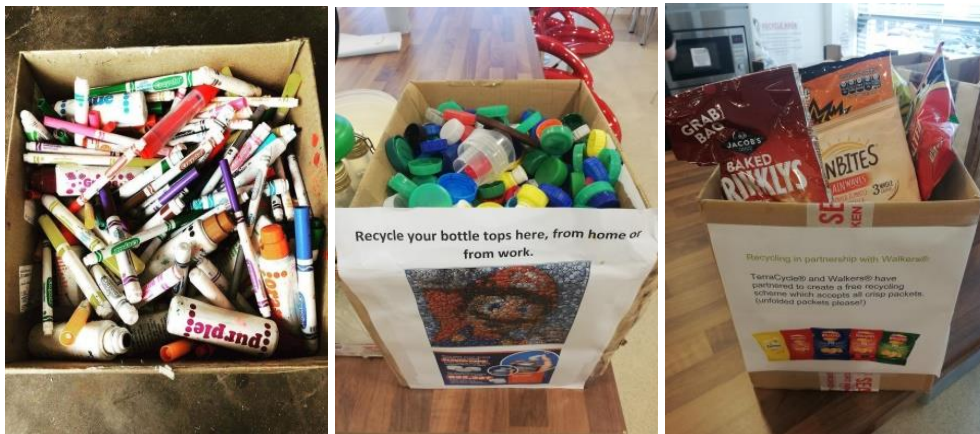


Recycling our way to share happiness

Employer: Connect Health

Area: North Tyneside

Theme: Community Engagement



Connect Health colleagues are a great bunch of people and love taking part in all our Better Health at Work initiatives. So much so that when we started recycling plastic waste, they were more than willing to help provide the empty crisp packets and biscuit wrappers for our collection! We of course, encouraged everyone to make healthy swaps where they could.

Recycling was chosen as our theme as it fits in perfectly with our ongoing aim to be more sustainable.

Over the months, like all good wombles, we collected many crisp packets, plastic milk bottle tops, used felt pens and biscuit wrappers then duly sent them off to the recycling centre. After a few months of recycling people started to ask what happened to the rubbish, and if we were making any difference to anyone or anything. It was a good question and we didn't have the answer.

We made enquiries with our chosen recycling company (Terracycle) to find out where our rubbish ended up and what it was used for, we discovered that it was shredded, turned into pellets and remodelled into useful plastic objects for the home, like bath mats and kitchen utensil holders. Nothing very exciting or meaningful! We felt a bit deflated at this non exciting discovery so investigated other ways of how we could help people benefit from recycling.

Then, quite by chance, one of our Health Advocates saw a social media post from a Girl Guide group who were looking for materials to recycle to help fund their 'Happiness Project' They had also signed up with Terracycle who now gave points per kilo of rubbish which they then convert into hard cash for the Guides to spend on materials for their project.



This sounded like it was worth following up and just what we were looking for. A few days, and several e-mails later we joined forces with the 1st Forest Hall Guides and Brownies Group. Katrina Moffatt, 1st Forest Hall Guide Leader, told us that they set up The Happiness Project after being contacted from a local care home who asked if the Guides would like to visit their residents to chat and have a cuppa with them. The aim was to help alleviate the feeling of loneliness and isolation that some residents felt but also to encourage the Guides to take an active part in their community.

The visits have now become a regular thing, and the Guides are planning events for the year ahead which will include more tea and cakes, crafting and sing-alongs with the residents. Heart-warming!

By Joining together and sharing our recyclable rubbish we have so far collectively been able to send off:

- **34.28kg of crisp packets**
- **22kg of used felt pens**
- **3.7kg of snack packets**

The collaboration is ongoing, and we plan to make further connections with our local community as the benefit to all of us, including the environment, is immeasurable.



“Thank you so much for your help with our project, I am so pleased you made contact with us, it really has made a difference” Katrina Moffatt, Guide Leader

To promote the work and to create a lasting memory of The Happiness Project The 1st Forest Hall Guides and Brownies fundraised to purchase a Mini Elmer which they named Khushee. At the end of the Elmer trail Khushee moved in with the residents of Park View Care Home which will bring happiness to residents, visitors, and staff for many years to come.