

Community Love

Ophelia

Love for community, where I have settled, where I start having my family grows with every year and every memory. I get inspiration from communities to embrace different cultures and different life-styles. I see community - as a group of people who, no matter what, are open-minded, keen to learn and do the things they want to do. It is a way to become a better person, a better version of ourselves, where we can embrace love instead of jealousy, our future instead of our past.

I remember fondly the community in Toryglen, where we all gathered every Wednesday, we would get food and clothes, used household items, like plates, cups, bedsheets, children's clothes, buggies, baby cots. People brought things that they no longer needed and we displayed them on the table for those who needed to pick. If our children had grown out things and they were still in good condition, we brought them back again. It will be useful to another family. People even came from far, from different places, they were all welcome to come and take items, it was all for free.

I did volunteer for the community, because it was a way of giving back, because this community supported me and my family. In the end I got a certificate, a useful piece of paper when I was looking for a job. Back then I was able to help, and the bond of being in that community - was so strong, we all looked after each other. We formed various sorts of relationships and support systems like school pick ups.

There was the plan to knock the highrises in Toryglen down and after staying in this place for four years I now had to find where to move and start a new chapter. I was finding it difficult to move, because I didn't know how I would integrate within the new community. Will I have the same support we had for each other in Toryglen, so I was kind of holding back...

When I moved to the Pollok community, in my street, we, people from Toryglen community, met and we bonded again! Through that experience of help, we were able to continue doing the same thing in our streets in Pollok. We had that background of support, so we introduced it to the neighbours. We all parents work together, we get to know each other, we get to trust each other, and give each other support. And from there we just lived like one community again, but smaller.

This community love, it's still on to today, although our kids are grown up, they are 18- 21 years old now, but that bond is still there, and this is what I carry on with me!

I keep telling my friends that, although I am far away from my home country, the people I live around are my first family. They are the first ones to know about all our news and changes, so I don't see them as just neighbours, I see them as part of my family as well.