



■ Open house – Ellie Crawford let a homeless man stay in her house

I let homeless man stay with me for a month

ELLIE Crawford went to the pub for a Christmas Eve pint and ended up offering her house out to a homeless man.

She spotted the teenager, known only as James, drinking in the Foresters Arms, in Castle Road, Colchester, last Christmas.

The mum of one, 44, overheard him explaining his predicament and decided to intervene.

“I wanted to help him back on to his feet,” she says.

“I knew he wouldn’t want to be with us forever, but I wanted to give him the chance to restart his life.”

James, 18, is originally from Hertfordshire, but became homeless in November 2011 after his mother died of cancer and his dad threw him out into the street. Since then he had been living in homeless shelters, such as the one in Alexandra Road.

He told our reporters at the time: “I was just sitting in the pub with half a pint of lager the barman had bought me and I heard someone say something to me.

“After that, she wouldn’t let me go back to the shelter. She just said, ‘come back’.”

He went back to the home where Ellie was staying with a friend and her six-year-old son, William.

Ellie’s gesture won her praise from Kindness UK, a national group promoting acts of selflessness.

A month later, James moved out.

Ellie explains: “He was no trouble and I am glad I did what I did.

“Unfortunately, when he left he got back into a bad spiral, made a suicide attempt with anti-depressants and had a stint at the Lakes hospital, but he has since recovered and got a flat in Colchester.”

KINDNESS GROUP

A NATIONAL group devoted to spreading kindness and good vibes has praised our newspaper’s good news spread.

Kindness UK is dedicated to random acts of selflessness.

It was set up by David Jamilly, an event company manager, who has appeared on Channel Four as a Secret Millionaire.

He says: “It is great that your paper has taken the initiative to recognise people for their kind acts, especially at this time of year when people are so stressed out.”

www.kindnessuk.com

I have come out the other end and want to help those less fortunate

The random acts of kindness that make the world a better place

Most of us have, at some time or another, benefited from someone doing us a good turn. Whether it’s someone lending us cash to get home or donating an internal organ to a complete stranger, JAMES COX and EMMA PALMER check out some of the most heart-warming stories...

SUSAN Dawson took the concept of charitable giving to a whole new level when she gave away a vital organ.

Sue, 63, of Colchester, spent four hours having her left kidney removed in Addenbroke’s Hospital for an anonymous recipient.

She had been on the list for two years before she was finally matched with some-

one in need of a donor. She said: “I’m lucky because I’ve always been healthy. I’ve known people who have had kidney problems.

“Their lives are not nice and you can die if you don’t get a donation.

“I just wanted to give somebody else the chance of a reasonable life.”

Most of the 2,500 transplants use kidneys from dying patients with organ donor cards.

Of the few hundred who volunteer to donate while still alive, the majority pass the organs on to family members.

Sue was inspired to donate after reading an article about someone in their seventies doing just that.

A year on, she is still not aware who received the kidney, only that the operation was a success.

Her daughter, Calista Dawson, was opposed to the idea

initially, fearing for her mother’s health.

“I told her she must be mental,” she said. “It was a bit upsetting at first, but there was no changing her mind.”

Now she is proud as punch of her mum’s sacrifice.

“I am over the moon and so proud,” she said.

“When we enjoy Christmas this year, we will know that someone else will also be enjoying a Christmas thanks to her.”

I LIKE TO GIVE SOMETHING BACK

TRACI Evans, 41, says acts of kindness are addictive. She has taken pity on people who leave homeless shelters or women’s abuse refuges and helps furnish their new houses. “This young lady was rehomed from the refuge with nothing but her two children,” says Traci, from Hutton. “I know how lonely it must be living as a single mum and spending the evenings alone.

“So one day I went out and bought her a 26 inch flat screen TV and took it round to her.

“She was thrilled.” Traci says acts of kindness are part of who she is. “I’ve always been a helper,” she says.

“I get a real buzz out of it. We’re not all absorbers. Some of us like to give



■ Traci Evans

something back as well.” Her acts of selflessness are all the more admirable in light of the tough year she has endured.

Traci has fought off a breast cancer diagnosis and also lost her mother to the same disease.

“I have come out the other end and want to help those less fortunate,” she says.

MY WIFE GAVE HER COAT TO COLD HOMELESS MAN

JULIE Brown, from Westcliff, got into the spirit of the season when she helped out a homeless man. Her husband Richard explained...

“A couple of weeks ago, my wife, along with a few of her girlfriends, met up at the Trading Rooms, in Westcliff, for a pre-Christmas drink. On leaving, a couple of them stopped off in the Plough for another quick drink.

“Then, before my wife came home, she and her friend went in to the shop opposite in London Road. Outside the shop were two homeless men. My wife Julie and her friend asked if they were OK and if they wanted anything. All they asked for was some chocolate. So my wife bought them a bar of chocolate each. When she gave them the chocolate,



■ Julie Brown

she again asked if they were OK as the younger one of the two looked extremely cold. When he said he was freezing, my wife took off her Parka and gave it to him. “When she arrived home and told me I was a little shocked, but when I thought about what she had done I was extremely proud of her.”