

These stories were compiled with the help of Homerton University Hospital, City & Hackney Clinical Commissioning Group & East London NHS Foundation Trust



Photos: Anne-Marie Oni-Olusola



Keep calm and carry on cooking

By Andrew Woollard

LEARNING to create delicious, healthy and affordable meals from scratch for just one pound is the culinary mission of 'Bags of Taste', a free community initiative that is cooking up a storm in Hackney.

Notorious for my own dinner choices (chicken nuggets and waffles), I was offered the opportunity to join a course to gain some much-needed gastronomic inspiration to turn this frozen food chump into a MasterChef champ.

Joining 20 other residents from across the borough at Dalston's Trinity Centre, Alicia Weston and her team set about demonstrating how to prepare and cook two tasty recipes from scratch: Kluski (Polish dumplings with spinach) and Xinjiang cumin chicken.

After cooking instructions were handed to us novices,

"I use what I have been taught to feed my five children. I now find cooking less stressful"



'Bags of Taste's' Alicia Weston and her colleague Linda

we were shown how to cook each meal, and offered hints and tips on where to pick up the most affordable ingredients, such as local markets. We were also shown how to finely chop an onion properly (apparently I had been doing it wrong for years.)

We were then paired up, given our own workstations – that included a cooker, the ingredients and all the

utensils necessary to put our skills into action – and rustled up some tasty food.

With 'Bags of Taste' volunteers on hand, the centre soon filled with the smells of cooking as each team began assembling their dishes. I tried the food we cooked and ... it was surprisingly delicious!

Afterwards, I spoke to Babs Fry, who first joined the project as a participant

and is now a volunteer helper. She said: "I use what I've been taught to feed my five children. I now find cooking less stressful and the hints and tips I've learnt makes the process simple and easy."

"Food brings the community together; through cooking and eating – and by taking people out of their comfort zones by trying something new – it broadens horizons."

Bags of the ingredients used on the day were also available for £3 to cook the dishes again at home.

'Bags of Taste' is funded by West Hackney Parochial Charity, Trust House Foundation and South Hackney Parochial Charity. The next course is 21 April.

MORE INFO

To book a place, e-mail: cooking@parkholmesupperclub.co.uk; or call/text your name to: 07715 555 560

News in brief

Hospice worker wins award

A HOSPICE worker, who has cared for the terminally ill in Hackney for 35 years, has won a national award. Rose Dodzo, one of the longest serving staff at St Joseph's Hospice in Mare Street, was selected from over 800 members of the UK charity sector to win the Care Service Provider of the Year award.

Rose said: "It is a real privilege to care for the patients and their families at the most vulnerable time in their lives and to give them the holistic care that was always advocated by St Joseph's. I'm thrilled to have won this award."

Rose began her career at St Joseph's in 1978 and spent many years as night sister, looking after all 42 of the hospice's beds. She was recently appointed to the post of nurse advisor for the hospice's new, 24 hour support line which offers specialist advice over the phone to people who are affected by serious, life-limiting conditions.

Michael Kerin, St Joseph's Chief Executive, said: "Rose is an asset to our organisation who has, over 35 years, always given her all. We're very proud that she won the top prize, it's an incredible achievement."



Rose Dodzo and Michael Kerin

Innovation health fund launch

A £400,000 fund to support local projects that help improve residents' health is set to be launched this month.

Individuals, voluntary groups, social enterprises and other not-for-profit organisations are being encouraged to bid for part of the Innovation Fund.

It was established last year by City and Hackney Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) as a result of feedback from residents, service users and stakeholders. It funded 11 projects that delivered innovative solutions for specific local health needs.

Dr Clare Highton, Chair of City and Hackney CCG, said: "Our area faces a wide range of complex health challenges and it can be difficult for people to access the services they need. The expertise needed to address this, and to drive down health inequalities within our communities, is what we want to harness through the fund. Therefore we want to hear from as many people and organisations as possible."

The launch will take place on 23 April, from 10am-1pm, at the Tomlinson Centre, E8. To book, e-mail: eeva.huoviala@nhs.net; or call: 020 7683 4222. For more info, visit: www.cityandhackneccg.nhs.uk/about-us/innovation-fund.htm

