

InTouch

The voice of learning disability in South West Herts

Winter 2013



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Simply the best!

We had a wonderful end to the year. On 30 November we received the stunning news that we had won Best Care Business (over 50 Employees) at the awards of Hertfordshire Care Providers Association!

We have 120 employees and 140 volunteers, and this award belongs to all of them. After the scandal of Winterbourne View, it is important to show that there are agencies with the right values who are providing good support to people with a learning disability.

We have recently had good CQC inspections at our Thorpedale, Berrywood and Hillside homes as well as for our Community Support service.

Happy New Year!



Jane Pattinson
Jane Pattinson

Calling all ambassadors!

Former deputy headteacher Janice Jones was looking for a new challenge when she retired, and decided to become an ambassador for Watford Mencap.

"I was keen to help in the local community and use some of the skills I had developed. There are so many different things you can do; it is very rewarding and so worthwhile. The people you meet are terrific and it is such a supportive organisation," she said.

As a volunteer ambassador Janice talks to all sorts of groups about what amazing things Watford Mencap does to support people. She also encourages others to donate and fundraise for the organisation.

"I have been so impressed by the positive attitude and understanding shown to all," added Janice. "It is good to see people having the opportunity and independence to enjoy life. Giving even just a little can help so much."

If you are interested in talking about Watford Mencap in schools, call Liz Hizli on 01923 713622 or email lhizli@watfordmencap.org.uk

Key Points

- Watford Mencap would love to hear from you if you want to volunteer like ambassador Janice Jones

Winners of Top Care Business Award

Watford Mencap is delighted to have won the Hertfordshire Care Providers Association (HCPA) Best Care Business (over 50 employees) Award for 2012.

Watford Mencap won the prestigious prize because it matched all the necessary criteria which included:

- Demonstrating how the organisation is working to develop and maintain its services
- Showing how the organisation continually supports staff in their role and that staff training translates into person-centred care
- Having a good reputation in the locality
- Providing additional services
- Demonstrating how quality is measured internally

Watford Mencap gets its message out to the community using the website, Facebook, Twitter and its shops which help to break down barriers and integrate people with the community.

Watford Mencap Director Jane Pattinson said: "The passion and commitment of our employees and volunteers have enabled us to push the boundaries as an organisation and go one step further to provide a wide range of opportunities to people with a learning disability."

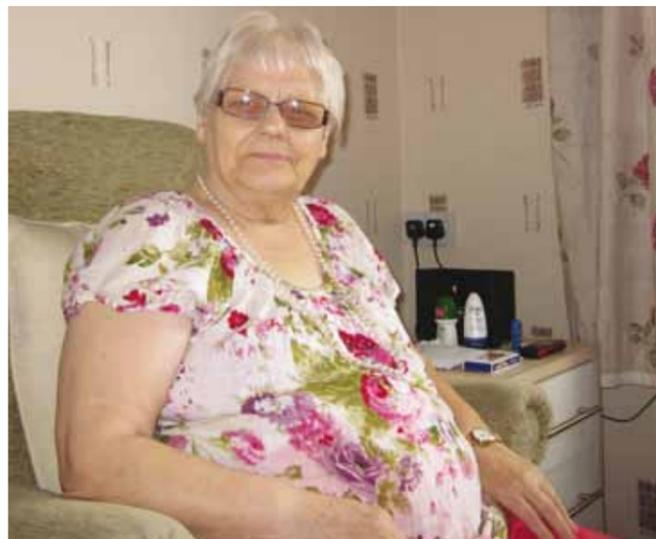
Watford Mayor Dorothy Thornhill said: "Without a doubt, Watford Mencap is one of the most successful voluntary organisations in the area. I admire its aspirations and its relentless commitment to supporting those in need."

Key Point

- Watford Mencap has won a top award for being the best care business in Hertfordshire (over 50 employees)

Our front cover shows Watford Mencap Chair Don Eungblut holding the trophy. Below are the Watford Mencap people who went to the awards ceremony

In memory of Florrie Amans



Sadly, Watford Mencap member Florrie Amans passed away in November after an illness.

Carol Sadler, her Community Support Worker said: "My memories of Florrie are her singing along to Abba in my car with a big smile on her face at the top of her voice. Also sitting outside in the sunshine at her favourite coffee shop and watching the world go by.

"She enjoyed everything that came her way and we feel fortunate to have known her. She will be deeply missed by all at Watford Mencap, her good friend Bob and her family, who she had recently been reunited with."



Rosemary achieves her goal

Whitfield Way in Rickmansworth is one of a small number of supported housing schemes run by Watford Mencap.

