



welcome

There's nothing quite as exciting as having a dream and suddenly finding that dream coming true. When I first commented on setting up research projects to find out how cross stitching and knitting were affecting people's lives, everyone chuckled, because never in our wildest dreams did anyone think it was realistic! However here we are just a short year on with a range of research projects being developed and a number

of experts in the fields of pain management and depression excited at the outcome. The findings could be important for a number of other conditions, too, not to mention as a way for all of us to achieve balance in life. A big thank you to Coats Crafts and the British Handknitting Confederation for donating some kits for use in clinical trials.

At the launch of Stitchlinks, the real journey is just beginning. To get you started we've got a great free kit for every member, so thank you to Jeni at Fyberspates for her fab fingerless gloves - they're so comfy - to Margaret who provided inspiration for our cross stitching starter kit - find out more on page 4 - and to Angela Poole for her beautiful design.

Together we can take this exciting project forwards, not only to improve our own quality of life, but to ensure that others benefit too. It's often difficult to make changes alone, but together we can. Each month we'll bring you news and views, penpals, up-to-date medical information and new skills to learn. With discounts on products and kits to save you money every month, there's something for everyone.

If we can repeat the progress we made last year, just think where we can be this time next! Together we've got so many opportunities and doors to open...

Betsan

4

step action plan for next month

- Tell us about yourself - what you like to stitch, the things you enjoy most in life and the products you'd like us to look into stocking.
- Take the first steps to a healthier heart. Turn to page 8 and you'll find your quick guide to heart health. Make the first small changes today!
- Tell someone special how you feel about them. Don't let them feel 'taken for granted' - give them something to smile about.
- Buy a bunch of fresh flowers. A bunch of daffodils always lifts my spirits - they're a way of brushing away the winter blues.

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