

InTouch

The voice of learning disability in South West Herts

Summer 2012



What's inside

**Florrie
finds her
family**



page 3

**Bargains
Galore**
page 4

**Services
Special**



**Centre
Spread**

**Diamond
Jubilee Art
Unveiling**
page 7

**Talent
Corner**
back page



Welcome to our summer edition of In Touch

We are delighted to announce that Watford Mencap has been shortlisted as a finalist for the Hertfordshire Care Providers Association Awards 2012 in the category of Best Care Business in Hertfordshire – more than 50 employees.



This really is a fantastic achievement and congratulations must go to all our staff and volunteers.

Watford Mencap's person-centred care and support, the breadth and quality of our services and our multi-disciplinary working have enabled us to reach the November 2012 final.

In this issue we share information about the services and support that we can offer you through our Advice and Information, Learning and Leisure and "The Right Support" services.

Please do give us a call on 01923 713620 if you would like more information about the help and support we may be able to offer you and your family.

Best wishes,



Jane Pattinson

Jane Pattinson

Living an independent life

Mother and daughter Audrey and Susan Tavener (pictured) talk about how their lives have been transformed thanks to the opportunities provided by Watford Mencap.

Susan has gained more independence since moving into Watford Mencap's supported living development in Whitfield Way, Rickmansworth, 8 months ago. Susan, who lives there with three other women with learning disabilities, is supported by Personal Assistants.



Perhaps the person who is most surprised and delighted with Susan's new-found independence is her mother. Mrs Tavener feared Susan would struggle to learn to do things for herself.

Mrs Tavener said: "Susan has grown up all of a sudden. She is more confident and making more of her own decisions."

Susan's Personal Assistants help her to shop, cook her own meals, do her own washing and tidying, budget and pay her bills.

Susan, meanwhile, is making the most of her independence. She enjoys drama and is going to be in a production of Peter and the Wolf with one of the other tenants at Whitfield Way.

Key Points

- Audrey and Susan Tavener talk about how their lives have improved with the support of Watford Mencap
- Susan has moved into her own flat in Rickmansworth and is helped by a team of Personal Assistants who support her to live a more independent life

Florrie finds long-lost family

A chain of amazing events has led to Florrie Amans being reunited with her long-lost family after a gap of 40+ years.

Florrie, aged in her 60s, and her family were separated when they were evacuated from London during World War II. Sadly Florrie's mother Florence died shortly after the war and, because Florrie has a learning disability, she was sent to live at Leavesden Hospital.

Fortunately the system has changed considerably and today Florrie lives an independent life in sheltered housing in Watford, supported by Watford Mencap.

It is through Watford Mencap that Florrie has begun the process of reuniting with her family. Student social worker Geeta Goswami (pictured with Florrie) initially discovered a message from Florrie's niece while helping put together Florrie's family tree. Watford Mencap then got in touch with local genealogist Nik Walker who was so moved by Florrie's story that he began researching her family history for free.

He has since discovered that Florrie is one of 12 children. Sadly the children did not remain together after the death of their mother so work is continuing to try and locate the remaining siblings.

Florrie has already met some of her extended family and will be meeting nieces, nephews and grand-nieces in the near future.



Key Points

- Florrie Amans has been reunited with her long-lost family
- Watford Mencap brought in a genealogist who discovered Florrie is one of 12 children
- Florrie had lost touch with her siblings during World War Two after being 'institutionalised'

Watford and Three Rivers Learning Disability Local Forum

A staggering 119 local people with a learning disability and carers attended Watford and Three Rivers Learning Disability Local Forum at Stanborough Park, Garston.

The event, jointly arranged by Hertfordshire County Council, Watford Mencap and the NHS, was a great opportunity to find out about local support and services and how they can be personalised to an individual's needs.

People with a learning disability shared their experience of direct payments, a carer talked about his vital role and visitors also visited stalls offering advice and information.

Support Worker Coral Brooke is pictured supporting Rosemary Culbert to fill in her feedback form.



Key Points

- Watford and Three Rivers Learning Disability Local Forum was a big success
- Watford Mencap helped organise the event to help people affected by a learning disability find out about support and services

Working with Watford Round Table

More than £16,200 was raised at the 2012 Watford 10k fun run sponsored by Camelot.

