

Annual Report

April 2022 - March 2023



Back to Front CIO - Registered Charity

Number 1170920

Established 2011 as a community group



Chair's Welcome:

On behalf of the Back to Front Trustees I would like to offer another warm welcome to our annual report, the sixth since we became a registered charity in December 2016 (**Back to Front CIO - Registered Charity Number 1170920**).

This was a year of fresh starts and new beginnings for us. We had learnt a lot over the Covid-19 years. Although far from ideal, it had allowed us the gift of time and space to reflect on what our little project had accomplished over the years and what we wanted to achieve next. All the upheaval and uncertainty we experienced during the global pandemic better prepared us for facing some major setbacks from the very beginning of this reporting period whilst at the same time I was juggling the needs of my newborn baby. We were already picturing where we saw ourselves in the future and had planned what we needed to do to realise this, so these unforeseen events did not hold us back as much as they could have. I was very impressed how our trustees and core growers reacted to all the changes and how quickly we began to nurture our new off shoots and embrace each exciting opportunity as we continued to put into place our **Covid recovery plan**.

My grandma always said to us when something disappointing happened, not to worry as there is always something else around the corner. I remembered her wise words when our fantastic partner **Shine** let us know that they needed the main space we used as our **Community Growing Hub** for an extension of the outside play space used by the nursery renting the lower ground floor of the building. We had made big plans for revamping for the original space in our **Gateway to Growing project proposal**. We were told we could continue to have a base at Shine on the next level up from the existing garden but this new area had no opportunity for adding a gate to create the step free and out of hours access we desperately needed. In the same week **Adam from Breaking Down Barriers**, who we have worked with for many years, suggested we meet with the Trustees at **Junior Sports Hub (JSH)** as they were hoping to turn what was a grey concrete former warehouse loading bay into a garden for use by the local community. It was to be maintained by young people from the hub and they needed advice.



JSH was just streets away from the Shine garden so this was a perfect opportunity for us to offer our support to this exciting development and potentially put our years of experience to good use.

The other challenges that arose during this reporting period were also faced with the same resilience and willingness to adapt and evolve. This consistent approach filled me with an even greater confidence that we have a project that can withstand all weathers and the ever-changing seasons.

I would like to thank **Shine** for being great hosts to our longest running Back to Front Community Garden and for generously letting us use your beautiful building for workshops and meetings. We were happy to support the vision you have for your grounds and I hope to link up with you in the future. I would also like to thank our new partners, especially **Kamran, Immy and the young people at JSH** for making us so welcome and embracing container gardening and growing edibles the Back to Front way. Thank you to our most committed supporters **Trisha** and my husband **Ben**. I would also like to thank the fabulous Back to Front trustees: co-chair **Karen**, treasurer **Peter** and secretary **Katy** plus a special welcome to our newest trustee, **Adam** who joined our board at our January AGM and whom we have worked with for years. Our final thanks goes to **our local growers**, both young and old, who continue to inspire us and motivate us to keep on growing...

Katie Greaves, Co-Chair of the Trustees of Back to Front CIO.



Introduction: Nurturing New Shoots

Our main aim for this year was originally to move on to the next step of the Covid recovery plan with our **Gateway to Growing project at Shine**. When we were not able to progress with this project within the grounds of Shine, we decided as a group to embrace the new opportunities that had been offered to us, just around the corner, at the **Junior Sports Hub (JSH)**.

We suggested **Hyde Park Source (HPS)** might be able to support them with the initial build stage as we were not in a position to take on that element ourselves. We had existing commitments and no capacity for large builds. We were delighted when we got confirmation that they had put in a bid and **HPS** were booked in to make some great sized containers with Adam and the young people from **Breaking Down Barriers** at the Hub.