One of the most recent successes at Whitfield Way is that resident Rosemary Culbert (pictured) is now able to make her own bed. This is an enormous achievement for somebody with a learning disability and who is also a wheelchair user.

Personal Assistant Coral Brooke said: "I see my job as supporting Rosemary to live in her house and to encourage her to do as much for herself as she can. I look at each task and decide how to help her to do as much of it as she possibly can."

Whitfield Way has just purchased a mini ironing board and a travel iron so Rosemary now hopes to do her own ironing from her wheelchair. "There is no stopping her now!" said Coral.



Key Points

- Whitfield Way resident Rosemary Culbert has achieved a personal goal of making her own bed
- Watford Mencap works with individuals with learning disabilities to help them achieve their goals in life

Musical entertainment for all

Watford Mencap has benefited from a unique scheme which aims to improve lives through the joy and therapeutic benefits of live music.

Music in Hospitals, a charity, performed several concerts to local children and adults with learning disabilities.

Mum Sally Summerton said: "My daughter, Sophie, loves the music, the interaction with others and watching the other children enjoy themselves. She also loves being the centre of attention for a change. What a lot of people don't realise is that kids with a learning disability, in particular with high needs, are often overlooked. This is a wonderful opportunity for them to feel special."



Ayshea Geraghty enjoys the jazz band.
Photo Stuart Bendig

None of these events would have been possible without the support of Capital Shopping Centres, owners of The Harlequin in Watford and, in particular, Erin Thorne, the centre's Marketing Manager.

Key Point

- A charity called Music in Hospitals performed musical concerts to children and adults with learning disabilities in Watford and Rickmansworth

Watford Mencap AGM

An evening of jazz and dancing followed the Annual General Meeting at The Watersmeet in Rickmansworth.

Sponsored by VocaLink, the international payments company based in Rickmansworth, the event was attended by nearly 150 people including Kemal Butt, Chairman of Three Rivers District Council, pictured (right) in the conga.

Don Eungblut, Chair of Trustees at Watford Mencap, conducted the formal business with overwhelming support from the members.

Watford Mencap Director, Jane Pattinson, highlighted the awards and accolades Watford Mencap had received from the Care Quality Commission, Advice Quality Standard and Investors in People, and the charity's short-listing for Best Care Business by Herts Care Providers Association which we went on to win (see page 3)!

She thanked staff and volunteers for their hard work, as well as the AGM's photographers SKM Studios, sponsors VocaLink, and BSV Jazz Band.

Act One Dance Base, an all ability dance project, performed at the end of official business.



Photo: SKM Studio

Key Points

- Watford Mencap's Annual General Meeting attracted an audience of 150 people
- Director Jane Pattinson highlighted the awards won by Watford Mencap and thanked lots of people for their support

Children enjoy a festive treat

An early Christmas party was arranged by London and Home Counties Lions' groups for youngsters from Watford Mencap Children's Centre. The children joined over 300 other children from various groups across London and the Home Counties at the party at The Allum Hall, Elstree, in November.

Cheryl Peacock, Secretary of Watford Lions, said: "The children were lovely and had a great time. I hope they all enjoyed the party as much as we did."

Watford Lions' Cheryl Peacock and Watford Mencap Playworker Thulashie Manivannan and youngsters are pictured at the Christmas party.



2012 - what a great year

What a great year 2012 has been. Britain has enjoyed the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, Olympic and Paralympic triumphs and we even saw a Brit win the Tour de France and a Scot win our first grand slam tennis title in 76 years!

Here at Watford Mencap we have also been enjoying 2012. Some of the photos featured here give you an idea of what we have been up to!



- A.** Horse riding was a big hit at Merchant Taylors' School Fun Day
- B.** Eileen Meadlarkin from Hillside Residential Home was given a glamorous new look with help from VocaLink Finance Manager Sonali Xavier at a Girls' Night In Pamper Evening
- C.** An After School Club member painted a picture for the Baker Tilly advent calendar Kenny is pictured with Carol Johnson (left) and Mark Wilson of Baker Tilly, and Sarah Fishwick, acting manager of our Children's Centre
- D.** Colin Loose (left) ran the 10k with Support Worker Alex Batts. Colin won a prize for raising the most money in his category
- E.** Watford Mencap Director Jane Pattinson and Laura Watkins at the Learning Disability Forum hosted by Watford Mencap
- F.** Watford Mencap's shops continue to do well, bringing in nearly £80,000 this year. 10 people with learning disabilities volunteer in our two shops in Watford and Bushey and we offer training opportunities for students at college
- G.** The High Sheriff of Hertfordshire visited our Children's Centre in Watford
- H.** Children enjoyed a visit to Santa at the joint fun day with Herts Inclusive Theatre
- I.** Amanda Topping and Lisa Christie at the Paralympics with the Day Activity Scheme

Up and coming events

Watford Mencap Annual Rickmansworth Pancake Race Tuesday 12 February

We are looking for 16 teams of 4 people. It costs £50 entry per team. A prize will be awarded to the team who raises the most money.