Watford Mencap has a long-standing connection with Watford Round Table and is delighted to be supported by this event, receiving just over £8,000 of the amount raised. We also support the event by helping with sponsors, media and publicity, while Watford Round Table focuses on set-up, equipment co-ordination and organisational overview.

Antony Stivala, Race Director since 2011, attributes the increasing success of the event to the professional way that it is organised, the ability to engage with runners via social media and the willingness to listen to and act on feedback.

Watford Round Table celebrated its 75th anniversary last year. It is actively looking for new male members aged between 18 and 45. Members make life-long friendships through their involvement with Watford Round Table as well as significant contributions to the local community. It's a fantastic opportunity to meet new people and discover new activities.



Antony Stivala and Tim Wood of Watford Round Table

For more information, please visit www.watfordroundtable.org.uk or email membership@watfordroundtable.org.uk

Key Points

- The Watford 10k raised more than £8,000 for Watford Mencap
- The fun run is organised by Watford Round Table, with support from Watford Mencap

Pick up a bargain at our charity shops

If you are ever looking for a bargain, why not pop into one of our charity shops in Bushey and Watford? Melissa McManus, a local mother of five, is a regular visitor to the Bushey shop. She says: "I pop in every day. It's such a lovely place with lovely people and so many interesting items donated."

Rhys Hatswell, who lives in supported housing, has been volunteering in our Bushey shop for nearly a year now. Rhys has grown in confidence and now uses his new customer service skills on the front counter where he prepares goods for sale and helps customers pack their purchases.

Many volunteers go the extra mile and produce craft items for sale in the shops. Dot Jones knits clothes and dresses dolls for sale at the Bushey shop, while Wendy Spinage makes cushions for the Watford shop.

Watford Mencap also has a successful eBay trading shop. Visit www.watfordmencap.org.uk to find out more.

To donate clothing or other items you can drop the goods off at either shop or our Rickmansworth headquarters in the High Street, or contact Rose Kreloff, Commercial Manager on 01923 713627.



Bushey charity shop manager Sonia Glover and volunteer Rhys Hatswell, pictured also on the front cover, prepare to sell some of the dolls which are modelling the knitted clothing made by Dot Jones

Guide to Services



We provide services to people with a learning disability and their families from cradle to grave. If what you need isn't listed, we should be able to point you in the right direction. Our services are open to people living in Watford, Three Rivers and Hertsmere. We are affiliated to national Mencap so we abide by their quality standards. We are an independent local charity and raise all our own funds.

Here's a run-down of Watford Mencap's services

Do you have a baby who might have a learning disability? Want to know your options, and where to find support?

Are you about to leave college? Do you need a Personal Budget to live the life you choose?

Might you or someone you know need residential care?

Do you need help to get benefits, talk to a doctor or deal with bills?

Contact Watford Mencap's Advice and Information Service on 01923 713620

Does your child have a learning disability? Would you like out-of-school fun for your child? Do you need time to yourself?

Are you a young person with a learning disability who wants to meet friends and try new things?

Contact Watford Mencap's Children's Services on 01923 220816

Are you an adult with a learning disability wanting social events and activities?

Contact Watford Mencap's Learning and Leisure Service on 07901 914154

Do you need help to live independently in a place of your own?

Contact Watford Mencap's A Home for Me Service on 01923 713625

Do you need one-to-one support to look after yourself, go shopping or do activities?

Contact Watford Mencap's Community Support Services on 01923 713621



Hillside home residents Eileen Meadlarkin and Monica Hutton at Madame Tussaud's



Saturday Club members enjoy boating at a Merchant Taylors' School Fun Day
Photo: Richard Owen

Advice and Information and Learning and Leisure

Advice and Information Service Holiday Fun

This is the first port of call for support from Watford Mencap. We help people with a learning disability, parents and carers with information and support.

Do you need help applying for benefits or completing a form? Do you need advice about life after college? Advisers can help you decide. They can go to meetings with you, or speak to Social Workers.

"I was lost and desperate until I contacted Watford Mencap... we needed someone to fight our corner and the adviser was the only one to help us"

Contact the Advice and Information Team on 01923 713620 or email advice@watfordmencap.org.uk

Learning and Leisure Service

Watford Mencap provides opportunities across the area for children, young people and adults.