After many site visits and discussing their requirements, we recognised they actually matched with much of our original Gateway to Growing plan, so we transported many of our ideas and redesigned them to fit within the JSH space in combination with the developing vision and needs of the Hub. We presented the Gateway to Growing garden design ideas to the JSH Trustees and we were delighted to find that they liked them. We were given the go-ahead to work in partnership with them once the build stage was complete and get the garden ready for the official launch. The JSH garden also has step free access and the Hub is open in the evening and at weekends so access to the space would no longer be a problem for us as it had been at Shine.

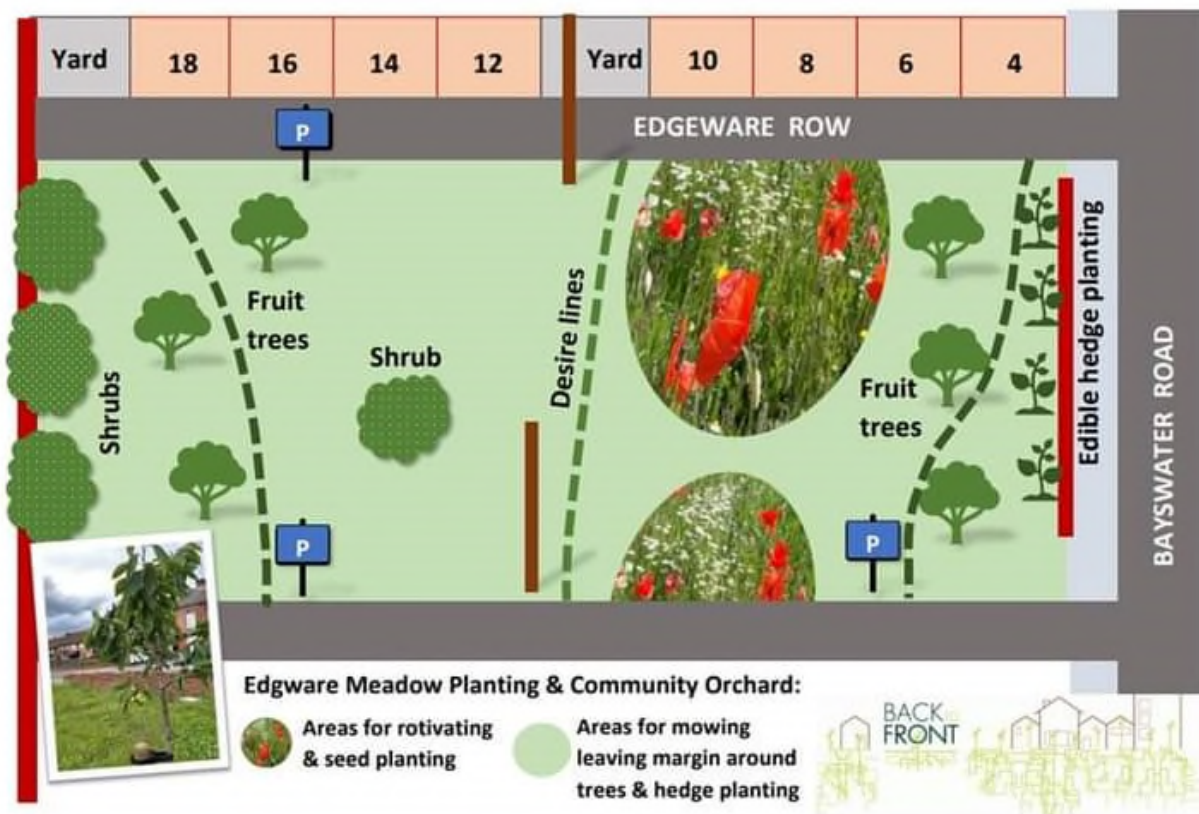
We wanted to build on the successes of last year and we planned to run a number of our most popular seasonal sessions such as wildflower seed sowing, educational maintenance and skill building sessions involving trees, especially fruit trees around Harehills. We also prioritised maintaining our previous social media successes and sharing regular project updates, informative posts and garden inspiration ideas.



