



‘Our Hands in the Time of Corona’

Throughout history, the arts have been used both personally and collectively as a way of documenting, exploring and understanding extraordinary events that impact on our lives. As we currently find ourselves in a different world, challenged to make sense of what is happening, the arts, in the broadest sense, can provide an opportunity to reflect.

Nurse practitioner and writer Allison Day is collaborating with Art for Life, the Trust’s art and design team and the Wellbeing Team on a project called *‘Our Hands in the Time of Corona’* (inspired by ‘Love in the Time of Cholera’ by Gabriel Garcia Marquez).

Our hands have never been needed more. Whether being used to gently turn and prone a patient in ICU, forensically clean a clinical environment or deliver a clap of gratitude for frontline workers our hands are, more than ever, a universal symbol of unity, connectedness and care. Whilst some of their purpose is, through necessity, being denied during the global coronavirus pandemic, we are re- learning to use them to express our love and togetherness - a wave given, a kiss blown, a thumbs up now joined by fresh ways to touch without touching those we care about most, be it through a window, across cyberspace or via a myriad of wonderfully creative gestures. We are also using our hands in ways that may be new to us – baking a cake, growing plants from seed, playing an instrument. A new language of care – and self-care – grows amongst us.

Whilst visiting Hebden Bridge in West Yorkshire in 2019, Allison came across Hannah Nunn’s beautiful little book *‘Tiny Treasures’* which she gave to her husband for Christmas. This book inspired Allison to write a poem in her husband’s Christmas card. What began as a very personal exchange between her husband and herself, has in the last few weeks, evolved into a reworking of her poem for wider appeal. A more inclusive poem that is uplifting and hopeful for staff during the coronavirus pandemic.

‘Walk newly together,
Be unlearned in the wild
And let the tiny treasures teach us.’

Using Allison’s poem as a jumping off point, we are asking all staff at the Trust what ‘tiny treasure’ they have discovered during lockdown – this could be a passion you have reacquainted yourself with, an activity that is new to you or something wonderful you have noticed for the first time.

Example:

Name: Allison Day
Role: Emergency Nurse Practitioner
My tiny treasure: growing plants from seed

To submit your contribution please either use this [word document](#), [pdf](#) and email to artforlife@tst.nhs.uk or send an email to artforlife@tst.nhs.uk giving your name, role and tiny treasure (in no more than 10 words).

Using the gathered contributions we will then populate digital handprints with the staff member's name, role and 'tiny treasure' to create a virtual paper chain of hands in celebration of our common humanity and in hopeful prospect of holding them again in person when the time is right.

Our ultimate vision will be to create a permanent physical legacy, somewhere on some of the Trust's sites, to what has been a true test of our resilience, both as individuals and as an incredible team of people – something that encourages us to reflect on our common experience and remember what is most important to us.

For the beginning of this 'journey of inspiration' – thank you Hannah!

www.hannahunn.co.uk

