



Joy of helping a child to read from my own home

By Gail Norcliffe

Having retired in the thick of the pandemic, I was delighted to spot an advert from Bookmark, the reading charity, looking for volunteers to work online with primary school children.

Volunteers sign up to read one-to-one with children through school organised programmes, consisting of two 30-minute sessions a week for six weeks, with the process being coordinated through Bookmark.

comfortable with reading online with their volunteers and using the programme is very straightforward. Bookmark is also running some programmes face to face, including in schools in north London.

Volunteers get support

Bookmark provides excellent practical training for volunteers, along with helpful and ongoing support. Feedback from schools shows how beneficial the Bookmark programmes are for children's reading, and



Screen assistant: Gail Norcliffe helps young readers from the comfort of her own home. Photo Mike Coles

From the comfort of my kitchen table in East Finchley, during my two years of volunteering I've worked with children in all areas of the country from Cornwall to Leeds, and it is a hugely rewarding experience. I aim to make the sessions fun and encouraging for my readers, and it's an absolute joy to see their reading confidence and enjoyment grow.

The children are very com-

good literacy skills are so essential for them to be able to make satisfactory progress.

Bookmark is looking for lots more volunteers, so, if you could spare 30 minutes twice a week during the school day to help children with their reading, please do apply. More information including how to apply is available at www.bookmarkreading.org/volunteer



Count on us: Bernard Manson, right, with Number Champions volunteers Peter Davies and Ayesha Aka enjoying a coffee break in Dan & DeCarlo. Photo Mike Coles.

Double win for charity that builds numbers skills

By Lynn Winton

Hot on the heels of being awarded a Points of Light award by the Prime Minister, the founder of East Finchley-based Number Champions, Bernard Manson, has received a second accolade on behalf of his educational charity.

He was named a Coronation Champion, a special award launched by the Royal Voluntary Service, together with Her Majesty Queen Camilla, to celebrate exceptional volunteers across the country who have been contributing to their communities.

Bernard, an East Finchley resident for 38 years, organises ongoing training for in-school volunteers. They use games and other creative activities in one-to-one sessions with children aged six to eight to help them make sense of numbers and so gain skills and confidence.

Number Champions is currently partnering with 28 schools across 12 London boroughs, a huge achievement considering the charity was only created in 2018.

Bernard's story

"I knew volunteers who helped primary school children with reading so when I neared retirement, I decided to do something similar and help primary school children who didn't 'get' maths," said Bernard. "However, I discovered no schemes offered this, so I set up Number Champions to create an appropriate volunteering opportunity for myself and for other people to help children with numeracy in a fun way.

"We received a very positive response from schools, which created an impetus for us to support more children, and I soon found myself organising

the charity full time. Over five years we've had 300 volunteers who've helped more than 760 children to engage better with maths, leading in turn to better probable educational and life chances.

"Our volunteers come from a wide demographic, span a huge age range, and represent at least 45 nationalities. Some have even gone on to become teaching assistants, teachers, and school governors. Our annual evaluation of impact from class teachers has consistently shown a large increase in confidence

and maths skills across the population of 'our' children".

"Only connect"

The Archer first wrote about Number Champions when it was launched. Once we started our regular volunteers column we've been able to connect them with committed volunteers, as we have for many other local organisations.

Visit numberchampions.org.uk to know more about volunteering or if you teach in a primary school and would like to find out if Number Champions can help your pupils.



Jan Lovell, of the East Finchley Safer Neighbourhood Team, updates us on the latest crime news. Jan and the team can be contacted by email at: EastFinchley.snt@met.police.uk, or by phone on 020 7161 9014. Follow the team on Twitter @MPSEastFinchley.

Car thefts

Unfortunately East Finchley is suffering an increase in theft from and of motor vehicles. We would like to remind folk about securing their vehicles. Here are seven ways to keep your car safe at home:

1. Turn your car wheels into the the kerb. This makes it more difficult to make a quick getaway as it makes the car more difficult to manoeuvre.

2. Get a steering wheel lock. They're very low tech but for this reason are surprisingly effective.

3. Keep your valuables out of sight. Don't attract thieves to your vehicle, so lock bags and other personal items in the boot. A bag might only contain your gym kit, but a thief doesn't know that.

4. Why not etch your Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) onto your car windows? A vehicle with etched windows makes it unattractive to thieves as the car is easier to identify and the thief will have to spend a lot of money replacing all of the etched windows before they can sell it on. Your VIN number has 17 digits and is stamped into the chassis of your car.

5. Watch them. Rig up CCTV or more easily a video doorbell, which allows you to see, hear and speak to visitors from anywhere. Both these will often deter a thief.

6. Leave your car in a well-lit position if you can. Thieves don't want to be seen.

7. Get an anti-Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) wallet or Faraday bag to keep your car keys in. These block signals from your key fob and so prevent thieves relaying or blocking signals from your key fob using wireless transmitters.

Martin Primary School
Business Manager vacancy
Salary: £42,795 to £47,805 pro rata
36 hours per week/42 weeks per annum

Martin Primary School is a large, inclusive and successful community school in East Finchley.
We are looking for an enthusiastic and committed School Business Manager to join our wonderful office team.

You do not need to have previous experience in the role but we do need someone with the following:

- finance management skills
- a basic understanding of Excel spreadsheets
- experience of managing people and systems
- an ability to think strategically
- excellent communication skills
- energy, positivity and a 'can do' attitude.

For more information about the position and how to apply, please visit our school website at [Vacancies | Martin Primary School](http://Vacancies.MartinPrimarySchool).
Deadline for applications:
midday on Wednesday 28th June 2023

Beginners & All Levels
Tai Chi & Qigong
Classes (E. Finchley)
& LIVE STREAM
Wednesdays am & pm
(Trial session: £5)

james@taiji.co.uk
07836-710281
www.taiji.co.uk