We then divided our focus for this reporting period into three distinct strands, these were:

- **Building resilience - the path to our Covid recovery,**
- **Fresh starts and seasonal sessions,**
- **Sharing informative social media updates and garden inspiration.**

This reporting period Katie initially had her hands full with her new baby, so Karen took the lead on our social media priority and volunteered to continue the process of creating and updating our easy to read planting plans. The plans were designed to show exactly where our edibles and wild flowers were growing at each of the sites we work on and we put our local knowledge to good use by including other important details such as desire lines. These could then be shared with the relevant council staff and on social media.



We also responded to local residents' need for us to continue to support the newly forming Harehills Neighbourhood Forum and local people and other groups who were telling us they wanted to see environmental improvements such as greener streets with more street trees, better quality greenspaces and greener play areas.

Covid restrictions showed that the few local parks and greenspaces in Harehills struggled to meet the needs of one of the most densely populated areas in Leeds and were that were not as accessible as they could be. Locals were now much more familiar with the greenspaces on their doorstep and were asking for access to locked away hidden gems such as the Harehills Park Orchard.

With all this in mind we agreed our annual maintenance programme for the reporting year and made a commitment to continue to keep our larger seasonal sessions fully inclusive. We extended our offer of family friendly activities, especially now we were focusing on the new garden at the Hub. We continued this as a top priority for whenever we held skill building sessions and community action days around the area. Katie volunteered to update our risk assessments so everyone would be absolutely clear on what tasks were appropriate and those not suitable for younger attendees joining us as part of a youth group or with their families.

As is our policy we planned to continue to welcome people to join in without asking them to fill in lots of forms. Over the years we have witnessed how much this can put people off getting involved with other groups. We want to continue to remove as many of the barriers to growing and participating in community planting and action days as we can, so more and more people can join us for skill building activities and action days to learn to grow the Back to Front way.



1

Building resilience - the path to our Covid recovery

- **Gateway to Growing project:** Back to Front to lead on supporting community gardens, unlocking the local orchard, local inspiration walks and visits, promote local plant sales and seed shares.
- **Our response to challenges and set backs:** moving hubs, the Edgware Greenspace - picking up the pieces after the Covid years, then the Edgware site is the latest one destroyed by the council cutters. Obstacles faced: emails not getting through, staff changes. Gledhow Greenspace challenges were similar. **Focus on raising the profile of what we learnt about the importance of having good quality green spaces in built up urban and inner city areas and getting better council support.**
- **Identified in our Annual Report last year “From a Back to Front perspective the pandemic absolutely highlighted the inequalities that people living in densely packed, environmentally deprived urban areas face”.** Ongoing piece of work which **links with forum** - Karen/Katie supporting that. Katie will lead on this as bigger piece of work over the next three years to raise the issue and encourage **Harehills to bloom and grow together again.**



Fresh starts and seasonal sessions

- Plans from April 2022: Back to Front to put together an annual calendar of seasonal sessions, maintenance and educational activities, and ways of inspiring good growing. Concentrate on running a **programme of outdoor events with a focus of fruit trees, berry bushes, shrubs and wildflowers.**
- Hold events at local hubs and promote our new **Gateway to Growing opportunity in partnerships with Breaking Down Barriers and JSH in the community garden** - focus on espalier trees, growing edibles and herbs.
- Establish ourselves at **Harehills Park** - in addition to the **annual Harehills in Bloom partnership wildflower sowing session**, hold **Orchard skill building maintenance sessions.**
- **Support the consultation for the Ashton Play area improvements.** This builds on what we did for the Harehills Road consultation Feb 2022. Asked for working groups and conversations to discuss planting and street trees.
- For 2023 - develop **our next annual calendar** of seasonal events and activities in **partnership with JSH. We committed to supporting the forum.**
- **Adam from Breaking Down Barriers joined us as a trustee in Jan 23.**




Planning Ahead

May 2022 sowing wildflower seeds at Harehills Park Horseshoe Meadow


Aug 2022 ongoing maintenance at the HUB



- **Karen's uplifting social media posts.** Even though we were able to meet in person again we wanted to **continue information sharing and inspiring people.** Katie and Karen offered to share inspirational pictures of their own front garden growing.

