

Tuesday 12th September 2023

Free arts, drama and reading programmes launched for new mums in Knowsley

- Free programmes of singing, reading and drama for new mums, babies and toddlers
- Weekly sessions start this month at Blue Bell Lane Health Centre in Huyton, St Chads Health Centre in Kirkby and The Halewood Centre in Halewood



A series of free arts programme for new mums in Knowsley will launch later this month, offering weekly arts, reading and drama sessions to help support and improve the mental health and wellbeing of new mothers and mums-to-be.

Starting from Friday 22nd September, the new 10-week arts programmes are open to **all new mums with babies or toddlers under 2 years old, and those who are pregnant**, and will include:

DRAMATIC RECOVERY – a weekly drama club for new mums and mums-to-be

- Weekly sessions will consist of **discussion, writing and theatre** all around themes of community and perinatal support. Everyone is welcome and no previous arts or drama experience is needed!
- Dramatic Recovery takes place at Blue Bell Lane Health Centre, L36 7XY on Fridays from 10am to 12pm - booking info [here](#)

READING FOLK by Creative Spaces Co. – a weekly book club for new mums and mums-to-be

- Reading Folk takes place over ten weeks, creating a **space for new mums to read for pleasure and enjoy some grown-up company**. Each week there'll be a relaxed discussion about the book, with **space for little ones to play**, and with book, biscuits and good times all included!
- Reading Folk takes place at St Chads Centre, L32 8RE on Fridays from 1pm to 3pm - booking info [here](#)

SINGING MAMAS – a weekly singing group for new mums and mums-to-be

- The group meet weekly to **learn and sing short, simple songs** ranging from lullabies to songs that support and empower mums. The group offers mums a space to let it all out and an escape from the stresses of life. No previous singing experience is necessary, and all voices welcome.
- Singing Mamas takes place at The Halewood Centre, L26 9UH on Fridays from 10am to 11.30am - booking info [here](#)

The new groups are the first in a 30-week programme of events aimed at using the creative arts to support and improve the mental health and wellbeing of perinatal mothers in Knowsley, allowing mums to build up new social connections with other new mums, and providing them with access to other health support

and advice. The programmes are being delivered by 'arts for health' organisations [Creative Spaces Co.](#), [Dramatic Recovery](#) and [Singing Mamas](#), with the free programme made possible through partnership and funding from One Knowsley, Arts Council England, healthcare investor Renova, Community Health Partnerships (a key part of the NHS family) and Improving Me (a partnership of 27 NHS organisations across Cheshire and Merseyside).

Renova has helped to deliver 17 community healthcare facilities throughout the North West including Blue Bell Lane, St Chads and Halewood Centre. **Renova General Manager Amy Lawrence said:**

"The creative arts can play such an important role in supporting the health and wellbeing of local communities, so we're delighted to help fund these fantastic new arts programmes and to welcome new mums and their babies and toddlers to our health centres."

Denise Cottam, Corporate Social Responsibility Delivery Manager from Community Health Partnerships said:

"We are thrilled to be a part of this project aimed at supporting the mental health and well-being of new mums in Knowsley. At Community Health Partnerships, we believe in the power of community initiatives like these to make a positive impact. Providing the necessary space and support for these programs aligns perfectly with our [Buildings At The Heart of the Community](#) initiative and our commitment to community health and well-being."

Racheal Jones, CEO of One Knowsley said:

"This programme is a model of excellence and a powerful example of what can be achieved through collaboration. The mobilisation of the partnership, development, and capacity building of the voluntary and community organisations by One Knowsley has resulted in investment into our arts-based community and voluntary groups. Thank you to all our partners and the investment support received to unlock creativity, wellbeing and enable connected resilient communities."

Feedback from mums that have been involved in previous Singing Mamas sessions includes:

- *"I've found it really emotional in a good way. If there's one thing that you get with a baby its floods and floods of all kinds of emotions, and I felt this has given me a chance to channel some of them in a creative and freeing way. I'm not the best singer but I do love to do it." – Grace*
- *"Have really enjoyed the sessions, they have brought me some sunshine every Tuesday... Will be singing all these songs for a long time xx" – Jane*
- *"The group has been so supportive and without even telling your own story, you know that the other mums 'get it'. There's that underlying sense of community and togetherness. I feel like I can be myself and that's okay even if it's the messy Lizi sometimes." - Lizi*

Feedback from mums that have been involved in previous Reading Folk sessions includes:

- *"I highly recommend the session and I've told everyone about it because it would be wonderful if more people could feel that included. It's helped me read again, carving out those moments for myself, it's the highlight of my week."*
- *"This is the first book I've read in five years; I'm starting to feel like me again"*
- *"Reading Folk is something different that I haven't seen offered elsewhere, and it's been nice to escape for some me time at home when I have to get my weekly reading done."*
- *"The group will be a highlight of the week as parents can indulge in some grown-up company in a welcoming environment for their small human. It's a wonderful, home from home space, to meet many parents all excited to delve into a good story together."*

- Ends -