

The Adiaha Antigha Community Achievement Award for the individual or community that has supported people during the cost of living crisis and/or has campaigned against poverty

**And the nominations are:**

**Aba Weinberger, Food Lifeline**

Food Lifeline, a project of Z.S.V. Trust, addresses hunger, poverty and inequality amongst marginalised families in Hackney's Jewish community, who cannot access mainstream foodbanks due to Kosher dietary requirements.

Food Lifeline deserves an award for their dedicated response to the cost of living crisis, through the distribution of food parcels, essentials, vouchers and shoes. With the overwhelming increase of demand (20% annually) and new requests daily, they have adapted and expanded their support accordingly. To date in 2023, Food Lifeline distributed over 1200 emergency parcels containing Kosher food and energy vouchers to 1200 families in Hackney who cannot access foodbanks due to cultural restrictions.

**Aina omo-Bare, IDIA'S COMMUNITY KITCHEN**

Idia's Community Kitchen identified a very important area of concern within the Hackney community soon after the critical stage of Covid-19. Aina identified poverty, hunger and homelessness within her community and decided to do something extraordinary.

Aina has shown outstanding commitment to feeding and clothing the poor - many of whom sleep rough on the streets of Hackney. She also provides the homeless with blankets and pillows to keep them warm, but most especially provides them morning and evening meals.

Dedicated in what she does, she stands out in the cold in Dalston market giving out hot meals, sandwiches, winter shoes and other useful necessities. Her interpersonal relationship with the poor and the homeless is exceptional.

**Dan Kanyanga Ilunga, African arts and advice centre**

This person has done a lot of work to support the people of our black and global majority communities living in Hackney providing assistance with free food and soft drinks to poor families and vulnerable people during the pandemic of Covid-19 and also during the cost of living crisis.

With their organisation they have supported people with workshops and counselling sessions about how to protect and save their lives against the spreading of covid-19 infection.

So, this person has done a lot to give people a better quality of life.

**Janet Akintoye**

Feeding a lot of homeless people in our community is job well done.

**Max Mucenic, Second Chance Café**

The Second Chance Cafe is a community cafe run by a rotating team of 55 active volunteers serving lunch twice weekly from the St Mary's Centre in Stoke Newington. We operate 'pay-as-you-feel, something or nothing', and about 150 guests a week come sit and enjoy a free, nutritious hot meal, and take another away for later.

In winter, we operate a take-one, leave-one coat rack and expand our hours to serve as a warm space. One regular said, 'This place is a sanctuary. I'm up to my eyeballs in debt, I have no food and no money.'

When guests have other problems (e.g., debt, mental health, immigration status) we signpost them to contacts in partner organisations like the Hackney Migrant Centre, the Hackney Night Shelter, and the Hackney Foodbank.

Donations used to cover about 50% of our running costs, now less than 30%. We received a much-needed Hackney Giving crisis grant, but we'll need more support. This Adiaha Antigha award would help our fundraising and, crucially, give due recognition to our amazing volunteer team.

## **Melissa Francis, Bridge the Gap families in need CIC**

Bridge the Gap families in need CIC came on the scene in March 2020 in the height of the pandemic. The idea was birthed out of the need to assist families in Hackney who had little or no digital access at a time when their families needed it most.

The idea was the lovechild of Melissa Francis, a single mother ,with a heart of gold and mind of determination. Bridge the Gap initially distributed laptops and hosted an online tuition programme as well as signposted individuals to services they could benefit from most.

Over time, the tuition programme was aborted as volunteer tutors were unable to continue offering services on a voluntary basis. The laptop provision however, has continued to date. Most recently Bridge the gap has joined forces with a community hub at St Joseph's Church , Balls Pond Road where they have undertaken a sim distribution to the needy and vulnerable who visit the hub.

Overall Bridge the gap has made a monumental impact supporting people during the cost of living crisis and campaigned against digital poverty , thereby allowing residents the opportunity to maintain contact with their loved ones through the use of the free sims provided. The feedback from residents and service users has been overwhelming.