Reporting Period 6:	April 22 - March 23 - Calendar of activities in detail:	
March/April 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Started the year with optimism and our plans for planting in hope... • Social media promoted microgreens and edible wildflowers and weeds. Plant and share month. • Shared on social media our updated plan for the Edgeware Green space - we need the council to support more with this and other local planting. 	
May 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spring seasonal session - 10th May our Harehills in Bloom and Back to Front annual partnership activity, wildflower seed sowing in Harehills Park. Thanks to LCC for preparing the horseshoe. Evening session was a success. We asked one of our returning growers how he found the session and he said "The wild flower sowing session was a really fun and informative evening, great for all ages and abilities with lots of hands on, practical seed sowing opportunities". • 28th May checked on Compton coppice... did an inventory of the trees and shrubs there (Laurel, rowan, silver birch, cherry, sycamore, elderflower, conifer, holly, willow, roses - could this be a wreath making session of the future in the making?) • Promoted on social media back street inspiration, red bauble tip for protecting tomatoes. 	
June 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early summer seasonal session - 1st June we did a summer pruning maintenance session on the Edgeware green space cherry trees and a (hands-off) health check of the apples and pear tree. Checked on the hedge of Elder flower, rowan and raspberries which was doing well. • Shared on Social media a strawberry pebble painting tip to keep birds away from your strawberries, inspiration for edible flowers, container planting ideas with decorated tyres and mosaicked concrete blocks. • 21st June watering and maintenance update for the Ashton Road planter 	

July 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st July tomato and cucumber plant share donated by Trisha. • 3rd July - Local allotment inspiration visit (Katie and family visited Katy's allotment). Also 3rd July - Karen's wildflower meadow update. • Hottest days 18/19th July!!!! • Social media Yarden inspiration what Karen is growing plus passion flowers, passion fruit and Katie's plums. <div data-bbox="470 383 930 842">  </div> <div data-bbox="948 353 1358 860">  </div>
August 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>21st Aug Summer seasonal session JSH and Breaking Down Barriers partnership project</u> we shared our planting plans and held an event in the new community garden. We planted 5 fruit trees, a Fig, Rowen, tomatoes, fuchsias, willow cuttings, plus added the mosaics. <p>Adam held a feedback activity with the young people who had attended to see how they found the session:</p> <p>"I love gardening but we don't have one here like back in Romania. I feel like I'm back on the farm doing this"</p> <p>"The old yard was so ugly, now it's brighter and even a little pretty"</p> <p>"This is so cool us developing our garden for the community together"</p> <p>"I thought this would be boring when mum sent me but I'm really enjoying this"</p> <p>"We need some green and trees here but it's gonna be a lot of work"</p> <p>"Imagine when this tree is old and I'm old. I'll bring my kids to play here"</p> <p>Their comments clearly demonstrate the passion for nature and growing in this group of young people. This is why we feel it is so important for us to continue to support our local groups with their planting projects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media promoted making fire cider and pickles on social media.
September 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoted pumpkin tips ahead of Halloween, edible flowers on social media.
October 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media garden update, seed saving inspiration.

November 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winter planning behind the scenes for the next three events.
December 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoted and went to Ashton Road play area consultation. • 11th Dec - Belated Autumn seasonal session - Ashton Planter maintenance day.
January 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adam joined us as a trustee at the AGM. • Social media promoted edible hedge growing.
February 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5th Feb Winter Seasonal session at the Compton coppice - litter picking, bulb planting, tree grafting, willow tree maintenance, planted a replacement cherry tree. Partnership even with Breaking Down Barriers and Junior Sports Hub. • 26th Feb Second Winter seasonal session winter pruning, mulching at Harehills Park Orchard. 
March 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning for the next 12 month growing Calendar with Karen and Adam.