Annual Watford 10k Fun Run Monday 6 May

Come and join the thousands who take part. There are 3 fun

run categories: 1k, 3k or 10k. Full details on www.watford10k.org.uk

Gala Dinner Thursday 14 March

Watford Mencap will be hosting a special gala dinner with Lord Seb Coe, courtesy of The Mercure Hotel, Watford. To apply for a table, please contact Liz Hizli lhizli@watfordmencap.org.uk

Photos: Richard Owen, Stuart Bendig, Sussex Sports Photography

Hotel staff carry out worldwide charity work

Hundreds of thousands of staff from the Hilton Hotel group carried out some great voluntary work for charities in November.

Watford Mencap Children's Centre in Watford and its Thorpedale residential home in Chorleywood were chosen to benefit from this week-long worldwide initiative – known as Hilton Worldwide's Annual Global Week of Services.

About 40 members from Hilton's European headquarters in Watford transformed the Children's Centre's Rainbow Room adding some great sofas, a new wide screen TV, a games console and 2 iPads. The room has even been given a new name: The London Room.

Everyone got stuck into the work, including two of Hilton's top bosses, Christopher J Nassetta (pictured pressure-washing the decking) and Simon Vincent.

A further 30 staff members went to Thorpedale to transform the garden where they removed two full skip loads of brambles and weeds, sprayed the patio areas and donated some lovely outdoor plants.



Key Point

- Our Children's Centre and the garden at Thorpedale residential home were transformed thanks to volunteers from the Hilton Hotel group

Surprise trip to Watford FC

Watford footballers Alex Geijo and Stephen McGinn gave four Watford Mencap Community Support users the VIP treatment.

Michah Babbs, Kevin Weller, Danny Price and Tom Bloxham, plus Support Workers Steve Tolliday and Caroline McCooey enjoyed free tickets to the Wolverhampton Wanderers v Watford match where they sat in the President's Club Box.

These great tickets became available after funeral directors MK Ginder & Sons were unable to attend.

The 6 guests were treated like VIPs, even having their photos taken with footballers Alex Geijo and Stephen McGinn (pictured with Michah Babbs).

Steve Tolliday said: "A big thank you to all the staff at Watford Football Club. They could not have been any friendlier, or more helpful, or made us feel more at home."



Key Points

- Watford Football Club had some spare VIP tickets to a match and invited 6 members and staff of Watford Mencap who had a brilliant time
- The tickets were donated by funeral directors MK Ginder & Sons
- To book Watford Mencap's Community Support Service phone Angela or Sharon on 01923 713620

VocaLink renews partnership

For the 3rd year, VocaLink has signed a partnership agreement with Watford Mencap to support people with a learning disability.

The agreement commits both organisations to continuing their partnership for 2013, and formalises a programme of activities which supports the charity.

Bryan Sharkey, Customer Service and Engagement Director at Rickmansworth-based VocaLink said: "This year we have raised over £7,000. We are now organising a party for Watford Mencap to brighten up one of those dull days after Christmas."

Don Eungblut, Chair of Watford Mencap, added: "We have really enjoyed working with VocaLink and are delighted to have renewed the partnership agreement."

Key Point

- VocaLink in Rickmansworth is supporting Watford Mencap again this year – the third year of our partnership'

Paralympic dream for Rebecca

Young Rebecca Fletcher had a dream come true when she was chosen to perform in the opening ceremony of the Paralympics.

Rebecca, who has a learning disability, was part of the 'Enlightenment' routine. She

wore a bright pink costume, a hat with lights, and twirled a pink umbrella.

Rebecca (pictured) received a letter of thanks from Prime Minister David Cameron.



Key Point

- Rebecca Fletcher had a fantastic time performing in the opening ceremony of the Paralympics

Councillors support Watford Mencap

6 Hertfordshire County Councillors have given a donation from their locality budgets – totalling £3,238 – to Watford Mencap.

Every HCC councillor has an annual locality budget of £10,000 to spend on worthwhile projects that promote the social, economic or environmental wellbeing of their community.

So far this year councillors Karen Hastrick, Morris Bright, Mark Watkin, Nigel Bell, Steve Drury and Caroline Clapper have donated money in recognition of the support that people with learning disabilities living in their community get from Watford Mencap.

