



Part of the community for over 80 years.

Woodhall is home to:

- ❖ Woodhall Opportunities Project, a day service for adult disability services.
- ❖ Woodhall Community Services
- ❖ Woodhall Community Centre event and room hire.



The magazine co-produced and written by the students and staff from

2023 UPDATE ...

Let's look at our vision and see how far we have come.

Since the last magazine in spring, we have been winning awards, helping out the community locally, hosting community events and improving our relations with partners.

Our award-winning disability day service has grown to 30 people who come to use the service with a list of referrals still to assess. Still room to grow.

We have had a real focus on co-production, which is working with the people who are in our life and listening to their feedback and adapting.

Our "you said, we did" board in the main hall goes into the details every two months.

We are most of the way through our grounds' improvements and hopefully you will have noticed the benefits.

Doing good day

The 8th of March is St John of God day where we celebrate the founder of our charity. We mark this occasion by doing good things in our local community. This year our plans had to suddenly change due to the unpredictable British weather. We had planned to spend the day gardening at our local children's nursery and to host a stall giving out free hot drinks and homemade cakes to the community. Unfortunately, the rain came down! We had a quick change of plan and instead spent the day making art and craft packs for each of the children who attend the nursery, which we presented to them at the end of the day.



Students also helped staff to make some delicious cakes and biscuits and these were donated to the local homeless charity, YMCA for their clients to enjoy. All the staff and students really enjoyed spending the day working together as a team and said it made them really happy to give something to the local community that they would get pleasure

Diversity Events

We try to celebrate at least two diversity occasions each month so that we can raise awareness and we can all learn and gain a better understanding of different events. Below are just some that we have learnt about over the last few months.

Holi - The Hindu colour festival

In March we learnt about Holi which is one of the biggest festivals in the Hindu religion. The purpose of the celebration is to welcome spring and new beginnings.



Traditionally, people throw coloured powders over each other, dance, sing and eat traditional foods such as deep fried sweet dumplings. We made colourful Holi trees which we decorated Woodhall with and which we will also use as one of the props in our upcoming play.



Autism Awareness Day

We marked this day by painting stones. Students used paint or acrylic paint pens to decorate their stones with different pictures, designs and colours. We put stickers on each stone, which had a web link to our charity website and information about autism. During our 'out and about week', students went into the local community and hid the stones in the large communal garden areas for people to find. The idea is that whoever finds them can access the web link and we are able to raise awareness of autism through this.





Mental Health Awareness week 15th – 21st May

Mental Health Awareness week takes place from 15th until 21st May. The focus this year was on anxiety. We spent the week doing lots of different activities that can help improve mental health and wellbeing and having discussions about our feelings. We had sports sessions most afternoons and played a range of different activities such as volleyball, table tennis and basketball. We incorporated music and some dancing and talked about how these activities improve wellbeing as well as keeping you fit at the same time. Gardening is well-known to be beneficial for mental health so when the weather was good we got out in the garden. We also talked about some of the things that we all liked doing that helped us if we were feeling anxious, some of the things students shared that helped them was listening to music, drawing, seeing their friends and going out for a walk.



Shop, Cook & Eat

Cooking groups are always very popular with more and more students wanting to participate. Cooking week takes place every 5 weeks on a rota. We always try to make something different so we can learn new dishes. Each month a different student choses something that they would like to cook which is great as it introduces new recipes to everyone.



The last few months they have enjoyed cooking lasagne, quiche and cakes. These sessions help students become more confident in the kitchen and learn about kitchen hygiene and how to prepare and cook a range of dishes. We usually try to make them healthy (with the occasional sweet treat included) so students can learn about healthy eating and living at the same time.

Our plan is to put together a cook book at the end of the year with all of the recipes we have been creating which students can keep and to raise money for Woodhall future activities by selling to the local community.





Horticulture

We have been very busy in both front and back gardens during the last month. The weather is getting better and we have been doing lots of ground maintenance, digging and getting the beds ready for planting. We are working with Roots and Shoots which is a SJOG horticulture project that is being run across all services and is enabling us to incorporate more gardening activities within services. Wellbeing and horticulture have long been linked together as well as improving physical health in terms of using different muscle groups, improving dexterity and hand and eye coordination.



Visit to Downing Street

One of our students Jamie is a volunteer for the local conservative group giving out leaflets to local residents. Local MP Grant Shapps was so impressed by his passion for helping the community and raising awareness of local issues that he was invited to visit Downing Street. In February, we went down to Downing Street where we were greeted by Grant who took us on a tour of not only Downing Street but Westminster Hall and the Houses of Parliament. It was a spectacular day, Jamie was also lucky enough to meet Larry the famous Downing Street resident cat as well as getting some time sitting in the houses of Common to watch the debates.



Recycling

At Woodhall we are all very passionate about the environment. Every Friday morning students help to sort all the different items out into plastics, paper and glass and we then go over as a team to the recycle bins.



Preparations for our play

Our Alice in Wonderland play in September last year was such a success and the students enjoyed performing in it so much that we are going to be holding another show in September this year. Students will be performing in the play Shrek and rehearsals are well underway with all the students doing really well with their parts, learning scripts and actions. During art and craft activities weeks we have been busy making props for the play of eyeballs and rats. We are all really excited to be able to showcase everyone's hard work to friends and family in September.

SHREK

The Musical

Coming soon!

The King's Coronation

We celebrated this special occasion by holding a tea party. It was a colourful and jolly event with an amazing spread of cakes, sandwiches, scones and much more. We played some coronation themed games such as Bingo and everyone was able to take home a memorial keepsake of a badge and bracelet. It was a great way to mark the occasion.



