Update for the end of 2020

When I first wrote this blog[ish] thingy we were at week 9 of working from home and in the midst of proper full lockdown where our ventures outdoors were limited, non-essential shops were closed, buses were largely empty and the centre of town looked like a scene from a post-apocalyptic film minus the wreckage.

So that was week 9 after having left the office on March 18th……………………I can’t actually believe I’m typing this here, at my kitchen table, on the 18th of December, a whole 9 months down the line!!! And how do things look now? Shops are all open and it’s only a week until Christmas – things certainly look a bit different to what they did at week 9. Shops are open, buses are busier but Edinburgh looks nothing like we are accustomed to it looking at this time of year - no Big Wheel, carousel, Santa train or reindeer in Princes St gardens, no German Market outside the National Gallery [although you can visit the gallery if you book a slot] no ice rink on St Andrew’s Square, no smell of all the food stalls and mulled wine kiosks in the centre of town - and no music [I only just thought about that]. But its Christmas, the shop windows are all decorated and trees and lights are up in the usual places. Over the past couple of weeks, the streets would have been filled with people wearing Christmas jumpers, Santa hats, tinsel in their hair, elves ears and reindeer antlers [not all at once, that would be tacky hehe!] I’m talking about the Christmas afternoon/nights out – they are not happening as a result of bars and restaurants being limited in opening hours and what they are permitted to sell. Current restrictions mean that group sizes and the number of households allowed to meet indoors [and outdoors] are capped – and no alcohol inside in bars or with meals. I have witnessed some hardy folks, braving the cold and often the wind and rain, gathering near bars where take away is being served, drinking pints from plastic tumblers, sometimes poured from [hopefully well rinsed out] milk cartons – I expect to see more of this over the next couple of weeks as people look to find a way round [subvert] the rules and have their social gatherings!

As far as CY goes, our team have been working hard to keep on doing what we do – I’m going to leave the rundown of our activities to our Acting Manager, the wonderful Susie Mc. Although I will mention our wee outdoor get together on the Meadows yesterday afternoon, attended by most staff, some of our lovely young people and the amazing Tania Peters from JGHS, one of the truly dedicated Pupil Support Leaders. Parking space and toilet facilities kindly provided by our friend and former colleague, Laurene Edgar from LAYC [and her colleague and long-time youth worker Emma Lee] Top notch gazebo lent by Matthew’s pal Lewis [Matthew has connections], hot chocolate lovingly made by Sima and Ally, cake and jam to go with it - home made by our Julia from the Youth work team, lights for the gazebo from Cat who risked life and limb in B&M for the cause. Our newest addition to the team, the gem that is Jen was there, giving her the opportunity to meet most of her new colleagues and some of our young people in the flesh rather than online! We had a great couple of hours – doesn’t compare with the Christmas meal that has now become a tradition and being in our cosy space, but hey, we are an adaptable and resourceful bunch and it was fun! Thanks to Andy P for organising and dropping off our personalised party bags for our “Christmas Night In” tomorrow and Claire W for coming in all the way from Midlothian to join us.

So, we finish up today [apart from a couple of rogue elements in the team!] and will be back on our laptops from home on 6th January 2021. We will be providing an online space [?] on Christmas Eve and Hogmanay for our young people if they fancy a wee chat. What does 2021 hold for us? I’m done with speculating – we’ll be back in the building at some point [please!]

I could go on [as those of you who know me are painfully aware of] and, much as I would like to, I have other things to do………………going back to the “9” thing – the number 9 is revered in Hinduism, it is complete, perfect and is a divine number as it represents the end of a cycle, so let’s revere the 9 and be positive going forward. I now have to stop myself from listing all the varied, interesting and obscure things 9 related - just one last and very important one from this ninth month – you all know that pregnancy lasts 9 months, yeah? Well, Clare J has only gone and done that during these nine months – baby Isla made her grand entrance to the world last Friday – how exciting, we can’t wait to meet her!

Whatever you are doing, wherever you are and whoever you are with over this holiday period – make the best of it – one day we’ll look back on this…………” Remember Christmas 2020?”

Keep on keeping on folks. Stay safe, stay sane and here’s to a better year in 2021.