

Newsletter September 2016

2016 is the year of spreading our award-winning Self Care with Food & Herbs course around the UK.

In 2013-14 Gail Farrow tutored three courses at University of East London, opening up the medicinal herb garden to teach kitchen pharmacy in daily health care. Our collaboration won a Gardening Against The Odds Award of Merit, with participants commenting “very relevant and totally inspired”, “Enlightened and thoroughly enjoyed the course”, “Great course. Totally relevant as a parent”, “I love it, can’t wait to go over notes and start making and learning”, “informative and practical for day-to-day living”. What’s more, **people’s health improved**: three quarters of participants’ self-assessed symptoms improved by up to 2 points (0-6 scale). Showing such a concrete benefit will help us market the course to the NHS as part of their “**social prescribing**”, which is referring patients to health promoting group activities, so creating healthier communities instead of prescribing more drugs.

This year we’ve run the course in **Devon in Exeter Community Centre, Manchester’s Hulme Community Garden Centre, Sydenham Garden, Chelsea Physic Garden and Fulham Palace**. Next year we intend to licence it to experienced medical herbalists as tutors round the country. As a charity, Living Medicine can help tutors by partnering them in fundraising to subsidise courses and so share our education programme with more people.

New core team and project coordinator

We now have a core team led by project coordinator Mary Sanderson, a gem whose IT project management background brings us much-needed structure. She has written our business plan and a new website tender document to support our growing UK-wide licensed tutor network, events booking and more, very generously volunteering her time until we win funding.

Spreading self care skills to the wider public

A key question is how can we scale up healthier living to reach large numbers of people? One approach is running public shows where people learn how to use and make simple self care recipes and remedies, then share these with friends afterwards round their kitchen table and so cascade this knowledge through **peer-to-peer health education**. We are planning a pilot event with partners next year – watch this space!

Our first Living Medicine Garden in Rosendale Allotments, London SE21



Rosendale Allotments

Amanda, second from left

Amanda (Rew, medical herbalist and horticultural trainer) has initiated our first garden project! This is a wonderful opportunity to partner Roots and Shoots (www.rootsandshoots.org.uk) to create a medicinal kitchen garden in Rosendale Allotments in Tulse Hill SE21. We’ll use the garden for teaching and harvesting as well as sharing herbs, knowledge and expertise. If you’d like to get involved or just find out more, come and join us from 3-5pm this Saturday 1st October at Rosendale Allotments – email amandarew@handsonherbs.com or contact me, Alex, as below.

Funding

Fundraising with bid applications is now a top priority to cover our core costs, specifically those of our project coordinator and our new, comprehensive website to support tutors, marketing and knowledge-sharing, along with developing **a mentoring course** for lay people to become **Living Medicine mentors** to teach each other about food as medicine and family remedies.

Seeking probono accountants – can you help?

We owe many thanks to the generosity of Joe Weston and his accountancy team at **MGR Weston Kay LLP** for auditing our books probono for the past years. So, we are urgently seeking new probono accountants for the next 1-2 years - do you know of a company who might be interested? Our brief accounts are not time-consuming! Please let me know if so.

Finally, a big thank you to our wonderful **Living Medicine team** who are generously volunteering their time – especially to Mary our coordinator, Jane (Placca) in Manchester, Gina (Webley) for her education input and Pieter (Meiring) for his IT knowledge.

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