

## When it comes to the crunch

Most of us don't properly understand the reasons behind the current economic crisis and can only hope that somebody will come up with a solution. In the meantime we peer into the future wondering what impact it will have on our lives and try not to get overwhelmed by a feeling of powerlessness.



But what does 2009 have in store for us? How will decisions made by the politicians affect our jobs, homes and the public services that we use? And do we have to just sit and wait or are

there ways that we can take more control over our own wellbeing?

Of course it's relatively easy to be positive when you're healthy, have a job and a roof over your head and nobody should be flippant about the impact of issues such as serious illness and unemployment. The truth is though that happiness and wellbeing are about much more than circumstances. That's why Healthy Brockley is encouraging people to make life decisions that aren't dependent on the economic climate and will have a positive impact as the year unfolds - regardless of what else may happen.

Read on for more information about new activities and events. You might also like to take a few minutes to look at the Healthy Brockley Happiness Manifesto. This is based on what people in Brockley told us made them happy. It's made up of surprisingly simple actions but putting a few of these ideas into practise could make a big difference to your outlook on life. 🍏

## Happiness Manifesto

1. **Count your blessings**  
Each day record at least 3 things that you are grateful for.
2. **Do something creative**  
Experiment and find something you enjoy.
3. **Enjoy nature**  
Take time each day to appreciate the natural world around you.
4. **Get involved**  
Make a difference by volunteering to help others.
5. **Get physical**  
Exercise for half an hour three times a week.
6. **Have a good laugh at least once a day.**
7. **Lend a helping hand**  
Practise kindness daily. Help those in need.
8. **Nurture your relationships**  
Be sure to spend quality time with friends and family.
9. **Relax and take time to unwind**  
Read, listen to music, pray, go for a walk...
10. **Share your positive attitude**  
A smile can be contagious. Compliment and encourage others.

## Healthy Brockley: For Good or Ill?

Healthy Brockley has managed to spark some debate locally – with questions being raised about whether the initiative is a good or bad thing. The activities are organised by Brockley Community Church and some people have suggested that they are simply a cover for trying to convert people. Others have taken issue with the idea that health and spirituality are in any way connected.

A brief look at church history shows that churches have traditionally been at the heart of the community – serving people through a wide range of activities, not just worship services. Although there is plenty that the Church cannot be proud of, it is also true to say that Christians have often been at the forefront of doing good and bringing about positive change. Take a walk down to Deptford and you'll find evidence of the innovative work in developing health and education services led by the MacMillan sisters at St Nicholas Church.

For the record, Healthy Brockley has always been clear about the fact that it is a church based initiative - look at any publicity and you'll see it there in black and white. The activities are a modest attempt to contribute to the community in which Brockley Community Church is located – helping it to be the great place to live that we all know. And feedback from participants has been overwhelmingly positive. Do we want people to join the church? Of course we do. Is that why we run the activities? Not at all. Church is at the centre of who we are and a belief in a God who serves with 'no strings attached'. That means we can feel entirely comfortable with organising activities without feeling the need to try to convert people.

And is spirituality relevant when it comes to health? Well there is good evidence to say yes. But perhaps we'll save that one for another time.

### Healthy Brockley: Resolution

Struggling with New Year resolutions seems to be an annual British pastime. Could a bit of team work make all the difference?

The start of a year seems to bring with it an almost irresistible desire to make improvements to our lives. Something like 83% of us make New Year resolutions and often we resolve to do things that



would make a significant difference to our health and well-being if only we could keep to them.

Research suggests however that only 8% of us will see things through and that by the time we read this at least 45% of us will have given up on their 2009 resolutions.

Healthy Brockley Resolution is about connecting people together who have made similar pledges, aiming to help us get to the point where resolutions become habits. It's based on the idea that we all need moral support sometimes and usually doing things with other people is much more enjoyable than doing them on our own. The emphasis is definitely on fun but we do hope to see some long term benefits for ourselves and other people.

### Healthy eating

- Lose weight (no crash diets!) and raise money for hungry people in Third World countries
- Join in with the Jamie Oliver 'pass it on' approach and learn how to cook real food

### Exercise

- Beginners running group that works towards participating in the Brockley Fun Run in the spring
- Cycling group working towards joining in with the London to Brighton bike ride
- Healthy walks in the country or make a commitment to walk to work or school a few times each week



The possibilities are endless, ranging from the very informal to the more organised. We've listed some ideas, and if you would like to get involved let us know by using the details at the bottom of this page. We've already set up activities linked to some of these ideas and you'll find dates and times on our events page.