FUNDRAISING

This year has been a great year for fundraising.

In the summer we hit our £1000 target to take the people who use the service on a trip to the seaside.

You may have spotted the cheeky shot of our Gillian as a sunflower. She spent an entire week in fancy dress. Driving, working, going to the bank. She raised £700 by herself.

Then we held an ability disco. Open to all of the people who use the service and their families, and partners. The disco raised £300.

Most recently was the summer fair which raised another £300 and helped us get access to educational subscriptions to help us with session planning throughout the year.

A HUGE THANK YOU to everyone who donated. It's been an enormous help and we have so much love for the community coming together to help us.



Grounds development

Hopefully you have noticed we are well into our grounds' development plan for the site. So far we have completed:

- Graffiti removal
- New fire doors and fire security measures
- Painted all the doors internal and external doors
- Skirting, rails, radiators
- New vegetable patch planted (you should see the size of the lettuces, sadly the pumpkins didn't make it)
- Removal of the raised beds bushes and replaced with flowerbeds
- Repainted the pillars and bollards at the front

Currently we have some work outstanding, and hopefully you will see the benefits in the coming months.

- Reopening of the sensory garden
- Cut the bushes at the side (can't do that until nesting birds have 'flown the coup' haha)
- Re-paint the kitchens

We have had some lovely compliments from the neighbours, but it's a work in progress.

Remember to help yourself to any veg from the patch at the front, they are there for everybody.





WINNERS!

Woodhall Opportunities Project was the national award winning service for helping people achieve their outcomes.

The National Autism and Learning Disabilities Award – People Category was presented to:

Woodhall for the staff and student team at the service who have achieved exceptional outcomes. From work placements, to mentoring all the way, to joining their local political party.

We proved that people can achieve anything with the right support.



Helping those who have helped us!

We would just like to give a big shout out to all the partner agencies who have helped us out recently and been working with us to deliver excellent services:



Herts Ability
01707 324581
hubinfo@hertsability.org.uk

Jenny is currently working with us to ensure that drop in sessions are available to help people get access to transport



Carers in Herts
01992586969

The team have been working with us co-hosting events to ensure that carers have access to support and signposting.



Step2skills@hertfordshire.gov.uk

The dept from DWP work with the council and us to provide a dedicated route into employment for people with differing abilities We have loved working with Emma and Casey to make sure that pop up info sessions have run from here for local children.



01244343433
www.explorelearning.co.uk

The team have helped us fund projects which will be upcoming, such as the soon to be announced girls football skills club.



01707251351
www.hertscf.org.uk

Huge shout out to Charlotte from the partnership, who works in the building and helps us develop programmes to benefit the whole community.



sportinherts.org.uk



Woodhall and the Combination Club

We have started an exciting new venture. Funded by local providers, organised by Woodhall and run by the Combination Club.

Free boxing exercise classes for older adults will help develop social, physical and emotional resilience, reducing some of the isolation and health deficits that particularly effect this estate

Farrell@combinationclub.com | 07754 559775

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
10 am. Strength and Balance Class with Stevenage FCF	5pm Youth group run by forever young people	4pm Karate with Lea Valley	5pm Cheerleading with Saracens	Youth Group, referrals only	11 am Step and sweat dance based fitness with Patrick	
7pm Yoga with Sunil and secret space	7pm Step class with Laila	7pm Step class with Laila	6.30pm Yoga with Sunil and secret space			
	8.30 pm Step and sweat dance based fitness with Patrick	8pm Boxing and exercise with The Combination Club				

Other regular events you may be interested in:

Tea Dance – A monthly dance for all ages and abilities

UBW Wrestling – Events throughout the year, wrestling entertainment

Peculiar market – Events throughout the year Alternative fashion and stalls

Sparrow Crafts – Monthly crafting workshop

Spaced Herts - Events throughout the year – Autism group for children

Services for young people – Weekly targeted support – refer through council

Woodhall Directory

Do you want to book onto a class or event? Contact the provider and make an enquiry.

- Combination club – 07754559775
- Foetal Alcohol Syndrome support group – Hertsfasd@yahoo.com
- Forever young people youth group - 07432565885
- Lea Valley Karate – 01707769061
- Peculiar market – thepeculiarmarket@gmail.com
- Secret spaces yoga – 01992503141
- Spaced graffiti and crafting – spaceherts.org.uk
- Sparrow craft club – sparrowcraftclub@hotmail.com
- Step class with Laila – 079762796194
- Step and sweat dance exercise – www.patrickrajahelm.com
- Strength and balance with Stevenage fcf -07930302102
- Tea Dance – 01707264154
- Wrestling - UBW – www.weareubw.com

HOW TO FIND OUT MORE

www.woodhall.org.uk – All the services we offer at Woodhall including everything you need to make an enquiry about hall hire.

woodhall@sjog.org.uk – Email us any other enquiries you may have

www.sjog.org.uk – Our parent charity and their contact details

Enquiries@sjog.org.uk – For enquiries for any of our charity's services and information

www.facebook.com/woodhallcommunitycentre/ - Why not follow us on facebook

01707 802829 – Main office number

Why not come in and pick up our leaflets, posters, service user guides or better yet, a volunteer application form.

Coming soon...

This year will see a new redevelopment of our sensory garden and the area at the front of Woodhall.

We will be going out into the community to do good for the people around us.

The summer play

Summer Festival

Keep an eye out for our King's Coronation Celebration Event – information to be released soon

CHECK FACEBOOK FOR EVENTS AND DATES

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