



Photo: Richard Owen

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Welcome to the summer edition of In Touch



Recently we celebrated Learning Disability Week and launched the 'Getting It Right' campaign to improve the rights of people with a learning disability to equal healthcare.

Along with the launch of the Getting It Right charter, we marked the week with a night of music with Ben and Luke who live at Little Martins, a coffee morning in the Old Town Hall and a health and sports session at the William Penn Leisure Centre.

Next year is a special birthday for Watford Mencap. We are planning a year of celebrations to mark our Diamond Jubilee. Please do get in touch with our fundraising team if you are able to help in any way.

Best wishes

Jane Pattinson

Bushey shop gets a makeover

Our Bushey shop has a great new look, thanks to the Watford John Lewis Visual Merchandising team.

The team of 10 spent a day at the Watford Mencap shop where they created a new layout and an attractive window display.

John Lewis are big supporters of Watford Mencap and have previously spent time painting the Bushey Shop and improving the garden at Berrywood. All their hard work is greatly appreciated.

If you would be interested in volunteering at one of our shops please contact Rose Kreloff on 01923 713627.



Key Point

- Watford John Lewis Visual Merchandising team have revamped our Bushey shop.

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Funding keeps summer play scheme open longer



Charity Pro Action has provided us with a £1,625 grant to run our Achieving Potential Together (APT) play scheme for three more days this summer. The APT group supports children with profound and multiple learning disabilities and complex health needs.

Ruth (pictured) is nearly 13 and has been using Watford Mencap Children's Centre since she was 3. She has learning disabilities and uses a wheelchair. She goes to the APT club on Saturdays, and this means having fun with her peers and doing things she is unable to do at home.

The APT club also means that she can, for example, go to Pizza Hut, bowling or to the cinema with her friends.

In turn this gives Ruth's parents the opportunity to spend prime time with their other two children, Hannah, 10, and Silas, 6. Watford Mencap is always grateful for grants which allow us to develop and extend our services to the benefit of our members and their families.

Key Points

- Pro Action has provided Watford Mencap with a grant so we can run our Achieving Potential Together summer play scheme for longer.
- The APT group supports children with profound and multiple learning disabilities and complex health needs.

Thanks to our volunteers

Watford Mencap volunteers were treated to a day out at a prestigious health and fitness club to thank them for all their hard work.

Among those enjoying the facilities at the Esporta Riverside Club in Northwood were Annie Wilkinson and Sue Hickson who help out at various fundraising events including the Pancake Race and Celebrity Golf Day.



Annie (pictured) particularly enjoyed getting her nails manicured by Selina Solanki at the club's Tranquillity health and beauty spa, while Sue enjoyed some of the sports activities and a walk with her friends in the grounds.

Christel Goodricke, who works in the Bushey charity shop, started her day with a cup of coffee and a chat. She said: "I really think this is a good idea. It's lovely to thank the volunteers as they really do work hard."

Key Points

- Watford Mencap volunteers enjoyed a day at the Esporta Riverside Health and Fitness Club in Northwood.
- The event was to say thank you for all their hard work.

The Great Watford Walk



Youngsters from our Children's Centre dressed up as characters from Alice in Wonderland to launch the Great Watford Walk.

They were joined by Watford MP Richard Harrington, Bharat Shah of Sigma Pharmaceuticals (seated), who sponsors the walk (previously the Big Herts Walk), and Watford Mencap Funding Manager Veronica Chamberlain, who are pictured with the children - see also our cover photo.

The theme for this year's walk on Sunday 3 October is Alice in Wonderland. The money

raised will be split between Watford Mencap Children's Centre, The Peace Hospice and Watford New Hope Trust, and organisers are hoping to top £30,000 this year.

There will be a fancy dress competition and local primary schools will be invited to hold Mad Hatter's Tea Parties to raise money, and to encourage their pupils to take part in the walk. The school raising the most sponsorship will receive a cash prize of £500.

Mr Shah said: "This year's walk promises to be bigger and better than ever, offering fun with the 'Alice' theme and a chance to get fit in our beautiful countryside."

