

## Newsletter December 2019



- ✓ Hand-on workshops making food remedies
- ✓ Learn how to treat minor ailments safely
- ✓ How to eat to boost your immunity and health
- ✓ Share your knowledge about food as medicine
- ✓ Manage long term conditions safely – individual advice given
- ✓ Plant up your own food medicine window-box
- ✓ Help create a new garden at Nubian Life Ellerdale Road
- ✓ Assess your health and diet
- ✓ Help create a new garden at Nubian Life Ellerdale Road

See [www.livingmedicine.org](http://www.livingmedicine.org). More information at [info@livingmedicine.org](mailto:info@livingmedicine.org)

### Self Care in White City designed for NHS social prescribing

Since 2017 we have designed and piloted two new self care courses in White City with remarkable results. Aimed at patients and public alike, our Lottery-funded 10 sessions of Self Care with Foods & Herbs ran three times and covered lifestyle and food remedies for common problems from depression and diabetes to sleep and skin problems. Our BSc qualified tutors Roisin Reilly and Sophia Forrester gathered participants around the table to drink tea, taste, learn about and share healing food remedies. Our expertise was enriched by the food medicine traditions of Nubian Life's African Caribbean elders. Living Medicine thrives on mixing all ages and cultures - it's now recognised that diversity breeds resilience, and food as medicine is our common language!

**Improved health and social prescribing** We were heartened that more than 3/4 of participants felt that their health had improved after the sessions. This was similar to our 5-part course, though we don't know if these changes last. While we encourage participants to pass on our **beautiful handouts** and what they've learned, what we really need is for GPs to "prescribe" our courses and so grow healthy communities - see below for our 2020 plan. Peer-to-peer cascading of these is still our aim. However, long-term funding is the key to this and community embedding of self care and wellbeing knowhow.

### Self Care for Parents & Toddlers

This year we won funding from H&F Council for a new 6-session programme of Food & Wellbeing Remedies for Parents & Toddlers. This clarifies what all too often is conflicting advice and aims to reach isolated parents. We ran this in the summer, again in White City Community Centre, with enthusiastic promotion from local community and maternity champions and other health workers. The practical sessions and clear **handouts** covered lifestyle and food remedies with the basics of self care, colic, constipation, sleep, colds and immunity, allergies, skin and first aid. We hope to repeat it, but as always subject to funding.

### Living Medicine continues at Chelsea Physic Garden and beyond

Our flagship award-winning 5-part course, An Introduction to Self Care with Food & Herbs, continued at Chelsea Physic Garden through 2017 to this year. There's an increasing hunger for such knowledge, as places are always sold out in advance. We're delighted that the course will run again there in 2020 - booking is via [www.chelseaphysicgarden.co.uk](http://www.chelseaphysicgarden.co.uk)

Alice Nugent BSc, who's inspired **Marlow** locals to drink her Hippopot herb teas, continues to run the Introduction to Self Care course on licence from her home and medicinal garden. Alex (Laird) also continued the course in Fulham in 2017/18.

We also gave two workshops at **The Weald & Downland Museum** in Sussex in October 2018 and 2019, along with another herb walk/tea/tasting in Walpole Park, Ealing this year. We took part at the London Permaculture Festival in July to a packed hall for the third year running and one in Isleworth's Salopian Gardens with a health/gardening group. Two talks for H&F Mind groups proved more demand for self care, pending funding.

**Our first videos** This year Living Medicine made its first two videos, one explaining what LM is about and a second demonstrating a body scan. Made by Jon Kwan with Alex and Imogen Crane, they will be added to our website.

The **mobile Herbal Bench** designed by the BMA's gardener Daniela Sikora with Living Medicine and Anna Parkinson, biographer of 17thC herbalist John Parkinson, were postponed to next year to give more time to design the project and find the right GP surgery and other venues. This will be a step closer to finding out how we may promote the nationwide use of gardens in or near GP surgeries, run by both patients and staff, as they offer myriad paths towards health.

**Next year 2020 we plan to pilot our 10-part Self Care with Food & Herbs course** with three social prescribing surgeries, funded with another Lottery bid if successful, in Hammersmith, Kentish Town (with its own garden) and Manchester.

**Finally**, many thanks to our generous volunteers who helped on our White City courses and to gardener and mindfulness teacher Cat Flannery for keeping our Facebook page alive. Special thanks to Maria Johnson <http://www.johnsonva.com> for managing our website.

**For courses and free handouts, see <http://www.livingmedicine.org>**

Alex Laird, Project Director, Living Medicine [info@livingmedicine.org](mailto:info@livingmedicine.org)

