Celebrating our National Treasures

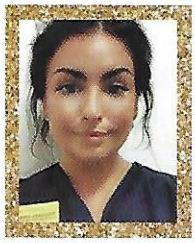
The Good Housekeeping National Treasures

These inspiring women and men also went above and beyond throughout the pandemic and are our other 17 winners

Amazing carers

CHRISTINE LACH from Clwyd

Christine was a tremendous friend to Elizabeth Downey through her battle with cancer. At first, Christine took Elizabeth to chemotherapy appointments, and kept her spirits up with evening phone calls. Then, she left her home and moved 200 miles to be with Elizabeth as her full-time carer. She was nominated by Elizabeth, who sadly passed away in August. 'My life is full of happiness now after some very dark days. I cannot thank her enough,' Elizabeth wrote in her nomination.



RACHAEL CRAGGS from Sunderland, Tyne and Wear

A nurse on the elderly ward in Sunderland Hospital, Rachael supported Liz McEvoy's mum who has dementia, when she was admitted to hospital during the pandemic. Painting her nails, talking her through family photos, reading out letters and using her phone to do FaceTime calls with her family, Rachael was always by her side. 'She was like another daughter, as well as a nurse,' says Liz.

FIONA MATHIESON from Esher, Surrey

A former district nurse, Fiona decided to come out of retirement to help during Covid. She went back into care homes giving patients the medical attention they required so they could avoid going to hospital and relieve pressure on the NHS. She did this while also taking care of her son, who caught Covid. 'I'm immensely proud of her, and proud that she is my godmother,' says Gemma Bell.

Helping the NHS

LYNDA YONG from Ascot

Lynda worked tirelessly to supply scrubs to NHS workers. She recruited volunteers, had fabric donated and set up Scrubs Glorious Scrubs, a sewing collaborative creating non-surgical scrubs. Radio presenter Chris Evans's son, Noah, helped raise more than £100,000, which he donated to Lynda. The group has over 400 volunteers and has delivered more than 28,000 scrubs, up and down the country to our frontline heroes. 'Lynda helped the NHS but she also inspired us volunteers who were sewing to have hope and purpose,' says Jane Glennie.

DULCIE SCOTT from Chipping Campden

When the pandemic hit and TV production companies stopped filming, costume maker Dulcie was out of work. She set up the group Helping Dress Medics and contacted 180 other costume makers, to help her make scrubs for NHS workers in hospitals in their local areas. They made more than 8,000 scrubs and went on to make 14,000 face masks, which were given to charities. 'Dulcie faced an uncertain future, yet she set aside her own concerns and used her talents to help NHS staff,' says Alice Carey.

Spreading kindness

LENA DIXON from Pembrokeshire

Lena is co-ordinator of Solva Care, supporting older residents in Pembrokeshire by helping them remain in their own homes. Clare Lynch's mum, Gaynor, was part of this community, but during lockdown she suffered a nasty fall and was hospitalised. She then sadly caught Covid and passed away. Lena supported Clare, helping to rehome her mum's dog and clear her house. 'It is hard to put into words how painful it was losing someone precious during lockdown. Lena's kindness made it more bearable,' says Clare.

RACHEL THORPE from Wednesbury

During lockdown, Stephanie Foster was unable to travel from Wales to visit her elderly parents in the West Midlands. Her dad had just started treatment for stage four cancer and food supplies became a worry, but new neighbour Rachel Thorpe stepped in – she knocked on their door offering to do their shopping. She did this every week without fail and regularly checked up on them. Her thoughtfulness made a huge difference to Stephanie and her parents. 'Rachel was an angel,' says Stephanie.

WORDS: BRYONY FIRTH-BERNARD. PHOTOGRAPHY: WENDY CARRIG AT A&R CREATIVE. HAIR & MAKE-UP: MALIN COLEMAN AND ALICE THEOBALD. FASHION STYLING: GAYLE RINKOFF. CLARE WEARS GOLD SEQUIN DRESS, BOMBSHELL; SHOES, RAID. OLIVIA WEARS: DRESS, GHOST NECKLACE, SIF JAKOBS; SHOES, PUBLIC DESIRE. CLAIRE WEARS (FIRST PAGE): SEQUIN WRAP MAXI DRESS, PHASE 8; SHOES, DUNE (PREVIOUS PAGE): DRESS, KALEIDOSCOPE; EARRINGS, SIF JAKOBS