



YOUNG ARCHER



Fill your boots: Leah Rudolf with a food bank collection

Food floods in for needy families

By Ruth Anders

When 12-year-old Leah Rudolf set herself a mission to take some positive action in the community, she could not have dreamed of its success.

Leah is a Year 7 student at JCoSS School in East Barnet, which participates in an initiative to encourage children to volunteer.

So, through both the school and her synagogue, New North London, Leah picked up the challenge to run a local street collection for Food Bank Aid North London. With the help of her "PA" (her mum Helen), she promoted the idea to all her neighbours in Huntingdon Road, N2, where she lives.

The first collection she ran was on Mitzvah Day, an annual day of faith-based social action that takes place in November each year. Her second collection coincided with the "Highlight Huntingdon" event when Huntingdon Road joined its neighbouring streets to light up the houses and front gardens with seasonal illuminations.

Leah said: "The first day we didn't get many responses, but on the second day more people gave food so the number of bags grew quickly. When we loaded everything into the car, we could barely fit it all in! The people at the food bank were very thankful. It was fun and we felt good doing it."

Targeted help

Food Bank Aid was launched in April 2020, to support North London food banks as they struggled with more than triple the normal demand through the lockdown.

What makes Food Bank Aid unique is that by giving the food banks exactly what they are short of, they avoid stockpiling surplus items and have the right stock for the families that they support. For more information visit www.mitzvahday.org.uk/project/foodbank-aid-north-london-network

A robin hidden on every page

When we last saw Sonia Beldom in *The Archer* (August 2020), she'd been driving a Routemaster double decker bus around London for tourists and wedding parties and had written her first book for children.

The driving has had to take a back seat this year, of course, so Sonia used the time to write and illustrate a second book for three- to eight-year-olds, called *Granny Franny's Big Zoo Rescue*, all about using a bus to round up some escaped animals.

Sonia says when she was writing the story she was spurred on by daily visits from a friendly robin who sat and watched her work in the back garden of her home in Long Lane, N3. She has placed a robin on every page for young readers to spot and is donating a percentage of sales to the RSPB.

The picture book has already found its way onto the bookshelves of Prince George, Princess Charlotte and Prince Louis, and Sonia was delighted to receive a letter of thanks from the Duchess of Cambridge. *Granny Franny's Big Zoo Rescue* is available via www.granny-frannysbigredbus.com and on Amazon.



Animal magic: One of Sonia's illustrations

Video tour of primary school

Many parents getting ready to make a choice about the right primary school for their children before the deadline of 15 January have been hampered by being unable to attend open days during the pandemic. Tudor Primary School has overcome the problem by producing a short video tour of their school to introduce pupils and staff, and the work they do.

Tudor School, in Queen's Road, N3, is in a federation with nearby Manorside Primary, in Squires Lane, N3. They share the same headteacher, Simon Jebreel, and both are attended by a fair number of East Finchley

pupils.

The video can be viewed at <https://bit.ly/TudorSchool>. It was filmed and edited by East Finchley father-of-two Almar Hafidason and his company Fetch Publicity.

Make your own skittle set

Once the piles of plastic toys given at Christmas have lost their appeal, Marian Bunzl suggests making your own version of this skittle set from recycled materials.



Collect six or seven of the little cardboard tubes inside rolls of toilet paper. These rather sad-looking objects can be transformed into a game of colourful skittles for children to play with. Both the preparation of the skittles and playing with them will pleasantly while away a good deal of lockdown time both for everyone.

Mark out your design with a pencil and maybe a small ruler and use up any odds and ends of poster colour (water-based) paint in pots or tubes. You can add lines with coloured felt tips to highlight, and then coat the skittles with colourless nail polish or varnish. This prevents the poster paint smudging and also makes the skittles a little harder.

Finally, find an old tennis ball or any kind of small rubber ball to knock them down, and position the set ideally on a wooden floor to play.

In the time-honoured tradition of *Blue Peter*, pictured are a few I prepared earlier. As you can see, the designs and colours are simple, but the tubes can be decorated in any design or colour you wish.

Have fun!



Still active: Gym classes are running at LAGAD this year

Gym classes bounce back

Like many local businesses that have been affected by the lockdowns of 2020, London Academy of Gymnastics and Dance (LAGAD) has had to adapt constantly. The company runs gymnastics classes for children in East Finchley, Finchley Central and Muswell Hill, but social distancing has inspired a new approach.

LAGAD founder Jessica Shenton says: "With the first lockdown last March we had to close our usual classes completely. We switched to online classes via Zoom, which was a steep learning curve for us. Luckily our enthusiastic coaches rose to the challenge to engage the children in this new format".

With classes resuming in person, the qualified coaches are observing stringent safety precautions. Jessica adds: "Even with our new Covid-safe systems, the children still have great fun and we are amazed at their progress." For more information, visit www.lagad.co.uk, or call 020 8883 4675.

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