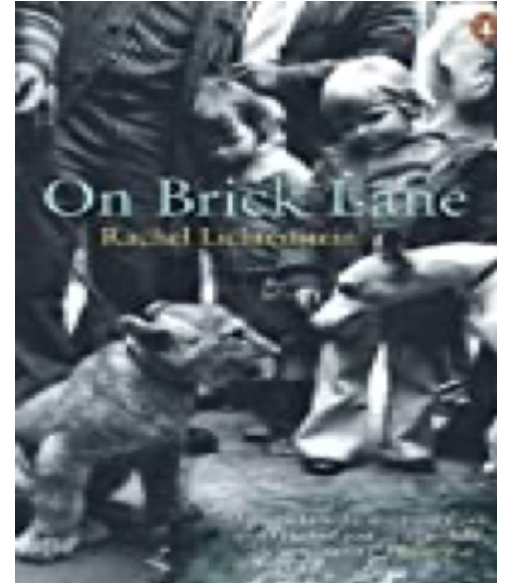


In the 1550s Brick Lane was mentioned in a survey of ancient Stepney and since then many nationalities of people have come here over the centuries looking for a better life. Courage and resilience are a vital characteristic of the place.

All sorts of unusual things have been traded in the markets of Whitechapel.



In the 1950s film 'A kid for two farthings' a young boy with a sad story is shown being cheered up by being given a baby goat in Petticoat Lane Market.



In the 1960s a picture was captured of a lion cub for sale in Brick Lane market. For about 30 years there was an animal market just off Brick Lane. There were caged birds and puppies as well as goats, snakes and monkeys. It was closed down in the 1980s and a law banned the street sale of animals.

As for the lion cub; it grew up and became more dangerous and was swapped for a set of watches. Maybe the lions in London Zoo are descended from it?



There have been persecution and troubles here too. There is a green spot in Whitechapel. Local people are fond of this little oasis in such a close packed area. It is called Altab Ali Park after the tragic killing of a young Bangladeshi man.

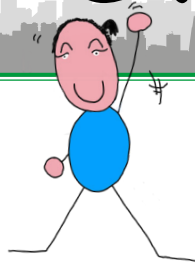
Now Brick Lane may become pedestrianized allowing more of its eating places to be outside and on the pavements. There are lots of excellent curry houses because of the Bangladeshi-Sylheti community. Previously Huguenots driven out of France in the 17th Century brought skills such as weaving and material shops. Colourful fabric shops are still here. Also Jewish people came here in the nineteenth century escaping persecution in the Russian Empire and created a thriving trading community.

This long history of survival in troubling times and of resilience and compassion combined are seen in the history of Providence Row also. Founded in 1860 by Father Daniel Gilbert it continues to bring life and support to the area and to the homeless people of Whitechapel and Tower Hamlets.



Tales from Tails

By Emma!



Hi everyone,

Leo and me have been busy with some serious sniffing for sure. one day the sky is blue and the next day it's fffffrrrrreeeezzzziiinngggg!

We are thinking about resilience for this edition and in our opinion there is no one better than Dr Seuss to sum up what it means to 'weather' ha ha - the storm. Here's our favourite poem by the man behind The Cat in the Hat - which could be about Leo and his ridiculous bobble hat.

Oh The Places You'll Go

"You have brains in your head.

You have feet in your shoes

You can steer yourself any direction you choose.

You're on your own. And you know what you know.

And YOU are the guy who'll decide where to go.

I'm sorry to say so but, sadly, it's true

And hang-ups can happen to you

And when you're in a Slump, you're not in for much fun.

I am worried. very worried.
I feel troubled
and concernedzzz...



But on you will go though the weather be foul

on you will go though your enemies prowl

on and on you will hike and I know you'll hike far
And face up to your problems whatever they are"

Hope it's made you smile and think and feel warm inside. If not there's this:

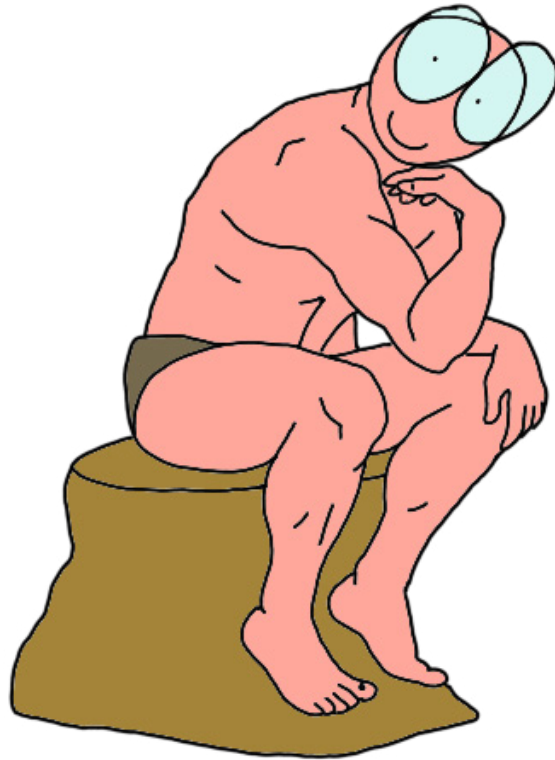
"Always remember you are braver than you believe, stronger than you seem, smarter than you think and twice as beautiful as you've ever imagined."

So long until the next one. Leo and Luigi.

Boy, aren't you elegant.



ART & FUN



By volunteer Sam!
(AKA The Thinker)

1. What kind of room has no doors or windows?
2. During what month do people sleep the least?
3. What word becomes shorter when you add two letters to it?
4. What is able to travel around the globe but stays in a corner the whole time?

SOLUTIONS

1. A mushroom.
2. February.
3. Short
(An envelope!)