Children's Afterschool and Weekend Activities

Children and Young People's Services are at our fully accessible Children's Centre in North Watford and in the community. There are two playrooms, a soft-play area, sensory room and all-weather play area. Ofsted has rated the service 'Outstanding'. Our qualified Play Workers are CRB checked and supported by specialist Children's Workers. We welcome volunteers.

Children and young people aged 5-19 can attend activities after school and on Saturdays.

See our film at www.watfordmencap.org.uk - click on the 'Children' button

Contact Sarah Fishwick on 01923 220816 or email children@watfordmencap.org.uk

There are holiday activities for 5-19 year olds and for those at college. They enjoy bowling and swimming and visit the cinema and local play facilities.

"I'm so impressed that she went out sailing on her own..... that's something we would never have done with her."

For 5-19 year olds contact Sarah Fishwick on 01923 220816 or email children@watfordmencap.org.uk

For young people at college contact David Trill on 07796 264839 or email dtrill@watfordmencap.org.uk



A member of Afterschool Club at a 'Meet the Animals' session

Getting Active

SportAbility, run with Watford Grammar School for Boys for 16-25 year olds, offers healthy living, including cookery, computers and sports. We have bowling and pool clubs, and sport and fitness at Parmiter's School and Everyone Active.

"I really enjoy using the gym as I would like to be healthier."

Contact Layla Rynn on 07766 801351 or email lrynn@watfordmencap.org.uk

Having Fun with Others

You can have fun at group activities. This includes meals out, dancing, TopGolf, bowling, archery, skating and crafts.

"Getting to know new people and feeling of belonging - the volunteers who help are really friendly."

Contact Lata Rees on 07901 914154 or email leisure@watfordmencap.org.uk

Learning a New Skill

We arrange courses like Cookery and Making Friends. Saturday IT classes cover photography, email, Facebook and Skype. We run taster days for new activities such as gardening or card making.

"J thoroughly enjoyed his session, shared his soup and gave us very good detail about how it was made."

Contact Lata Rees 07901 914154 or email leisure@watfordmencap.org.uk

Having Your Say

We help people with a learning disability gain confidence and speak up. You might become a Watford Mencap trustee or come to an Area Forum.

Adults with profound and multiple learning disabilities meet at our Rickmansworth offices to get to know each other and do leisure activities.

If you know someone who would like to have their say and join a group call Layla on 01923 713620 or email lrynn@watfordmencap.org.uk

telephone 01923 713620



A group of us going out to a restaurant



Chris Murphy learning to cook



Yusuf Haque enjoys singing

The Right Support

A Home for Me: Affordable Accommodation with Tenancy Support

We support people to live independently, helping you to manage money, go to appointments, find work or report repairs. We also support people to find new housing.

8am-8pm weekdays, all year.

Contact Michelle Ewing on 01923 713625 or email mewing@watfordmencap.org.uk

A Home for Me: Living with Others in a Residential Home

Watford Mencap has residential homes in Chorleywood, Rickmansworth and Oxhey providing 24-hour support. You can visit and try it out before moving in. You usually need to be referred by Adult Care Services, but we can show you round.

We work closely with residents so that you decide how you live your life. Everyone has their own room; some rooms are adapted for people with greater mobility needs.

Residents do different things, according to their interests. Some keep chickens. Others volunteer at charities, travel, make jewellery, garden or go shopping. You can see more about our homes on our website.



Martin Telfer and Alan Whittle enjoy an outing to Moor Mill

Choices for Living: 'The Right Support to Live Every Day the Way you Choose'

Fully personalised service. You can use your budget to recruit Personal Assistants whom we will train and manage.

24 hours a day, all year.

Skills for Living: 'Individual Learning Support to Help You Achieve your Potential'

One-to-one support to learn new skills, e.g. cooking, using public transport, getting money from a machine, sending email.

For people who need short periods of support to learn.

8am-8pm Mon-Fri, min. 12 weeks, 2-hourly blocks.

Active Living for You: 'Your choice to do things when you want to'

We offer one-to-one support to go out into the community, preventing social isolation.

7am-11pm, 7 days a week, all year.

Contact the Development Team on 01923 713625 or email therightsupport@watfordmencap.org.uk



Michelle Ewing, Housing Manager, discusses new housing with Brian Burgess

Remember us in your will

Charities such as Watford Mencap would not be able to continue without the generosity of supporters, especially when leaving money in their will.

The late Mrs Betty Lydon kindly left a legacy to Watford Mencap to thank us for all the support we had given to her and her son, Kevin.

