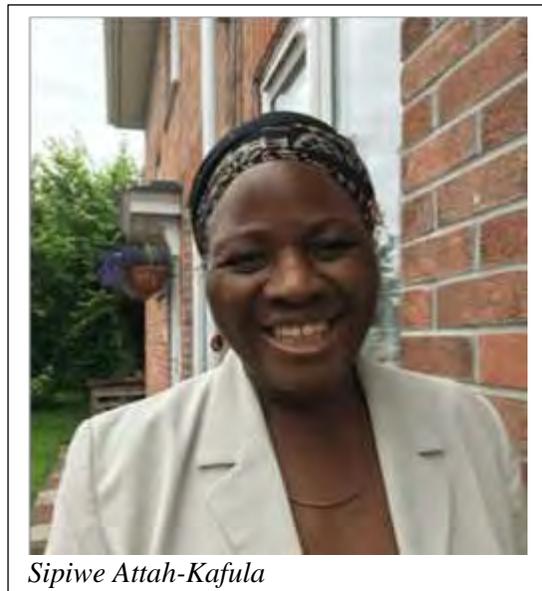


FFWPU UK: Heroes Within Our Community: Sipiwe Attah-Kafula

Michael Balcomb
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"Heroes Within Our Community" is a series of articles where we hear from those in our communities who are working on the frontline during this pandemic. This is the second article in the series: Sipiwe's story.

Sipiwe Attah-Kafula:

"My name is Sipiwe Attah-Kafula. I am originally from Zimbabwe but living in Norwich with my husband and two children. I work as a Support Worker in the Health and Social Care Sector, supporting vulnerable adults with dementia and other mental health issues.

To me, lockdown did not exist, because my working schedule did not change. In fact, this has been the busiest time of my working career.

I had to cover extra hours for colleagues who were classed as vulnerable or unwell, as well as those who could not come to work. Some had no childcare while others were too anxious to come into work. I was terrified of being infected but could not find a valid enough reason to take time off work over this period. I realized my services were needed now more than ever.

When the COVID-19 pandemic broke out, no one was prepared for it. No one had any idea as to how deadly the "virus" was! Our Government, our management, our doctors and nurses did not know what we were dealing with. Everything was on a trial-and-error basis. There was fear, anxiety and tension in all workplaces but especially in hospitals and care-homes.



To begin with, in hospitals, where people usually rush to when seeking sanctuary or feeling unwell became a no-go area as people stayed away for fear of contracting the virus. I too was afraid of going into work during this time. There was so much negative information circulating about the virus on TV, social media and it was frightening. There was also a lot of publicity about people dying in hospitals including nurses, doctors and healthcare workers. Of course, we had some basic protective equipment to use when dealing with patients but in the beginning, this did not include masks or shields.

This was a very challenging time for me. I truly believe I was protected by our Heavenly Parent. I remember listening to True Mother's speech encouraging us to read HDK and pray constantly for protection during this period. I held on to those words. Faith is a funny thing. It really played a big part in my life during this time. I remember a colleague of mine from the Christian community saying to me: "Ma but why are you not afraid to go to work? You are older than me, have high blood pressure and you are asthmatic, therefore more vulnerable!".

By this time my friend was self-isolating because of anxiety, however I had spoken to my GP who told me that I was not classed as high risk. I assured her that indeed I was afraid but as I believed I had God's protection and was following the required guidelines, I just got on with it. I just did my best and believed that God would do the rest.

Social distances measures brought in great loneliness among those in our care as they felt abandoned by their own families. Some even said: "My family has abandoned me". This was heartbreaking. Some clients did not understand why we had to wear masks, shields and other protective clothing. One client commented that they were frightened as we looked like we came from another planet! Some got angry saying they could not hear us when we spoke wearing masks. Some said they could not see us smile. We tried smiling with our voices, but it is not the same. It was frustrating but we had to stay safe to keep everyone safe. At times, I had to be with clients during their final moments before passing away, as their loved ones could not be with them. During these tragic times, I prayed with them, read Father's word or, at times, told them about True Parents. They might not know exactly what I was talking about, but I always hoped that brought them peace.

MY PERSONAL HEALTH JOURNEY

For several years now I have been suffering with a condition called verruca; it is caused by a human papilloma virus. People with very low immune systems will easily catch it. There is no treatment is available. The only recommendation I got from the GP was to freeze the warts using acid in the hope that they would heal; I did so to no success. Surprisingly, during this era of the COVID-19, information on how to protect yourself against viruses is regularly being shared on social media; one example being on how to strengthen one's immune system. One of the methods was to take a lot of herbs like ginger, lemon, garlic and many more including to increase your vitamin D intake. I jumped on the band wagon and was blending these herbs to make juices and in-turn increase my fluid intake.

After a few weeks of taking this concoction, the verruca warts completely disappeared. I had been "miraculously" healed. Whether this was a coincidence, I do not know but I am completely healed. Prevention or fear of contracting the COVID-19 virus helped me to pay attention to what the GP had highlighted about keeping my immune system up. I am happy about this.

My personal recommendation: work on strengthening your immune system!

MY GRATITUDE

I have come out of this situation stronger and more confident in Heavenly Parent and True Parents' love. Trusting them when they encourage us to live for the sake of others as we usually look at the concept as something we do outside of our daily lives. I am grateful that I can be a channel of God's love by being available and participating in delivering care, love and compassion to some of our communities. I feel it is great attendance to the communities I serve by sharing our True Parents' love.

I am grateful too for all the prayers offered by brothers and sisters from different communities and all over the world as well as encouragement from family and friends."

If you yourself wish to share your own experiences over these past few months, please contact: pr@ffwpu.org.uk or fsfobbie@gmail.com