Conclusion and Reflection...

Our charity had endured all the challenges of a pandemic thanks to the sheer grit and determination of our most loyal volunteers and our ability as trustees to react quickly and positively to each of the different barriers and obstacles we faced. The further setbacks we experienced throughout this reporting period continued to demonstrate just how vulnerable small charities can be when the unexpected happens. It also shows how the work we do is absolutely priceless, especially in environmentally deprived inner-city areas like Harehills where the consequences of an increasing cost of living crisis are more visible and severely impact lives. This year we demonstrated our ongoing resilience with a change of growing Hub and in turn, we further expanded our focus and adjusted our activities to make the most of the opportunities that had arisen due to this fresh start.



Future proofing the Back to Front project

We have always wanted to keep the project sustainable and relevant. Recruiting more local trustees has been important to the project. And since we became a registered charity in 2016 it has remained one of our priorities over the last six years. In this time, we have attracted two more local enthusiastic folk, Karen and Katy, to join us. This foresight turned out to be absolutely paramount to the recent success of the project and our ability to keep things going during the lockdowns as we didn't have to travel to do necessary maintenance sessions and were able to run activities as soon as we were allowed. In January, at our AGM another Harehills local, Adam from Breaking Down Barriers, said he would be interested in becoming a Back to Front Trustee, so we took a vote and were delighted to welcome him on board.

Another strength that has grown over the past five years is that the core group of volunteers and trustees have become confident enough to run more of our own skill building educational sessions in house. This gradual shift has given us a far greater flexibility. Being locals, we have been able to help identify the challenges, spot the inequalities and find hidden growing opportunities as well as keeping running costs down so sessions can continue to be free. That said, part of the ongoing rebuilding and recovery plans this year has shown we now need much better support from the council. This year we chose not to get upset by all the challenges and merely put them back on to the to do and to replant list, but we don't want to come to expect our hard work and years of planning will be mown down again in the future.

Living and working in an environmentally deprived area, we are also acutely aware that one of the ongoing challenges for front garden growing is that so many properties, especially end of terrace shop houses or some of the private rented houses, have their hedges and gardens ripped up by people, who are not living in the area. They are then either totally built over to form a huge shop extension or concrete is poured over the remaining earth. On the hottest day on record where it hit 40 degrees centigrade in July 2022, the lack of shade was really felt in Harehills as there was just no escape from the sun.



Back to Front are in a fortunate position where we can continue to explore a variety of urban greening methods and principles as a core part of what we do. We had supported the council in their local response to the climate crisis with the launch of the Greener Gipton and Harehills campaign in 2020 – 2021. We had hopes this could be the start of more tree planting, better quality greenspaces and opportunities for nature and wildflowers locally. The meetings were held online and seemed promising until we were told that as we do not have large amounts of land for tree planting or verges, there was not much that could be done in Harehills. The pledge turned out to be more about establishing new woodlands, “we will be planting 4,500 saplings per hectare, a planting target of 225,000 trees each year and 5.8 million trees from 2020 to 2045”. But as this required having a large amount of land available in the first place, most of Harehills wasn’t suitable for this scheme and although a few got planted in Harehills Park, we are not yet sure if this is just a commitment to getting them in the ground as whips in those quantities or if it includes keeping them alive to get that amount of new trees to a good size by 2045.

This makes our efforts to establish fruit trees on any small patches of and in Harehills all the more important.

