

invisible talents!

invisible talents in times of Corona

Since community centre Modestraat had to close down because of the Corona virus all members of the Sweet 70 community received a bunch of tulips. The Sweeties (members of Sweet70) were regularly informed of developments. A group app was created. Furthermore, there are a lot of phone calls among the group members. Marja cooks twice a week for some Sweeties. The Dream Factory is a group of eight people, between 68 and 91, all part of the Sweet70 community, who participate in the invisible talents project activities (Netherlands). Because the invisible talents team was interested to find out how everyone is doing in Corona times, photographer Caro Bonink from the Dream Factory team called everyone for an interview by phone.

"Call each other, do not wait, find digital contact, keep your distance, watch TV, make a walk but not all of you at the same time and move! Sit back in the sun. Hold on."

Tips in Corona times from the Dream Factory group

Fred Vos (75)

"In the Dream Factory I can bare my soul."

Fred will be fine, he says: "I spend a lot of time at my computer and watch a lot of TV. I also read a lot on Facebook. I get groceries myself. My sweet 80-year-old neighbour occasionally cooks for me and every now and then I get groceries for her. It's nice to help each other. Marja, one of the Sweeties, also cooks for some people of the group twice a week.

I have four sons and the youngest son lives close by. So, I always call him first and fortunately he doesn't mind. I miss eating together in Modestraat and at the Salvation Army. What I miss most are the conviviality and nice conversations at the Dream Factory. It is a small group and there is more depth.



At the Dream Factory I can bare my soul and it stays there too. At the lunch restaurant the tone is light-hearted.

I also miss my social contacts, swimming and the sports club and cuddling. Because we all need a hug every now and then."

Martha Vrij (91)

"I like it when it's a bit quiet."

"How nice that you call. I'm just putting flowers in the water. My house is full of flowers from family and friends. I just received these flowers from a friend of my daughter. Everything is fine and I'm fine. Although I am waiting for surgery on my toe. I can still walk when I use some Paracetamol. It's not that bad. Fortunately, I am not ill. I make a list for the whole day: do my exercises, painting, reading, a walk and I make calls to keep in touch with people.



I am able to do the shopping myself and I also cook myself. I even like it when it's a bit quiet. But I would really like to get together with the Dream Factory soon.

We could meet in a place where we can sit at a distance from each other, that allows to come in with a walker.

We'll order a sunny day and everyone takes something tasty with them.

If there is anything I can do, you can call me, because I have plenty of time."

Rijk van den Hoek (86)

"Dreaming together."

"I'm fine. Actually, I am bored, but still I am doing something all the time. Right now, I'm writing a story for my 7-year-old granddaughter. I 'live' the story as I write it, so I don't know what's going to happen. I also make typing errors that change the direction of the entire story. In addition to the story writing, I keep one eye on WhatsApp messages of the Sweet70 group.



Sometimes I comment on that, without really seeing the solution. I just like the responses. I have also

dreams. I'm referring to dreams we have been dreaming lately.

At home I manage, everything just goes on, the

been thinking of the Dream Factory meetings, in which we were going to help each other's dreams come true. Because we can't really get together due to the Corona break, I thought we might tempt each other to exchange journal *PurmerPleinBuurtKrant* and working on the next Sjors newsletter of Sweet 70. What I miss most is human proximity. Just touch each other, a hug, give each other a pat on the head. Otherwise, I am used to being alone. I haven't had a partner in thirty years.

shopping, making food, or having it delivered. Sometimes I participate in Marja's meals. Eating on the couch near the TV. Calling friends and family, texting, emailing, writing stories for the neighbourhood. Every now and then I call sweeties to encourage each other or just to prevent becoming bored. Like I said I'm fine."

Marty Jager (81)

"All I can do now is focus on myself all the time"

"Oh girl, I have been wanting to call you, because I am very happy with the flowers you brought. I get flowers all the time. It seems as if this has been coordinated whereas you don't even know each other. How am I doing? Well, it's hopeless actually. I don't do much, because I can't do anything myself anymore. I have applied for power steering for my Canta, because using my hands is not possible.

Besides, I'm not going out for the time being, because I don't feel like driving around for no reason. Instead I prefer to sit on a bench in the garden at home. Yes of course I do miss Modestraat. I miss the fun, the community spirit and talking together. All I can do now is focus on myself all the time. I also think of the Dream Factory. Actually, I no longer have any dreams, but I find it interesting to learn what others may dream about. I know what I would like, but I also know that I can no longer do it. Fortunately, there are many nice people around me, who offer to do the shopping for me.