Their donations have included support for Hand in Hand, after-school Activities, glider bikes, a children's Christmas pantomime trip and IT workshops for adults.

Councillor Watkin, who represents Nascot Park, recently visited the Hand in Hand project that he has supported. During his visit Councillor Watkin (pictured centre)

learned the basics of Makaton, a form of sign language, which helped him to communicate with Hand in Hand member Chloe.



Photo: Stuart Bendig

Key Point

- 6 Hertfordshire County Councillors have given donations totalling £3,238 to Watford Mencap from their locality budgets

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 of after-school activities.

£128 could pay for one IT session for up to 10 adults with a learning disability.

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.

A Big Thank you

Baker Tilly
Lorrain Barratt
Batters Green Farm
Saundra Bell
Jo Birch – AFB PLC
Blackrock
Breakspere School
BSkyB
BSV Jazz Band
Valerie Burdett
Anne Burke
Bushey and Oxhey
Methodist Church
Cllr Kemal Butt, Chair of Three Rivers DC
Capital Shopping Centres
CBE Ltd
Chorleywood Book Shop
Chorleywood Business Association
Chorleywood Residents Association
Christopher Laing Foundation
Cinnamon Square
CO-OP Community Fund
Courtland Lodge
Dr Eddington
Don Eungblut
Zoe Eungblut
Everyone who has donated books/items for eBay
Ross Gemmell
M K Ginder & Sons
John Good
Geeta Goswami
Lynn Green
The Halfway House
Harefield Gymnastics Academy
Department of Health's Health and Social Care Volunteering Fund
Help a Capital Child
Mark Hemsley
Hertfordshire Care Providers Association
Herts County Council – Aiming High for Disabled Children
Herts County Council Locality Budgets:
Cllr Nigel Bell
Cllr Morris Bright
Cllr Caroline Clapper
Cllr Steve Drury
Cllr Kareen Hastrick
Cllr Mark Watkin
Herts County Show
Herts Inclusive Theatre
Hertsmere BC Community Grant
Herts Parent Carer Involvement
Hilton Worldwide
Hilton in the Community Foundation
Homebase
IBB Solicitors
John Lewis Watford
Alan Jones
Janice Jones and Roger Jones

Pippa Kennedy
Jarmo Kesanto
KIDS East and West Hubs
Kier Construction
Mr and Mrs Kirk
Knutsford School
The Lawton Trust Limited
Loudwater Residents Association
Matthew Arnold & Baldwin
Mercure Hotel Watford
Mr and Mrs Minall
Donations in memory of the late Brian Mitson
Nihara Murugupillai
Natwest Bank
Neighbourly Charitable Trust
Parmiter's School
PB Conversions
Mrs Prince
David Rees
Rickmansworth Rotary
Riley's Watford
RM Band – West Herts College
Betty Seward
Ben Robertson
Pam Robertson
St Peter's Church Mill End
SKM Studio
Barry Southcott
Dawn Stewart
Dan Stickland - KPMG
Sylvia Adams Charitable Trust
Tesco Charity Trust
James Tetlow
Michelle Tetlow
Adrian Thompson
The Mayor of Watford Dorothy Thornhill
Radlett Round Table Residents and staff of Berrywood, Hillside and Thorpedale
Three Rivers DC
Thrive Homes
Carole Timms
Mr and Mrs Topping
Townswomen's Guild
Rickmansworth Berry
Elliot Treacy
The late Lady Monica Tuck
VocaLink
Waitrose Rickmansworth
Warner Bros Leavesden Studios
Watford Accordion Band
Watford Colosseum
Watford Community Housing Trust
Watford Grammar School for Boys
Watford Grammar School for Girls
Watford Round Table
Kevin Weller
Ian Williams
Mr and Mrs Wyatt
York House School

Christmas fun for Learning & Leisure team

80 members of Learning and Leisure enjoyed a Christmas party at The Mercure Hotel in Watford. The party room was decorated with disco lights and stars, and guests had fun wearing celebrity masks.

Christmas gifts were handed out too. These included some great Monopoly and Hello Kitty mugs. Our thanks to volunteer Jo Birch at AFB plc who kindly donated the Hello Kitty mugs.



Sarah Whittle enjoying the Christmas party

Warner Bros donate £20,000

A massive thank you to Warner Bros Leavesden Studios who have donated £20,000 for our work in 2013! The studios will be sponsoring our fundraising events, which allow us to develop cutting-edge services which really meet the needs of the people we support.

Grant to refurbish shop

We are thrilled to have received a Community Grant of £1,721.98 from Hertsmere Borough Council towards essential refurbishment at our Bushey shop.

