



PRESS RELEASE

September 15, 2015

Community Christmas receives Big Lottery grant.

Community Christmas, the national charitable organisation that believes 'no elderly person in the UK should be alone on Christmas Day unless they want to be', is delighted to have been awarded a grant from the Big Lottery Fund. Community Christmas offers support to organisers across the country who are interested in hosting activities on Christmas Day that will start to build links within their community. The organisation also maintains a database of such events that can be accessed by the elderly and those that care about them to ensure that they have somewhere to go for companionship on Christmas Day.

Caroline Billington, founder of Community Christmas, said; "We are thrilled to receive this vital funding which will make a significant difference to our operations over the coming months. As Christmas fast approaches our phones start ringing, this money will ensure we are able to answer significantly more calls than we did last year. We will also be able to improve our website to provide better information to users and better support to new event organisers. We want Christmas to be a time everyone can look forward too – whatever that might mean for them."

In the run up to Christmas 2014 (the fifth year in which the campaign had been operating) Community Christmas received just under 500 enquiries, made over 800 outbound calls to organisers and guests, and received over 10,000 website hits in December! As the organisation goes from strength to strength they are anticipating three times that number of phone enquiries this year, as they help people to connect around the country.

Anyone interested in organising an event on Christmas Day should contact Community Christmas direct 0844 443 0662 or visit the website www.communitychristmas.org.uk where they will find lots of advice and guidance.

Caroline is keen to point out that it is not just about providing Christmas lunch, although that is always welcome. "We want communities to think about what might be right for them; perhaps an afternoon tea with mince pies, Christmas cake and board games, or what about organising a short walk round the park with some warming punch and sausage rolls afterwards. Local pubs and restaurants can also do their part by taking up our call to support the idea of 'book alone but don't eat alone' and putting aside a table where people could dine together and make new friends."

Background Note

Community Christmas was founded by Caroline Billington in 2011 after she became aware of just how many of the elderly are alone on this one day of the year and how little was being done about it. Since then the organisation has grown and last year 238 options for companionship were listed on the Community Christmas website. These were organised by volunteers, care homes and pubs across the county and it is estimated that 5000 older people benefitted from attending these events. Community Christmas works closely with other organisations including Friends of the Elderly, The Silver Line, Abbeyfields, BUPA and more.

For more information or to donate please visit www.communitychristmas.org.uk

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*** High res jpegs and images of Caroline Billington available on request**

For enquiries about hosting or attending an event please contact:
Community Christmas Tel: 0844 443 0662 or visit the website
www.communitychristmas.org.uk

For media enquiries please contact:
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