

# International Women's Day

INSPIRE INCLUSION

**Kim Shutler MBE**

CEO

**International Women's Day** is held on 8th March each year.

Imagine a gender equal world. A world free of bias, stereotypes, and discrimination. A world that's diverse, equitable, and inclusive. A world where difference is valued and celebrated. Together we can forge women's equality. Collectively we can all #InspireInclusion.

Celebrate women's achievement. Raise awareness about discrimination. Take action to drive gender parity.

IWD belongs to everyone, everywhere. Inclusion means all IWD action is valid.

On International Women's Day, especially with the theme of 'Inspire Inclusion', I wanted to tell you a bit of a story about my Mum and how she has inspired me!

My Mum is ethnically Chinese. She grew up in Malaysia as 1 of 7 children and was educated in a Catholic convent. Quite remarkably, until she was 5, she was brought up as a boy (because her parents wanted a boy not a girl!) My Mum has told me her dream as a child was to have a whole orange to herself as they were too poor to afford this.



Her other siblings were funded to go to University (all medics) but as one of the youngest she knew there was no money left for her education. She left, age 18, with £40 in her pocket and headed to the UK to train to be a nurse at Manchester Royal Infirmary.

A karate black belt and instructor my teensy little Mum is a total powerhouse. She met my Dad (who is from what was at the time the biggest Council Estate in Europe – Wythenshawe) learning to scuba dive in the freezing cold Irish Sea. They braved the racism of being a (rare) mixed-race couple in the 70s... racism she still faces today. They lived in Thailand, then Indonesia, where I was born, before moving back to Manchester in the mid-80s.

My Mum rejoined NHS nursing... moving from theatre nursing to being a Practice Nurse whilst also helping set up Stroke Association groups and the Chinese Information Centre and General Practice to ensure culturally competent health services for Chinese people. Both are still in operation today. Later she trained to be an NLP Master Practitioner and was an NHS nurse till she retired.





My Mum turned 70 last year and has Parkinson's which is hard. But this is her doing yoga in Sydney (where my sister lives) and actually her and my Dad put me to shame with how active they are.

I am acutely aware that I have lived a very privileged life and whilst I have had my own experiences of prejudice as a result of being mixed-race, the bravery and resilience of my Mum has meant I could have the life and the opportunities I have had.

I have had (and still have) many women in my life who have mentored and supported me, and I am grateful for every one of them, but none more so than my Mum who laid my path and set the bar high.



Kim has been the CEO of The Cellar Trust since November 2014. She is passionate about the role of charities and was recently appointed as the VCSE representative on the **West Yorkshire Partnership Integrated Care Board (ICB)** and Senior Responsible Officer for the Harnessing the Power of Communities programme. She is also a member of the **NHS England Adult Mental Health Steering Group**. Kim was awarded an **MBE** for Services to Mental Health in 2022.