### Mental Wellbeing

- Start a gratitude diary and experience the benefits of thankfulness
- Do something creative – come to a Healthy Brockley art & craft workshop
- Financial difficulties or just stressed by money? Come along to the Money Secret Course and learn more about money management

Other activities will be more organic and you'll need to contact us or look on our website to find out more. If you've got an idea or resolution that you think other people might like to get involved with, let us know and we'll be happy to help get things off the ground.

### Spiritual Wellbeing

- Take time to appreciate the natural world around you
- Join an exploring spirituality group
- Visit a church service – there are lots of good ones in Brockley or join an Alpha group (Healthy Brockley is organised by a church and so specifically recommends Christian spirituality)



## The Happiness Diaries



**Thurs 8 January – late**

I followed my New Year resolution and started a course last night. It's all about how to be happy. I don't know exactly what I expected – maybe activities that made you feel happier but it turned out to be more of a discussion group. I'm not big on talking about myself so I kept pretty quiet, and chewed all my fingernails off.

Apparently experts reckon that happiness is 50% determined by background and 20% by circumstances. That leaves 40% to do things that makes me feel alive and optimistic!

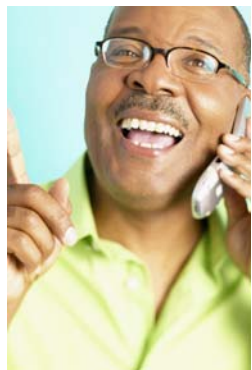
What makes me come alive?

I've been thinking about this all day. Most of my time seems to go on work, sleep, avoiding family, trying not to eat too much... why don't I paint any more? Feels like I'm too busy to do things that really matter. I need to get a life.



**Thurs 15 January – late**

I wasn't sure I wanted to go back to the course tonight. Last week I felt less happy after going - which seemed a bit ironic.



Lots of questions that I didn't really want to think about and I always thought happiness was just about what you feel.

Tonight was about the kind of person that you'd really like to be. Someone said they'd like to be able to look people in the eye without worrying about being liked. Someone else wanted to have the guts to speak their mind and not worry about offending people. I didn't say much again but it did make me think. I know I'd like to have more meaning in my life.

Maybe if I spent more time being grateful for what I do have, I might be happier. I have a job. Which I hate. OK, fine, a job which provides enough so I don't starve... at least that's a start.

It can't be this hard to be positive. I've been trying hard for a week but I can only find cloud and no silver lining.

Why am I such a cynic?



**Thurs 22 January – late**

I realised why I'm a cynic. Somebody said something tonight about people being genetically wired to need each other. That may be true but when you've been let down the way I have you don't want to need people. The truth is that I can't forgive and I feel like a failure. So I don't like it when friends have babies, go on cruises, win awards, get their hair cut, do something nice for someone else. That's what I should be doing!

Of course I don't like myself for not liking them. It's like the chicken and the egg dilemma... do I have to like myself before I can appreciate other people's success, or learn to be glad for them so that I can be happy with my life?

I'm looking for a new job. There's no room for painting when you work at a bank.

How do you learn to like yourself anyway? This sounds so lame and trite and I can't believe I'm going to write this but –

I'm going to forgive somebody.



**Fri 30 January – early**

My head feels like it's going to fall apart. But I haven't felt this good for a long time.

I was going to write my mother a letter – telling her that I forgave her for the way that she'd treated me. Then I had a bit too much to drink after the last Happiness session and rang her up instead. I gave her a piece of my mind. I don't think I have any of it left, I ranted on so long. She didn't say a word. Only asked if she could come round and see me.

Suddenly success doesn't seem to have anything to do with my work, or weight, or even painting.

I'm going to take Mum out for her birthday.

... 'Mum' - that's the first time I've called her that in twenty years. 🍏

## Gratitude is good for you

Those of a more pessimistic or cynical disposition may struggle with the concept but a number of scientific studies have suggested that there may be a link between gratitude and health. The idea that 'counting one's blessings' improves mood or mental wellbeing is hardly a new one but a recent report from Mississippi University claims significant benefits on physical health, specifically for organ transplant patients.

Reports like these go some way to explaining the growing trend for keeping a daily record of what makes you thankful. A Gratitude Diary might relate to people, things, events, experiences or things we do. The process doesn't have to be time-consuming. It might just be a list - and it doesn't have to be long. If you're a confirmed pessimist, you may have trouble coming up with anything to be grateful for. In that case you start with just one thing and work your way up.