**Pat Fitzsimons, Hackney Foodbank**

Hackney Foodbank provides emergency food to those in the community who are living with food insecurity. We have been doing this for over 10 years, however since 2022 demand has risen dramatically. We are now feeding over 650 mouths each week and are convinced that many more people in Hackney need our support.

We are also working to help people out of food insecurity by partnering with other VCS organisations in the borough to provide advice and support to the residents. Our aim is to ensure the people of Hackney have the resources to buy the essentials needed to sustain them.

**Sarah Bentley, Rashmi Joshi, Fran Humber, and the Made in Hackney team**

Made in Hackney is a food justice charity comprised of a community cookery school and a community meal service, the latter launched as an emergency response to the pandemic, but needed as much as before during the cost of living crisis.

The meal service tackles injustice with nutritious, plant-based, culturally varied meals delivered by cycle couriers to community members who need it most. Made in Hackney's in-house team of chefs and volunteers prepare over 1200 meals a week with regular input from recipients on what dishes they'd like to



see on the menu each week. Yet the service is more than just food – meals are delivered with a personal touch twice a week with occasional treats, and recipients receive regular welfare phone calls to check how they are and how they are finding the food.

The Adiaha Antigha Community Achievement Award for the individual or group that has done the most to support and empower LGBTQ+ communities

**And the nominations are:**

**Rainbow Grow**

Rainbow Grow is a Hackney-based LGBTQI+ inclusive community gardening initiative. They provide a welcoming space for LGBTQI+ people to grow edible plants in an urban environment.

Rainbow Grow have been based at Hackney CVS since 2018, when they transformed a neglected courtyard into an award-winning community green space. Through fundraising, the garden was extended to include a raised bed and a wheelchair-accessible garden at Age UK. Hundreds have participated in their gardening sessions and they've organised events with students and LGBTQI+ people seeking asylum. Throughout lockdown, Rainbow Grow supported members by giving away seedlings and posting free seeds.

Rainbow Grow's open days and social evenings are regular fixtures for LGBTQI+ people and they've organised trips to venues including Kew Gardens, RHS Wisely, and The Garden Museum.

Rainbow Grow has built relationships with organisations including the RHS, Project Indigo, Chelsea Fringe, Opening Doors, and Capital Growth, offering free training in partnership for local people. Rainbow Grow's volunteers have shown how a small, committed group can make a positive difference for LGBTQI+ people and the wider community.

**Claire McComb, ELOP**

elop is a trauma informed east London charity that has supported LGBTQ+ people to improve their mental health and wellbeing since 1995. During this time, elop has provided much support for Hackney's LGBTQ+ community through individual mental health support in our HeadsOut service and community counselling provided by our large team of LGBTQ+ counsellors, complimented by our social spaces, events and befriending support.

Those using elop services often have unsuccessful experiences accessing statutory mental health support and cite reaching out to elop as important in knowing that the person providing their support will also be an LGBTQ+ community member. This knowledge offers a sense of safety and trust that their LGBTQ+ identity will not be pathologized or a point of intrigue, but rather their support will be appropriate and focused on their needs with sensitivity to potential historical LGBTphobia.



To quote some service users:

“My sessions with elop have saved my life when I was let down by the NHS, without these weekly sessions, I probably wouldn’t be here today.”

“I feel like I’m in a better headspace, more positive and less anxious. Having a non-judgemental ear felt validating.”

## The Adiaha Antigha Community Achievement Award for the individual or organisation that has made a positive difference to the environment in City and Hackney

**And the nominations are:**

### **Bahar Ali, Kurdish Community Learning Centre**

This organization has a great impact on the community in London, by providing children's activities, such as; outings , sports clubs, and arts and supplementary learning for children age 4-16 which often provide a more informal setting and style of delivery in contrast to mainstream schools.

Also, they are providing adult workshops including a parenting programme, helping Kurdish people to connect with their social networks, staff and volunteers so that they will have strong relationships with the wider family.

### **Chaim Hochhauser, Shomrim Stamford Hill - Community Safety Patrol**

Over the years, we at Shomrim have dedicated ourselves to enhancing the safety and wellbeing of the residents of Hackney. As a community safety patrol, we have made it our mission to provide reliable, responsive assistance to our fellow residents, thereby significantly contributing to the security of the borough.