Key Points

- Watford MP Richard Harrington and sponsor Bharat Shah joined youngsters from our Children's Centre to launch the Great Watford Walk.
- The theme of this year's walk is Alice in Wonderland so children dressed up for the launch.

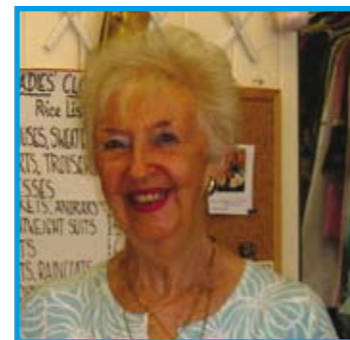
Help for young people

The Transition Team is a Hertfordshire County Council service which offers people aged from 18 to 25 with a disability help with choices and decisions as they become an adult. The team can help young people plan for the future with all sorts of support on topics including money, health, where you live, keeping safe and transport. Call 01442 45387 or email transitionteam@hertscc.gov.uk

Watford shop opens Mondays

Our Watford shop at 250 St Albans Road is now open on Mondays. Why not pop in to snap up a bargain!

Shop manager Jean retires...



Jean Darke, manager of Watford Mencap's Bushey charity shop, has retired after more than 10 years' service. Watford Mencap would like to thank Jean for her loyal service and for her role in making the shop such a part of the Bushey community. We wish Jean a very happy retirement!

Mencap volunteer is Young Person of the Year

Mitchelle Gass, a volunteer at Watford Mencap Children's Centre, has beaten off stiff competition to take joint 3rd prize at the Hertfordshire Young People of the Year Awards.



Mitchelle Gass with her cheque

She was nominated by Children's Centre manager Ro Linton as a thank you and in recognition for all the hard work she does for Watford Mencap.

Mitchelle said: "I love working with Mencap as it makes me feel good to know that what I have done is to help other children in some way."

Young People of the Year or 'Yopey' recognises the efforts made by young people around the country and aims to change the negative attitude associated with young people these days. Visit www.yopey.org

Ro said: "Mitchelle is a fine example of the commitment, responsibility and maturity that young people are capable of displaying."

Mitchelle was awarded £125 of which £50 goes to Watford Mencap.

Key Points

- Mitchelle Gass has won joint 3rd prize of £125 at the Hertfordshire Young People of the Year Awards.
- Mitchelle is a volunteer at our Children's Centre.

Diary Dates

Watford Mencap AGM

Watford Mencap's Annual General Meeting will be on the evening of Tuesday 5 October at the Watersmeet in Rickmansworth. Do come along and hear about all our activities!

Up on Downs coffee/play dates

Up on Downs holds coffee and play sessions for families of children with Down Syndrome on the last Wednesday of each month from 9.45 to 11.45am at Beechfield School Children's Centre, Gammons Lane, Watford WD24 5TY. It is even open during half term. Contact Claire on 01923 442230 or email ctinsley63@aol.com

LGBT health summit

The national free health summit for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Health will be held on 6 and 7 September in Hatfield. Book online at www.lgbthealth.co.uk

Hallowe'en Party

A Pumpkin Pie Hallowe'en Party will be held from 2 to 4pm on 30 October for families of children with Down Syndrome at the Quaker Meeting House in Watford. There will be singing, face paintings and seasonal fun.

Herts Inclusive Theatre

It is a busy summer for Herts Inclusive Theatre. A 3 day workshop and performance project 'Pinocchio in the Park' will be held from 10 August until 12 August at a cost of £25. There will also be some fun workshops at Butterfly World, St Albans, on 18 and 25 August from 10.30am to 12.30pm. Workshops are £8 each, or £12 for both. For more information call 01923 499310 or 07983 376734.

Mencap campaigns to Get It Right

National Mencap's focus during Learning Disability Week 2010 was on the Getting It Right health campaign.