The money was split between providing a Changing Places toilet at the Watford Mencap office in Rickmansworth and adapting a house in Whitfield Way into 2 flats so it could be used by 4 people with a learning disability. Since moving to the flats, these 4 individuals have gained confidence and improved their life skills.

If you value the work we carry out at Watford Mencap, please help us support more people with a learning disability through a gift in your Will. The amount you bequeath can be big or small. One thing is guaranteed: your donation will go towards making life better for a person or persons with learning disabilities.

Key Points

- Please consider leaving money to Watford Mencap in your will
- Legacies in this way will improve life for individuals with learning disabilities

Leon Talbot

It is with sadness that we announce the passing of Leon Talbot who lived at Hagden Lane in a Turning Point-run home.

Leon, who attended Northwick Day Centre and Sunnyside Agricultural Project, enjoyed listening to music and playing games on his Wii. He was very friendly and caring and his favourite expression was “stay positive.”

Leon attended the Watford Self Advocacy Group for 7 years, rarely missing a meeting.



Sheriff visits Children's Centre

Staff and youngsters at our Children's Centre were delighted to welcome The Honorable Arabella Stuart-Smith, High Sheriff of Hertfordshire, for a visit during Learning Disability Week.

Mrs Stuart-Smith's visit came during Learning Disability Week which focussed on hate crime and the fact that 9 out of 10 children with a learning disability have been bullied.

She said: “It is tragic that children with a learning disability are bullied. This is due to lack of knowledge and understanding. Watford Mencap Children's Centre is a great place and it is essential for parents to receive some respite.”

Watford Mencap needs to raise £103,000 a year towards the cost of the Children's Centre. If you would like more information or would like to make a donation, please contact Liz Hizli, Community Fundraiser, on 01923 713622.

Key Points

- The High Sheriff of Hertfordshire visited Watford Mencap Children's Centre during Learning Disability Week
- Learning Disability Week is focussed on raising awareness of hate crime.

Change a life with your donation

Help Watford Mencap support 500 adults and children with learning disabilities and their families by making a donation.

£10.50 could provide an hour's support to reassure carers over the phone.

£43 could pay for a child to attend a session at the Afterschool Club.

£100 could pay for a young adult with a learning disability to attend a holiday scheme for 3 days.

Please fill in this form and send to:

Watford Mencap, The Old Town Hall, 105 High Street, Rickmansworth, Herts. WD3 1AN.

Or call 01923 713622 www.watfordmencap.org.uk

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____ Post Code: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

I enclose a cheque for £ _____
made payable to Watford Mencap

I would like to make a donation of £ _____
by credit card

Card number: _____

Start date: _____ Expiry Date: _____

Security number: _____ Issue number: _____

We promise to protect your privacy and will not share your details with other organisations. All information you give us is managed in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998). We would like to keep you informed about our work, however should you wish not to receive such information please tick here. ☐

Special thanks

to Stuart Bendig for taking many of the photos for In Touch.

www.stuartbendigphotography.com
or 01923 499232 or 07951 111874

A Big thank you

20:20 Development
Fund (national Mencap)

Mariam Abbas

Albert Hunt Charitable
Trust

All those who have
donated goods to us,
for sale in our shops
and for our online
trading sites

Arimathea Charitable
Trust

Don Bailey

Stuart Bendig

Barry Bray

Bricket Wood Ladies
Group

Valerie Burdett

Hazel Carmichael

Carpenders Park
Townswomen's Guild

CBJ Digital

Cinnamon Square

Holly Dalfen

Everyone Active

Sian Fenwick

Melv Fenwick

Garston Spiritualist
Church

John Good

Linda Hall

Nicole Herholdt

Mr and Mrs D Kirk

Cllr Peter Knell

Laurence Knight

Load of Hay

Monique Page

Parmiter's School

Peter Harrison Trust

Rickmansworth School

Rickmansworth Society

Cllr Lindsey Scudder

Donations made in
memory of Margaret
Sealey-Bell

Adrian Thompson

Elected Mayor of
Watford Dorothy
Thornhill

VocaLink

Aisha Waheed

Nik Walker

Warner Bros Leavesden
Studios

Watford Borough
Council

Watford Ex-Services
and Social Club

Watford Football Club

Watford Grammar
School for Boys

Watford Grammar
School for Girls

Watford Rotary Club

Watford Round Table

Cllr Chris Whately-
Smith

Whitfield Way
Residents

Yorkshire Building
Society Charitable
Foundation

Youth Philanthropy
Initiative



Monique Page, Aisha Waheed and Mariam Abbas from Rickmansworth School

Diamond Jubilee artwork unveiled

Artwork depicting the history of Watford Mencap, which celebrated its Diamond Jubilee last year, has been unveiled at our offices in Rickmansworth.