Healthy Brockley is hosting an evening with Sherry Clark to explore the benefits of gratitude on 18 Feb. For venue details phone 020 8469 2538. 🍏

## Come Rain Come Shine Walking Club

We take the same circular route, savour the seasons and scents and walk ourselves to better health and happiness. It will also be a great opportunity to catch up with friends and make new ones.

We walk just over 5 miles, taking about 3 hours. It's for anyone moderately fit or wanting to get fit, but unsuitable for buggies or wheelchairs. We start and finish in Otford, 38 minutes by train from Crofton Park Station. Meet at the station at 12.20 pm for the 12.30 train.

### Saturdays in 2009

21 Mar	8 May	27 June
5 Sept	10 Oct	21 Nov



## Unsung Uniformed Superheroes

'Hard work, lots of discipline, positive thinking; you can have talent but if you don't have them you will never achieve your potential.' Michaela Emmanus, founder member and coordinator of Raiders Netball Club, is a frank woman. If you've been past Prendergast School on a Wednesday night and wondered why the lights were on, here's why.

Michaela, a small but energetic and determined woman, is the heart of the club and has been playing netball since her teens. From the humble origins of a group of school friends who wanted to keep playing after their club collapsed, Raiders is now a force to be reckoned with in the North-West Kent League.

The club was an ambitious undertaking and its growth is a testament to Michaela's motto. It now has three league teams and has done netball tours all over the UK, Europe and the Caribbean. Raiders players have gone on to play at County and National levels but remain loyal to their sporting roots and the development of all the club's members.

Nobody does this full time - Michaela teaches French and Spanish in Lambeth. Others come from a range of backgrounds and have overcome perceived social



barriers to develop as players and be one of South London's most inspiring teams - a tribute to the power of strong community bonds.

Raiders women are heroes because as well as being partners, mothers and daughters, they make

time to train each Thursday, play matches on Saturdays, and work with young people on Sundays. They struggle for well deserved recognition play with fire, passion and skill. The ladies also like to laugh. Anyone with a willingness to work, a sense of team spirit and sense of humour should visit [www.raidersnetball.co.uk](http://www.raidersnetball.co.uk). Raiders stress that they are happy people with no experience and negligible fitness(!) if you're keen to learn.

Raiders' youth team trains at Prendergast Hilly Fields' sports hall on Wednesdays at 6pm and the adult session starts at 7.30pm. 🍏

### Dates for your diary...

For more information about any of these forthcoming events contact us using the details at the bottom of the page

#### 21 Feb 9.00 am weekly Beginners' Running Group\*

Meet at the Bowling Green on Hilly Fields. Starting gently - don't be intimidated!

#### Saturdays @ 8.15 am Intermediate Running Group\*

Meet outside 37 Chalsey Road SE4. Newcomers welcome.

#### 24 March @ 7.45 pm Parenting Course taster evening

Phone or email for details..

#### Easter Weekend

Look out for special Healthy Brockley events.

#### London - Brighton Cycling Group\*

Phone or email for details of training commencing soon.

\* Please get your doctor's advice before commencing any new exercise

## The Money Secret



Debt. Recession. Credit Crunch. These words have become so familiar of late. According to the experts, average household debt stands at £59,630 and 124 properties are re-possessed daily.

But you don't have to be in dire straits to participate in The Money Secret, a course that provides the chance to take a step back and look at how you manage your money. The course is designed to equip people to budget more efficiently, keep debt at a distance and maintain control over their finances in a consumerist society.

The Money Secret has been running for a few years and a significant number have benefited from its practical approach. Even those who consider themselves shrewd in money managing, like Elena from Crofton Park, have gained from some fresh ideas. "It helped me understand my choices. The poor suffer most from the subtle and seductive manoeuvres of credit card companies. Everyone should benefit from knowing better about money especially young adults who too easily start life in debt!". Feedback from other participants suggested that the course helped in "recognising the patterns of impulse buying and dramatically reducing it."

The Money Secret only one course run by Healthy Brockley. (others are 'The How of Happiness,' 'Stress Busters,' 'The Marriage Course,' 'What can a Parent do?' and 'Deeper: Journeying into Spirituality'). The Money Secret runs fortnightly for six evenings from 26 February. If you are interested, call 020 8469 2538. 🍏

Looking for a local church? Brockley Community Church invites you to an All Age Service on Sundays 10:30 am\* Brockley Primary School, Brockley Rd

For more information ☎ 8469 2538 or visit the website

\*Every week except 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in the month when we meet in small groups



Healthy Brockley is an initiative of Brockley Community Church. Registered C<sup>o</sup> Ltd by Guarantee N<sup>o</sup> 5039807. Charity N<sup>o</sup> 1103389.

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