

Everybody needs good neighbours.

In two week's time my partner, Tamara and I will be moving house. This will be the twenty-first time I have moved house since leaving my family home thirteen years ago. Needless to say, I hope we won't be moving again any time soon.

Before moving to London I lived in Nottingham, Liverpool and all over Israel, all places where you can barely walk a metre without having someone wish you well, ask a question, make a comment, offer to help or insult you. Imagine my shock when a day after moving to London I manage to travel for two hours on tubes and buses carrying Ikea storage twice my size and not one person said a word – not even a joke at my expense! I was not in Kansas anymore. For many years living in London I was struck with how individualistic it was. I believed that it would be possible for a person to go weeks without speaking to someone unless they had family or friends to contact or contact them. That was until we moved to Harrow.

Whilst there are many benefits to us moving, I will miss our neighbours and the community of people we have around us. The dog walkers in the park all have a WhatsApp group and when Covid restrictions allowed would have regular meetups sometimes with upwards of 30 dogs all playing together.

More than that though, we share a fence on either side of our garden with two lovely families. During lockdown take 1 our fence broke and the two little boys next door, who were going stir crazy having not left their house for so long, would regularly jump through the holes in the fence to run around and play with the dogs.

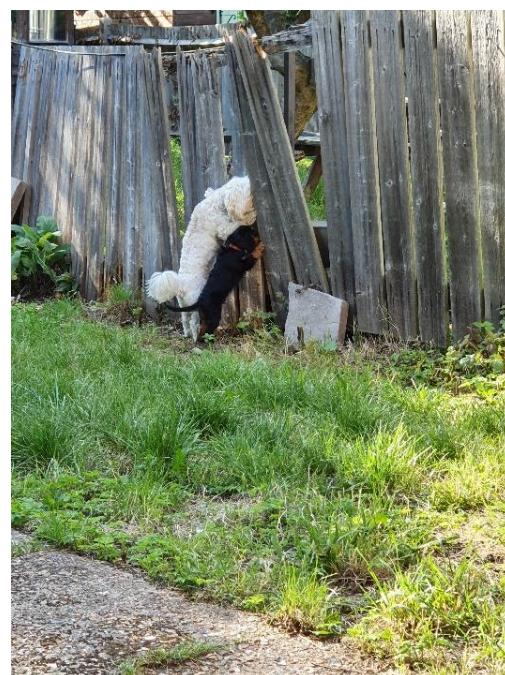
These great escapes soon turned into play times and sometimes I'd print off colouring pages so that the eldest boy (aged 3) could colour (and not disturb me) while I got work done. The family had a baby at the beginning of lockdown, and we had the privilege of

being the first people outside of their family to snuggle the baby.



Play time and snuggles turned into meals being passed over the fence. One evening I get a call from Jasmin (the boys' mum) and she said: 'come outside I have your dinner'. She presented me a delicious meal, with a candle and a flower saying she had seen me working hard all day and thought it would cheer me up – it did! They're from Kuwait and run a Kuwaiti catering company so the food they send over the fence is incredibly tasty! Her sons mostly chatter to me in Arabic and we have found so many words in common between Hebrew and Arabic that I often know what they are pointing at or telling me about.

Having such special neighbours during this isolating time has been a true blessing. We will miss our dog walking crew and the community we have built



around us but rest assured I will aim to bring a bit of that neighbourly feeling to our new neighbours – if they only knew what’s coming!

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