

FAREWELL THERESA...

July sees some changes for Devonport Lifehouse Chaplain Theresa Conway who is moving to Stroud. Lyndsey Withers takes time out to talk to Theresa about her thoughts and memories...

How will you look back on your time here? "My most significant memories formed on the Soup Run - the amazing conversations I had with people, and networking with volunteers who offer service users not only food but also the possibility of having a social life."

What is the most important impact of the Soup Run?

"Because it is done for love, service users know they are valued and cared about. We help people wherever they are living, turn no one away, and find a way of

helping them however difficult that may be."

What are you most proud of as you leave Plymouth? "I'd say Soup Run Plus [a weekly service for street sex workers]. And I am happy to have brought the wider caring community into the world of the Soup Run and Devonport Lifehouse through things like mental health awareness training."

What is the best thing that has happened to you in the last two years? "So many things! But my best memory is taking 10 residents from Devonport Lifehouse to Creation Fest - an experience that is still impacting on them."

What would you tell your 16 year-old self? "No matter how bad it gets it is never forever. Have confidence in yourself and who you are."



Theresa Conway, Chaplain at the Salvation Army's Devonport Lifehouse

Any other message? "Unless we pay more attention to people at the bottom of society we can never move forwards."

Goodbye Theresa – thanks for everything – we shall miss you!



Some volunteers from the Wrigley Soup Run Team (left to right): Paul, Adela, Saraj, Tim (centre, is the minibus driver from Hope Baptist Church), Sarah, Bryony and Gary (PTO for more)...

Psst... Did you hear what happened back in March? Soup Run clients may have been surprised to be served the usual hot drinks, sandwiches, soup and pasties from the back of a new Mercedes estate car! Well, that's what happened when the Hope Baptist Church mini-bus had a break-down one Monday night... So, to the rescue was Mark Andrews, General Manager of Wrigley UK! He taxied back to the office to pick up his car so that the Soup Run could still deliver a full service to users that night. Whilst the team were a little worried about hot soup potentially spilling in the boot of Mark's smart car, one of the clients commented "...well you've done alright for yourself haven't you!" Read about Wrigley and some of the volunteers on page 2.

A community and faith driven service providing free food and hot drinks to homeless, hungry and vulnerable people 365 days a year.



Paul and Gary taste the soup after chopping, cooking and blending

Perhaps other businesses should take note of the management approach at the Wrigley's site in Plymouth. Voted the 13th best large company to work for in the UK, employees are encouraged to be actively involved in voluntary community projects. So began their involvement with the Plymouth Soup Run about 6 years ago. The current team is headed up by Bryony Maunder and Paul Martin who supervise the Monday night Soup Run on a rota basis every 4 months. Food prep is done at the factory and offices in Estover which has amazing views over Plymbridge Woods and allows fallow deer to roam happily on the estate and where bee hives are managed by retired ex-employees... no wonder the staff are happy with such a fabulous location and altruistic leadership...

If you would like more information about Monday night Soup Run teams, please contact Maddie Maddison on 07734007617.

Bryony has worked at Wrigley for 28 years and been a Soup Run volunteer for five years. Bryony says the Soup Run "resets my barometer on life and makes me realise how lucky I am".



Bryony and Wrigley's charity board

Adela is new to the Soup Run, and was inspired by her mother who worked as a local representative serving the community. Adela wants to "do something that makes a difference and has meaning".

Gary has been at Wrigley for 20 years and on the Soup Run team for two, his first time was a team building exercise for the Finance Department. He says

it's rewarding and he enjoys the banter when preparing the soup "it's humbling and they (the clients) are so thankful and polite; it makes you appreciate what you have".

Sarah has worked at Wrigley for 15 years, she's currently Field Sales Support Co-ordinator, managing equipment and supplies for the sales reps. Sarah enjoys the Soup Run and feels "it's good to give something back, especially knowing you are lucky enough to have a nice home and a warm bed to go home to".

Saraj has worked in a variety of positions at Wrigley over 11 years and has been on the Soup Run team for about five. Saraj has also been involved with BITC (Business in the Community), which serves to help those who are unemployed get into work. Saraj, along with others can say "there but for the grace of God go I" and she says she is "happy to make a tiny difference".

Paul has been a Wrigley employee for 15 months and started volunteering on the Soup Run earlier this year, encouraged by his work colleague Gary. A Plymothian who previously worked for Royal Mail for 36 years, Paul believes "you should always do to others as you would have them do to you".

Dear Lord...

Thank you for all those who dedicate their lives to helping and serving others... Amen.