In my role as CEO, I have strived to ensure that our organisation consistently meets the community's needs, maintaining a safe environment in which

residents can thrive. My aim has always been to foster a strong sense of community, with everyone feeling safe and respected, regardless of their background or circumstances. The nomination of myself and Shomrim Stamford Hill recognises the consistent effort, dedication, and commitment that has been invested into making Hackney a safer place for everyone.

### **Garden of Earthly Delights**

Over the last few years, Garden of Earthly Delights and the people who make up the group have hosted activity sessions, workshops and events around greening spaces, learning, growing and caring for plants, ourselves, each other and our local environments. Gathering and supporting in the community to design positive ways forward.

### **Rhyania Blackett-Codrington, BetaMinds CIC**

Rhy, the founder of BetaMinds, first spent years teaching those excluded from mainstream education and then started her own organisation in order to create a service that supported youth and the community in personal, social, emotional and mental wellbeing.

Through BetaMinds she created the My Torch is LIT! Project in which over 100 young people, marginalised & global majority groups have taken part as a way to help each other and create intergenerational conversations. She continues

to give back to Hackney despite her medical condition and subsequent pain and says that she does so in order to model resilience to young people.

I have been with Rhy when ex-students see her and the first thing they talk about is how much she believed in them. She deserves recognition for all the hard work she has done and continues to do in Hackney.

### **Sarah Jacob, Step by Step**

Step by Step is a parent-led organisation established 23 years ago, dedicated to providing disabled children and young people, aged 2-18, with transformative opportunities to thrive. Operating as an out-of-hours provider, we offer respite services every day after school, on Sundays, weekends, and school holidays, supporting families in need.

Our comprehensive range of leisure and respite activities, including sports, playschemes, and clubs, caters to the diverse needs of our 220 users with disabilities such as spina bifida, global developmental delay, Down syndrome, autism, cerebral palsy, hearing impairments, and more.

Through our programmes, children have the chance to develop crucial skills by engaging in activities that foster motor skills, sensory play, and gross motor skills.

Step by Step leaves an enduring impact on the lives of these extraordinary children with each passing day. By equipping them with the necessary tools and opportunities for growth, we are not just transforming lives but also shaping a brighter future

### **Shukri, Connecting All Communities**

The reason why we think this individual within this organisation should receive this award is because of the huge impact they have been making to local people's daily lives.

Some of those are cooking free halal hot meals and food parcels to local residents. Taking children with their families on trips, holiday programmes and providing free lunches. Helping mums to have a free platform to learn and have fun. They have been helping during lockdown and have recently won the Mayor's Annual Civic Award and they deserve to win more as they are doing it voluntarily in this difficult time of the cost of living crisis.

### **St Mary's Secret Garden**

This team: Michael, Gengiz, Paul, Philip and Nosson have worked together to develop and maintain the community garden for many years. Their work not only supports their own wellbeing by keeping active within the community –

but supports 1000's of other people's wellbeing too by being a vital team that has developed the garden into a biodiverse, healing sanctuary.

Over the years, they have created a rose garden for the residents of a local estate and developed a food growing area for another - amongst other community projects. Within the garden they:

- Make compost, which feeds the garden.
- Sow seeds for food growing and those that are beneficial to pollinators.
- Feed the garden birds so their songs can delight our community.
- Wash & recycle plant pots
- Welcome visitors with a smile.

They are powerful ambassadors of how gardening and nature contact can improve everyone's wellbeing – even if you have learning disabilities, Autism, long-term mental health conditions and other long-term health conditions.

### **Terry Kinsella, The Leaside Trust**

The Leaside Trust has over the last two years shifted its focus from outdoor sports to concentrating more on the local environment and how its users can make a positive impact within it.



Leaside regularly facilitates river clean ups from canoes and kayaks involving the local community and so far this year has organised 8 of these events. They have also introduced environmental education into its delivery and are now in partnership with Ecoactive providing Hackney pupils/schools with lessons informing and educating young people about our environment and the impact pollution is having locally and globally.