The Getting It Right campaign followed on from Mencap's Death By Indifference campaign. Death By Indifference brought to light the shocking way some people with a learning disability are being treated within the medical system, which in some extreme cases resulted in the patient's death.

Mencap has decided that something needs to be done to improve the health care received by those with a learning disability, and this is where Getting It Right comes in.



Learning Disability Liaison Nurses would help ensure those with a learning disability get the medical treatment they deserve

People with a learning disability experience poorer health and poorer healthcare than the general population.

The Getting It Right campaign will aim to improve the rights of people with a learning disability to equal healthcare. It will focus on providing training, guidelines and policies to deal with the needs of people with a learning disability, their carers and families.



Hospitals can be frightening and confusing for someone with a learning disability

During Learning Disability Week, Mencap launched its Getting It Right charter, which health trusts and hospitals will be asked to sign up to. The charter sets out nine key actions that bodies responsible for healthcare must put into practice. These include employing learning disability liaison nurses, providing accessible information and providing ongoing learning disability awareness training for all staff.

Mencap also provided a check list for health care professionals, to help them work towards creating better healthcare treatment for people with a learning disability.

Locally, our health services still need to work on the way they treat people with a learning disability. Recently a member of Dacorum

Mencap was taken to a local hospital after suffering a seizure. He was placed on a chair during his seizure, and fell off. It is claimed that a trained nurse told him to get up and accused him of being drunk. Dacorum Mencap has involved the local MP and an official complaint has been made. This kind of treatment is unacceptable and it is time something is done about it.

To support the Getting It Right campaign, Watford Mencap started a petition which will be sent to our local Primary Care Trust and Hospital Trust asking them to sign up to the Getting It Right charter.

As well as supporting and promoting the campaign, Watford Mencap held a range of events to raise awareness of, and money for, Watford Mencap. These included a music night organised by Ben Robertson and Luke Gordon, who have a learning disability; a fitness afternoon for people with a learning disability at William Penn Leisure Centre, sponsored by Three Rivers District Council; and Watford Mencap opening their doors in Rickmansworth for a coffee morning.

Do you want to tell us about your experiences with the health services?

Email smaling@watfordmencap.org.uk

For more information on all of Mencap's campaigns visit

www.mencap.org.uk/campaigns

Key Points

- National Mencap has launched the Getting It Right campaign to improve the rights of people with a learning disability to equal healthcare.
- The campaign will focus on providing training, guidelines and policies to deal with the needs of people with a learning disability.

Raising Your Game is launched

A new Mencap project – Raising Your Game – has been officially launched.

Raising Your Game is a 5 year project which aims to provide support for young people aged 14 to 25 who have a learning disability, particularly those disadvantaged and at risk of offending.

The £4.5 million project, which is funded by the National Lottery, is being piloted in 6 regions in the UK, including Watford. It aims to support young people to make positive choices about their lives and will help to prevent young people with a learning disability getting involved in anti-social behaviour or crime.

Natasha Cock, Regional Co-ordinator, and Sandra Bell, Learning Disability Consultant, helped launch the project.

If you would like more information please contact Natasha Cock on 07852 230832 or email Natasha.cock@mencap.org.uk

Key Point

- The Raising Your Game project has been officially launched, to provide support for young people aged 14 to 25 who have a learning disability.

Training update

Feedback has been very positive as Watford Mencap staff have been working towards and achieving the Learning Disability Qualification. Assessment workbooks have been submitted by 6 staff members and another 10 staff have completed the LDQ (Learning Disability Qualification) taught course. They will submit their work for assessment in July. Congratulations to Anna O'Brien and Debra Wilde who have already gained the qualification.