Guests of honour included the Mayor of Watford, Dorothy Thornhill, Hertsmeire Mayor Cllr Peter Knell and Chairman of Three Rivers District Council, Cllr Chris Whately-Smith. A young member of Watford Mencap's Afterschool Club and a resident of the charity's Chorleywood home, Hilda Yardley, also helped with the unveiling.



Back row: Julie Richards (Deputy Head Watford Grammar School for Girls), Pat Hiscock, Sian Fenwick, Adrian O'Brien, Jo Birch, Holly Dalfen and Jane Pattinson (Director of Watford Mencap). Front row: Layla Rynn, Lata Rees and Lucie Watts

Last year, the school and the South West Herts Strategic Area Partnership Group secured funding for the massive artwork which now hangs in the office's entrance hall. It takes the form of a triptych showing '1951', '2011' and 'Hopes and Dreams.'

The Hopes and Dreams section depicts dozens of butterflies bearing messages of hope from individuals.

It was the culmination of months of work involving Watford Grammar School for Girls, their resident artist Sian Fenwick, Watford Mencap members and volunteers.

Key Point

- Artwork commissioned to mark the Diamond Jubilee of Watford Mencap was unveiled in front of honoured guests at our Rickmansworth offices

telephone 01923 713620



Looking for a challenge?

Are you looking for a challenge? Would you like to raise money for Watford Mencap? Over the coming weeks and months we will be posting information about challenge events you can take part in for Watford Mencap, in the events section of our website. There are already several opportunities available, so head to our website now!



Date for your diary

This year's Annual General Meeting will be at 7pm on Friday 19 October at Watersmeet, High Street, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire WD3 1EH.



T-shirts for sale

Watford Mencap now has a stock of branded T-shirts for sale. The T-shirts are priced at £5 each, or £7 including postage. Available in sizes M, L, XL, XXL. All money raised will go towards helping people with a learning disability living in the South West Herts area. To order your T-shirt, pop into our office or head to the 'Raise Money' section of our website.



Talent Corner

Young People's artwork at Herts County Show



In amongst the floral displays at the Herts County Show was artwork created by members of Watford Mencap's Hand in Hand Club.

The youngsters were invited to enter a competition to have their artwork judged by the Hertfordshire Agricultural Society.

The theme was Red, White and Blue, Flowers or the Jubilee and it was Andrew Green who impressed the judges so much with his picture of the Olympic Rings that he won 1st place.

Well done also to Thomas Wilkins who won 2nd prize with a picture of the Olympic torch and participants, and Joe Harding-Kitts who won 3rd prize with a picture of flowers. All three were awarded certificates for their great work.

Event judge June Walters said: "It was lovely to have Watford Mencap represented and to have their artistic contributions. The pictures were all really well done and it was difficult to pick the winners."

Watford Mencap would like to thank Mike Harmer and the Agricultural Society for their generosity in giving the stand for free and also inviting us back.



Ask Rebecca

Dear Rebecca,

I have a son of 14 who is autistic and attends school, and a 20 year-old son with learning disabilities who attends a local college. I am looking for activities for them during the summer break.

There is a variety of activities running through the summer months, many of which are organised through your local council. Hertfordshire County Council's website also gives details <http://www.hertsdirect.org/your-community/distborserv/shscheme/>

Watford Mencap also runs activities through the summer. The Children's Centre is running a Summer Holiday Activity Scheme for 5-19 year olds between 6 and 24 August which costs £10 a day. Forms are available on the Watford Mencap website: www.watfordmencap.org.uk

For further details call Sarah Fishwick on 01923 220816.

For your older son, the College Holiday Activity Scheme may be an option. This will run from Tuesdays to Fridays for 7 weeks starting on 10 July at a cost of £10 a day. If you are interested please contact David Trill on 07796 264839 or email him at dtrill@watfordmencap.org.uk

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