## The Adiaha Antigha Community Achievement Award for the individual or organisation that has demonstrated commitment to the community

### **Ali Aksoy, Hackney Refugee and Migrant Forum**

Ali has dedicated his life to the community. He has campaigned for workers' rights, migrants' rights, fair access to health and much more. He started Hackney Refugee and Migrant forum over 20 years ago which has gone from strength to strength.

The Adiaha Antigha Community Achievement Award for the individual or organisation that has demonstrated commitment to the community

Ali has now retired but still leads his community at the library he founded which has people from Turkey coming to London to learn about what has gone on in Turkey! We are grateful for Ali and all his work and Hackney is a better place for him.

### **Bisi Alakan (volunteer) & Amina Nalubega Ssendegeya (Director), Precious Lives**

This award should be given to Precious lives. They have worked tirelessly throughout the years without rest and funding, helping people - especially the community - supplying them with food. They collect food from different sources because people have no food out there.



They help young people by engaging them in different projects which are of interest to them and help them produce songs, mentoring them doing activities with senior citizens.

Bisi is a volunteer who has worked tirelessly throughout her youth, helping with food collections from different sources. She loves what she is doing - outreaching to those who cannot collect the necessities.

I think within our area everybody praises her kindness and we beg that she is recognised for her efforts.

### **Che Clarke, Salaam Peace**

Che has been delivering programmes in Hackney since 2019. A large part of his work takes place on Hackney Housing Estates including Hawksley, Nesbit and Frampton. He has engaged many young men and women, inspired others to volunteer and work for Salaam Peace.

He has provided support during the Covid 19 and Cost for Living challenges. Only 22 years old himself, he has already achieved so much but his passion remains extremely high.

### **Chippy Flohr, Mishon**

In my experience of working with Mishon, their organisational focus is instrumental in supporting families at the more extreme end of poverty. The service manager Chippy Flohr through her passion, dedication, and commitment, understands the stark divide of rich and poor within the Charedi Community and how a poorer family's emotional mental health and wellbeing is furthermore affected by food poverty.

They are always looking at ways to help alleviate the pain and suffering of those in need regardless of age, gender or other.

### **Elif Keles, The Crib**

Elif is volunteering every morning to run an exercise club for the people in the community. She also has volunteered her time to help with youth club sessions and has encouraged the Turkish community to come to the crib and join in with our programme. She has made a big impact to our organisation and continues to do so.

### **Fran, Wilton Way Deli**

During the pandemic Fran was the only thing left holding our community together. When all the shops shut, and I mean all of them, at risk to her own health (she was classed as vulnerable) she kept open - serving people and helping us get through it all. Now this action might sound less than it was - but

at the time and to me now - it was immensely brave and generous. That spirit is maintained in Fran's charity fundraising for Shelter and her general benevolence.

### **Hackney Lunch Clubs chefs and volunteers**

I would like to nominate the unsung heroes of our lunch clubs network - the dedicated lunch club chefs and volunteers. There are 12 lunch clubs in the network each unique with its own history. There is a lot of work to be done by lunch club staff in order to keep a lunch club running.

One of our lunch clubs "Lunch Up" is managed single handedly by Lydia who is head chef and coordinator all in one. She has her neighbour Bolonle as a regular volunteer who helps with food prep, serving, collecting payment and dish washing. Other clubs to mention include Hackney Chinese Community Services where they have been incredibly lucky that a local English man Michael turned up in 2019 with his mum and has since never left. He loves the club and is literally there 6 days a week often helping in the kitchen.

I would like to mention some others: Beriya the Kurdish chef at Halkevi and her kindness, Vanessa a volunteer at Holly Street lunch club who helps out in the kitchen and loves hanging out with the older members, Dilek, Cilem and Eran are dedicated chefs at Hackney Cypriot Association, especially priding themselves in the nutritionally balanced and freshly cooked meals they serve,

Ha is the Vietnamese chef at VLC Pho Club and sometimes has to deal with large numbers on a Saturday with everyone wanting to eat at once after Tai Chi. The list goes on. At Nightingale Lunch Club, Denise and Sarah are committed auntie and niece who work 5 days a week in the kitchen to cook food for their community. The funding doesn't cover all the hours that Denise and Sarah work, so they choose to do extra hours voluntarily. At the North London Muslim Community Centre sometimes staff from the children's day centre will pop up to offer extra support at the ladies' lunch club on a Tuesday!

