

MAY AND JUNE 2022

THE 'KEEP THE HEID' NEWSLETTER!

From North Ayrshire Justice Services Service User Involvement Project



WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING?

We have had some challenges facing the Making a Difference project over the last few months. Things have gotten increasingly busy within Justice Services and staff have been feeling under a lot of pressure. Consequently we have had to put our book club on hold for a few months whilst some of the pressures within the Court system and to workloads calm down a little. This has come as a disappointment to us all but in the meantime we are focused on keeping our other activities going. Football, gym class and the cooking challenge continue to thrive and we are so grateful for how hard everyone works to keep these going.

In more positive news... we managed to get a new cookbook for 2022 printed which we are delighted about. We will begin sending this out to our Making a Difference cooking challenge members and our supporters very soon!



COMMUNITY CHALLENGES



We have some ideas in the pipeline for stories and news to share over the coming months but this edition we wanted to focus on an important conversation that a few of our members have been having with their Social Workers recently. We touched upon this in the first edition of this year, but felt that revisiting it would be beneficial as we had people reach out after that edition to express their surprise as they hadn't realised many of the challenges faced by people getting out of custody.

One of our members mentioned that he had been struggling to adjust and he felt that he hadn't given proper thought as to what life would properly be like when he got out. He admits now that he had naively thought that it would be great... simply because he wouldn't be in custody. Whereas the reality is that being in the community brings its own challenges and stresses. He has found that he is not as stable in his recovery as he thought he was and has recently admitted that he needs more help in this area of his life. He is hoping to go into a rehabilitation facility to help him get back on track.

Another member spoke about feeling that when he gets overwhelmed, he retreats into his "prison routine" where he will just watch mindless programmes on the television and stop interacting with other people, because he doesn't know how else to cope. He spoke of feeling disappointed in himself that this still seemed to be a type of comfort for him.

Both of our project members spoke of how they found it difficult to explain to their family members why they were struggling because to them it was very black and white... you're not in custody anymore therefore you should be happy. Sadly life is rarely that straightforward and sometimes life can feel overwhelming and without positive coping strategies many of us could return to making the same old mistakes we've made before.

Thankfully our members are being supported in the community and have workers there to talk this through and to try and help them build their skills so they can make better choices. However, not everyone has this and it can be a real uphill battle for some people when they are released.

"I THINK PEOPLE JUST ASSUME WE'LL BE HAPPY ONCE WE'RE OUT, BUT THE REALITY IS THAT LIFE CAN BE LONELY AND BORING WHEN YOU'RE BY YOURSELF AND HAVE NO PALS WHO WANT THE SAME THINGS AS YOU. IT'S WAY HARDER THAN I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE".

(MAD PROJECT MEMBER)



LAST BUT NOT LEAST...



We've chosen to share our 'Fifteens' recipe with you this edition. This was a wee nod to our colleagues in the Northern Irish Probation Service as we have been reliably informed that it is a Northern Irish recipe.

Ingredients

So you're meant to use 15 of each ingredient.. hence the name.. however that got a little confusing as some people said slightly different things. So we used weights for our ingredients to make it as straightforward as possible!

Ingredients

400g digestive biscuits
397g tin condensed milk
50g glace cherries
50g mini marshmallows
Some desiccated coconut for rolling out

Method

Put the digestives in a clear sandwich bag and smash them up with a rolling pin or tin - you want them to end up in small pieces.

Then add all the ingredients - apart from the coconut - to one big mixing bowl and stir them all together.

Shake some of the coconut out on the countertop and place the mixture on top of it once it's mixed together.

Then using your hands.. roll the mixture out into long log shapes (as shown in the photo on the bottom right).

Place on a non-stick tray/plate in the fridge for a few hours until it's firm.

Then cut them into slices approximately 15mm thick and pop in cake cases (like in the pictures below).



"THESE WERE ABSOLUTELY AMAZING. THE WEE ONE WANTED TO ADD IN SOME SPRINKLES.. AND WHO AM I TO STOP HER!? THEY TASTED BRILLIANT!"

(MAD PROJECT MEMBER)