Looking onwards, upwards and forwards

In Harehills, the importance and impact of a splash of green wherever we can get and the shade it provides cannot be ignored for people like us who live in areas of high density housing. This reporting year, despite getting stuck into growing edibles at the new Hub, we could not ignore the wider local hunger for more accessible, better quality greenspaces and a continuing thirst for making the most of street greening opportunities. Residents were committed to watering and tending to the established planters situated on previously fly tipped corners and we were delighted to hear that another local we had only recently started working with, had turned their attention to growing edibles in a neglected bin yard.



This local interest was highlighted as part of a council consultation that took place at the end of the last reporting period about the next stage of work to be carried out on Harehills Road. We had continued to ask if there was an option for creating opportunities for introducing more urban street trees and meaningful planting locally. For example, when local roads are reconfigured. Harehills Road had been the obvious one to explore first to see whether street trees could be added as part of the road safety and general improvement scheme and whether they would be appreciated by the wider community. The responses to the consultation were very positive towards the greening part of the scheme.

We believe that regularly networking and supporting the council with their initiatives and newer opportunities such as interacting with the Harehills Neighbourhood Forum will help to raise awareness of local people's wish to see the environment improved. We also hope to ensure better future consultations and better co-produced strategic planning and funding towards greening Harehills. We want to help create and implement effective strategies for overcoming some of the existing barriers to local growing and encourage more urban tree planting. We

plan to extend our mapping of local greenspaces and inventory of trees and shrubs to help shape our future educational and maintenance sessions. Long term our hope is that a greener Harehills in general could lead to more Back to Front style front garden growing. With an increase in community growing and local foraging opportunities the fear of much loved garden plants and hard-earned produce being pinched could be reduced.



Opening up important community greenspaces, such as the locked away orchard in Harehills Park, became another central part of our Covid recovery this year. We recognised that listening to, and assisting with local peoples requests for admittance to an established but usually inaccessible orchard, directly feeds into our primary goal as a charity. Our aim is to educate and encourage people to grow edibles in their own front gardens and yards. Providing people with the opportunity to see an established orchard with a variety of fruit and nut trees on our doorstep and for us to then commit to offering annual orchard maintenance sessions might just foster a budding interest. To achieve the objective, we know we have to support them by a variety of methods. Ensuring access to a neutral public places where people can be inspired is important and by supporting people to learn the skills needed to maintain a fruit or nut tree, the offer to have one at home to grow in a large pot or in the ground will seem more doable. In turn more and more residents could start to feel uplifted when walking around a greener street and it might inspire them to give it a go too.

We might be a small group of volunteers working in the inner city area of a northern town in the UK, but we will continue to build on what we have achieved so far. We will find different ways to inspire, encourage and support even more people so that they can develop the confidence, knowledge and skills required to grow edibles, specifically in their front yards, the Back to Front way.





CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Back To Front CIO

1170920

Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period
from

Period start date

01/04/2022

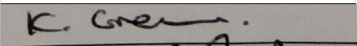
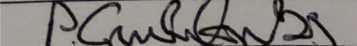
To

Period end date

31/03/2023

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
	-	-	-	-	-
Leed City Council	-	2,500	-	2,500	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	-	2,500	-	2,500	-
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	-	2,500	-	2,500	-
A3 Payments					
Admin costs	16	-	-	16	8
Events	-	120	-	120	-
Gardening sundries	642	-	-	642	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	658	120	-	778	8
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	658	120	-	778	8
Net of receipts/(payments)	- 658	2,380	-	1,722	- 8
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	8,651	-	-	8,651	8,659
Cash funds this year end	7,993	2,380	-	10,373	8,651

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period				
Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Bank account	7,993	2,380	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	7,993	2,380	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK
		Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets	Details			
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
B3 Investment assets	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
B5 Liabilities	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees	Signature	Print Name		Date of approval
		Katie Greaves		30/01/2024
		Peter Cruikshanks		30/01/2024



**HAREHILLS
IN BLOOM**



Leeds
CITY COUNCIL

JSH
COMMUNITY | FAMILY | WELLBEING



**BREAKING DOWN
BARRIERS**

