

Notts DA are delighted that the Chairman's Charity for 2019/20 is the Dementia choir based in Nottingham who will also be performing at our final Goose Fair.

Kellie Ashton nominated the Dementia Choir as her Mamma (and Dawn Ashtons Mum) is in the Choir – we decided to quiz her as to what its all about:

What is the Dementia Choir and how come you are involved?

The Dementia Choir was made up after Vicky McClure asked to do a documentary following losing her Grand Mother to Dementia. She had noticed herself the positive effects of singing with her Gran, even though she didn't seem to respond to much else. She approached the BBC re doing a documentary about the effects of singing for the brain with Dementia sufferer's. Curve media (who produce documentaries for the BBC) then contacted the Alzheimer's Society, about contacting Dementia sufferers who attend their Singing for the Brain sessions (held once every 3 weeks at The Good Shepard Church, Arnold). These sessions rely on charitable donations to run also. A letter then dropped through my door from Curve Media, asking me about filming for Vicky McClure's, Our Dementia Choir, so I responded giving consent for what I thought was filming at these group sessions and about the positive effects the group has for my Mamma. Before I knew it, we was meeting up with the crew and started filming the documentary, with Vicky McClure in my Mamma's living room! The rest is history, as you will see on the documentary.

How is the choir benefitting your family?

The choir is of great benefit to my Mamma and my family. Not only does singing have such a positive effect on my Mamma, it does for us carers too. Music has a tendency to make you feel good, even if you feel down beforehand. The families also have a chance to talk to other families/carers, who are experiencing the same issues/problems etc and watching loved ones be affected by Dementia in their everyday life.

How come the Choir still need funds – hasn't the TV programme funded it?

The TV has never funded the choir itself, just refreshments and the cost of the venue etc over the filming period. Once filming finished last September, funding was cut. I think initially, people thought the choir would end then, but they all made such good friends and choir members missed singing together, as they had gotten used to seeing each other frequently over the 16 weeks of filming. So we decided to try and carry the choir on and do some fund raising, to pay for refreshments, room hire and fees for the choir leaders time. Also some of the funds raised will be used for taxi's to transport those who are no longer able to drive/cannot drive to and from choir sessions.

Can you give us some tips about dealing with people with dementia?

Kellie's tips for working with Dementia sufferers (though I'm not a professional, just a loving carer of my Mamma):

Have patience

Say things slowly

Repeat things if necessary

Don't argue, try and reason

Stay positive, don't say no... try and explain things in a calm way Love and care for them Remember IT'S NOT THEIR FAULT it's the Dementia Listen carefully to what they are saying/trying to say Don't get upset if they say upsetting things/argue with you... that's a hard one, as it's easy to take things personally Learn to love a "new version" of the person with dementia... they are still the same person behind the Dementia Try and still have fun with them... laugh with them, not at them.

How do you feel about being chosen as our nominated charity?

I am absolutely thrilled that we have been chosen as your nominated charity!! I couldn't be happier and I would like to thank you all from the bottom of my heart (now you have made me cry again). The money raised by Notts DA will go a long way towards bringing happiness for the Dementia sufferers and their families, by allowing us to continue with their dementia choir. THANK YOU ALL SO MUCH x