My granddaughter comes every week to bring me some treats. I enjoy the meals Marja prepares twice a week. I'm in touch with a few Sweeties over the phone. I am also in the Sweet70 app group and I look at everything that goes on there, because I find it difficult to app myself. It's just nice to attend. All these stories about Corona make me very sad. It is also too much information. So, I watch nice videos for distraction, I follow Facebook occasionally and I read a lot on the computer."

Mirjam van Golen (68)

"Just keep thinking positive."

"I am quite well. One day all is well and the other day it's a bit less. It's because of my fibromyalgia. My dream was to clean up my house and clothes. I am still working on that. But it only works if I can do it together with my neighbour. It seems I just can't get going on my own. So, I am waiting for the neighbour who will come to help me after Ramadan. She is very good at organizing. It's not that I sit down and give up.



We just keep going. I often go out for some groceries and then drive along Modestraat. Yes, I do miss being with people, laughing together and chatting together. I also miss the rebel club, the coffee corner, the exchange boutique, God I miss basically everything. Yesterday I went to Zaandam by taxi.

I go there to get yarn in a special store and having done so I sit down on a bench for a while. This way, I have been on the road for at least 1.5 hours! I also enjoy crocheting, reading, games and WhatsApp. So just keep thinking positive and make sure you are busy. Goodbye my dear, stay healthy!"

Riek Leibrand (81)

"Go for a walk in your house."

'I'm doing well. So much is happening around me. Most people down the street work from home so I see them a lot. They are very nice and cosy with each other. I hope it stays that way. I have put a chair in my front garden and I photograph everyone who sits on it. I will make a nice book of it later. I read a lot. I do my exercises every day. I watch TV once a day. Once I've got enough information, I turn off the TV. All day in front of the TV makes you gloomy.



Yes, of course I miss my children and grandchildren, even if they come by to see me at a distance. They bring groceries. Twice a week I get meals from Marja

(Sweet70). It's enough for four days, delicious! I miss Modestraat and I don't. It can also be too busy for me.

One on one conversations or in a small group are much better for me. Like in the Dream Factory. The Dream Factory has a lot of impact on me. It made me write, developed myself more and made me think about my life. It is nice to share feelings. I notice that sometimes older people can get a bit gloomy.

If I do, I make a list of good points and bad points. Then I work on the good points in my life. And I look at the opportunities that I still have in my life. So, folks, don't get gloomy, take a walk in your house, walk up and down your stairs three times, do exercises and make a positive list."

Herman Brand (71)

"I won't give up and get gloomy."

"My life is monotonous at the moment. I have been used to go out every day and now there is nowhere to go. I also dare not go anywhere, because the risk is too big. I realized how dangerous it is. At first, I thought: what an exaggeration. I go shopping once or twice a week and I order food from Marja twice a week. I spend a lot of time behind the computer and TV. I like to watch movies.



I miss the people I work with. I miss the togetherness. You know, I am very cuddly, so I miss it very much. Yet I also think; what a lucky thing that I ended up at Modestraat. I take part in the Photo Club and the Dream Factory. I am a volunteer at the Lunch Restaurant and I have recently become the house photographer at Modestraat. As a volunteer I get a lot of appreciation and recognition and that is so nice. Especially when eating together. Everyone asks how I am doing. Besides, I have never had so many flowers in the house.

You know, I'll get through my day. It's just that I don't have anyone to talk to at home. That is why I keep in touch with the people of Modestraat. So, I keep it up and just keep going behind my computer and TV and by keeping in touch. I won't give up and get gloomy."

Marijke Maaren (80)
"I am having a lot of fun."

"How am I doing? Brilliant of course. The weather cooperates. I sit in my lovely garden surrounded by beautiful plants and flowers. I like gardening. I never get bored. I crochet, read a book, colorize with chalk and enjoy music. I am having a great time. I don't need to do anything and that gives me a lot of peace. I am a doer and always on the go. And now it is a bit quieter than before.



I don't really miss anything. I can go by car. Visiting my daughter. Then we have a chat each standing on one side of the fence. And I occasionally have visits at distance in our garden.

What I do miss is our group discussions (the Dream Factory) and painting. I don't like to paint alone. I have already agreed with Fred that we will continue with the discussion group.

It's nice to be able to talk about everything in a small group. I am in touch with a number of Sweeties. And I share everything on Facebook. Then, it's really nice when people respond. That way you stay in touch. And when my husband starts watching boring series on TV again, I put on my earphones and enjoy Hauser and special Irish songs."