

An Insight into Chaplaincy

An act of kindness every day...

This was the strap-line for the Random Act of Kindness Week run by Chaplaincy at Coleg Cambria in North Wales. To raise the profile of the event and get learners thinking about it Chaplaincy members loitered around in lunchtimes during the week before with pages of suggestions of simple acts of kindness, and offered them to group of learners, inviting them to add some more. The focus of the week itself was a table in the Learning Zone loaded with edible goodies, with a large board. Learners and others could write on post-it notes about acts of kindness they had experienced and stick them on the board for all to see.

At the beginning of the week the Chaplaincy team had to be quite pro-active in engaging learners, but as the days passed learners began to spontaneously take part and add notes to the board without prompting. By the end of the week there were hundreds of post-it notes on the board, recounting acts of kindness. Some examples included, 'I helped at a party for a 3-year-old', 'my friend told me my hair looks nice today', my friend shared his chocolate bar with me', 'I helped my friend with her homework', 'I worked in an elderly person's garden and I fell in the pond', 'I picked up some litter and put it in the bin', and dozens more. One student observed that every day people are kind to each other and no-one notices or comments on it. During this week those kind deeds were recorded and recognised. The week ended with a visit from the local MP who met some of the art students who had supplied the graphics for the display, and added a post-it note of his own. He suggested an 'Act of Kindness Week' for the whole town!

One of the interesting features of the week was the opportunity to liaise with departments and individuals and broaden the range of participation. Some personal tutors used it as an opportunity for discussion with their tutor groups, and staff in the Learning Zone were very helpful and supportive. An Art class produced some striking posters, and a Christian staff member (a participant in the Staff Prayer Group) produced a powerful scrolling banner for the screens round the college based on words from I Corinthians 13 about love.

The event served well in terms of raising the profile of Chaplaincy and providing opportunities for Chaplains to spend time out and about with staff and learners. It was very effective in spreading a 'feel-good factor' around the college and led to plenty of interaction and engagement. Its limitations were that it did not lead to any deep or significant conversations, and there was nothing distinctively Christian about it. However, as an interesting and enjoyable event to deliver to the college it was very successful.

Find Out More

Our thanks to Cathy Williams for this report. Cathy is a part time Chaplain at Yale College, Coleg Cambria and has responsibility for Festive's Advice and Guidance.

Festive works as part of the Christian Church for the benefit of the Further Education Colleges and Sixth Forms of the UK, for the glory of God. Our vision is for ongoing, effective Christian witness in Colleges and Sixth Forms.

We are a small charity seeking to offer support to students, staff, chaplains, local churches, agencies and all those involved in Christian witness in FE Colleges and Sixth Forms.

Visit www.festive.org.uk to find out more.

Useful links:

Chaplaincy Central: www.chaplaincycentral.co.uk

FE Chaplains Training: www.fect.org

Faith Tutorials: www.faithtutorials.co.uk