Boost for Children's Centre

We are delighted to have received a Better Communities award of £3,574 from Watford Community Housing Trust for refurbishment of the Children's Centre soft play area.

Teenage support from Capital Radio

Capital Radio's Help a Capital Child has awarded £2,184 to Hand in Hand, our weekly youth club for teenagers with learning disabilities.

telephone 01923 713620

Support aids mum and son

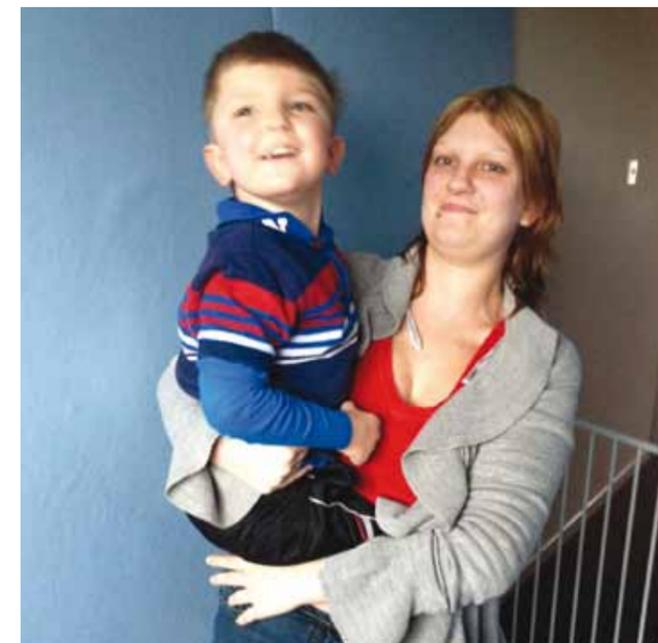
Support from Watford Mencap is helping to transform the life of mum Louise Woods and her 4-year-old son Liam.

Watford Mencap advisor Dawn Fortune stepped in to help because Liam was making a lot of noise in his bedroom, which was disturbing the neighbours.

Dawn helped Louise, who also has a learning disability, to approach the charity DEMAND in Abbots Langley and they kindly built a padded wall for Liam's bedroom and anchored his bed to the floor.

"Dawn has been very helpful and very supportive," said Louise. Dawn is now working to get a social worker for Liam and hopes to give the family some respite.

Watford Mencap advisors work with children and adults with a learning disability, and their families. If you would like to speak to a Watford Mencap advisor, phone 01923 713620 or email advice@watfordmencap.org.uk



Key Points

- Watford Mencap advisors are there to help children and adults with a learning disability
- Advisor Dawn Fortune helped a mother and son to sort out a noise problem they were having

Special thanks

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

www.stuartbendigphotography.com
or 01923 499232 or 07951 111874

Talent Corner

Regular player at Watford Mencap's pool club, Paul Whenman, has been invited to join the Beginners' League at Rileys in Watford.

Paul originally played in Learning and Leisure's ongoing tournament. Group leader David Rees was so impressed that he passed Paul's name on to Chris Hutchison, Rileys Manager, who invited him to try out for the Beginners' League.



Photo: Richard Owen

Paul, who is pictured lining up a shot, now plays for the mainstream league. He enjoys playing against a wide variety of people.

Rileys is open daily, with a different event each night. Chris is keen to offer a service that is available to everyone, offering free entry to carers, and discounts for large groups.

Key Points

- Watford Mencap pool club member Paul Whenman has joined a mainstream pool club
- Rileys Club in Watford is keen to offer a service that is available to everyone, plus free entry to carers



Ask Rebecca

Dear Rebecca,

Will my Disability Living Allowance be stopping soon? I currently receive low rate mobility and middle rate care allowances. I am really worried as I rely on this money to help with the costs of day to day living and getting around. The last letter stated that my DLA claim was awarded indefinitely so I am hoping that any changes won't affect me. Is this right?

There are soon going to be changes to Disability Living Allowance. From 2013 DLA will be replaced by the personal independence payment (PIP). These changes will affect all adults aged 16-64.

It is important to know that the changes to DLA affect **everyone** regardless of whether you have an indefinite or lifetime award. PIP will be similar to DLA in that there will be 2 rates: Standard or Enhanced.

The Department of Work and Pensions says that reassessment for PIP will begin in October 2013. Current claims will be reassessed from this date until spring 2016. If you receive a letter about your DLA during this time, **please do not ignore it.**

Our advice service is happy to help you. telephone 01923 713620

Rebecca Perfect manages Watford Mencap's Advice Services

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