There are more people to mention but for now I'll leave you with this flavour of the staff who hold up are clubs and keep our elders fed.

### **Lunch team, Gascoyne 1 TRA**

I am nominating the team that delivers the weekly community lunch at Gascoyne 1 every Tuesday. Led by Derek Smith (who is a very modest man). At least 50 residents are fed every week. The lunch provides a free and much needed opportunity for people to connect with their neighbours, find out about community activities, get support and deal with cost of living crisis. Derek does a huge amount of work to support residents on Gascoyne 1 - most of it unseen but hugely important to his neighbours. The lunch takes lots of work to plan, prepare and deliver.

The core team - Amy, John and Helen turn up every week to make sure that everyone is looked after. The quality of the meals and the friendliness of everyone involved is amazing.

### **Joycelyn Dankwa, National Parents and Youth Open Forum**

We wish to nominate the National Parents and Youth Open Forum (NPAYOF) for the Adiaha Antigha community achievement awards as Joycelyn Dankwa has been unwavering in her commitment to the community to ensure their needs are met in any which way she can help.

Building NPAYOF has been instrumental in bringing parents and young people together with the aim of reducing knife crime and gang culture to save our children from dying young and to wipe the tears from our parents' eyes. This includes running youth club sessions, half term programmes and forum sessions to build understanding between adults and the youth. One of the forum's significant achievements is their dedication to empowering parents and youth through valuable resources and educational programmes. From informative forum sessions on subjects such as mental health and managing puberty, they have empowered individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary to navigate life's challenges effectively.

Another great passion of Joycelyn's is to support community members who have been affected by the cost of living crisis by running a community food

bank and sharing vouchers wherever possible. The community which she supports are always extremely appreciative of her efforts and I wished to nominate her and NPAYOF for the recognition they deserve.

### **Shaye Fischer**

I have the honour of introducing you to Mr Shaye Fischer, a figure of unwavering dedication and commitment to making Hackney a safer borough. Shaye's consistent display of social responsibility has been commendable. His active involvement spans several organisations, including Shomrim, Chaverim, and Bedside Kosher, as well as his role as an Independent Custody Visitor.

In addition to his extensive volunteering, Shaye holds the position of ward panel chair of Springfield. In this capacity, he has formed a close working relationship with Hackney Council and Hackney Police, playing a significant role in maintaining law and order within the borough. Notably, his relentless efforts led to a pivotal achievement that has had an immense impact on community safety. Shaye managed to secure a ten-year Criminal Behaviour Order (CBO) against a habitual career criminal, prohibiting this individual from entering the N16 & N15 postcodes.

Shaye has reassured community members that they can live in Hackney without undue fear.

The Adiaha Antigha Community Achievement Award for the individual or organisation that has demonstrated commitment to the community.

This award is made in honour of Jasmina Dimitrijevic, Refugee Women's Association.

Jasmina worked at Refugee Women's Association for over 20 years and upheld RWA's reputation of always going the extra mile, dedicating herself to being vital to some of the most vulnerable women in the local area.

In 2021, RWA's longest running director, Simin Azimi sadly passed away, rocking the organisation to its core. Jasmina stepped up in an extraordinary way, rallying the staff, taking on the lead for the advice work, fundraising, project development and becoming the overall leader of the organisation. Jasmina put many, many hours into RWA - helping it through this very difficult time, to become again a forward looking, positive organisation.

Tragically in April this year, Jasmina was diagnosed with cancer and passed away in June, leaving staff, clients, trustees and supporters completely bereft. We think Jasmina deserves this award because she put all her adult life into working to support Refugee and Migrant women in Hackney, she stepped up in challenging circumstances to be a leader, when she herself was grieving and



she put everything she had into her work for the community. It would be fitting if we could honour her legacy in this way and recognise her priceless work through this award.