Thanks to

Baker Tilly - £100 Just Giving
Martina Balazova and Lucy Wrangles - £210 Just Giving
Daniel Ballantyne - £70 - Just Giving
Colin Barnett - £2,125 Coast to Coast Eco Challenge
Nicola Bielicki, Veronica Chamberlain, Evelyn Gloyn, Sarah Teboul - £1,080 Hatch End triathlon
Camelot - £3,000 sponsorship for Watford 10k
Carolyn, Grace, Josephine, Emily, Lucy and Chloe - £40.50 selling sweets on a stall
Beatrice Chong - £105 Just Giving
Mr Clark - £16 regular monthly donation
John and Betty Crowder - £25 donation
Sophie Eastman - £235 Just Giving
Zina Etheridge, Laurie Megainey and Molly Megainey - £115 Just Giving
Leigh Fleming - help at the Watford 10K, £150 sponsorship
Fox and Hounds - £32 from collection box
Linda Hall - £100 in memory of Trevor
Anna Hejnar - £26 Just Giving
Jungs Patisserie - £1,000 sponsorship for Golf Day
David Kirk - £30 in memory of Betty Kirk
Harrison Leather - £10 Just Giving
Steven Mallett - £30 Just Giving
Frances Malsbury, Sue Ross, and Robert Scullard - £185 in memory of their mother, Delia
Richard Powell - £10 Just Giving
Rosemary Kearney Family Trust - £10,000 for Children's Services
Pro Action Hertfordshire - £1,625 grant for APT summer play scheme
Susan Rowe - £100 Just Giving
Sandy Lodge Golf Club - £98 raised at a quiz night
Sarah Sherwood - £80 Just Giving
Tesco Metro - £100 donated and staff volunteered in Watford shop
Tilsbury Seesa - matched sponsorship - £105
Pauline Worrall - £40 Just Giving
Vocalink - £327 raised at quiz night
Youth and Philanthropy Project and Rickmansworth School - £3,000

Donations in Kind:

Aldenham School - hosted a fun day
Base Build Services Ltd - remedial work at Children's Centre
Beaconsfield Golf Club - hosting the Golf Day
Bharat Shah, Sigma Pharmaceuticals - donated 2 club seats for a match at the Emirates stadium
Bicester Golf Club - auction prize for Golf Day
Alex Clemin - Watford Football Club season ticket
Deliver Events - support for Ball
Doug at L1fe Personal Training - warm up massages at the Watford 10K
Esporta Riverside Health Club - hosted volunteer day and gave 2 x 1 month family memberships for Golf Day
Golf Breaks - Golf Day raffle prize
John Lewis visual merchandising team - revamped the Bushey Shop
Mark Mace of M and S Rebuilders Ltd - for Hillside bathroom project
Masquerade - free fancy dress hire
Mothercare - donated toys for the lost children's tent at the Watford 10K
Neil Price at Watford Football Club
Owen Watters at Roberts Radio - donated a radio Golf Day
Richard Harris Jewellers, Rickmansworth
Rickmansworth Water Ski Club - donated a beginner water ski lesson
Saracens - 10 tickets to a Wembley match
Stix - providing refreshments for Golf Day
Stoke Park Club - donated 18 holes for 2 people
Sussex Sport Photography
The Frost Partnership - advertising at Golf Day
TopGolf - Family Premier Membership
Vocalink Executives - for redecorating Thorpedale residential home
Warren Clarke - for hosting Golf Day and much more
Watford Round Table - for organising the Watford 10K
West Herts Golf Club - 18 holes for 4 people
Your Golf Travel - 2 x £25 vouchers

Thank you to all Watford 10K helpers, supporters and runners, your effort and sponsorship is greatly appreciated.

Thank you to those who purchased Summer Raffle Tickets.

A big thanks also to everyone who donated along with their membership and to all those who donated goods for our shops and eBay sales.

Join in our Diamond Jubilee celebrations

Watford Mencap is 60 years old in 2011 and we hope you will join us in our sparkling celebrations.

The fun kicks off with a glamorous ball at the Watford Hilton on January 29. Don't miss your chance to buy tickets!

Tickets cost £90 each, or £850 for a table of 10, and include a 3-course dinner with wine, entertainment and dancing to a live band.

Reserve your places by emailing fundraising@watfordmencap.org.uk. If you know a company or person who would like to sponsor the event or offer an auction or raffle prize, please get in contact now.

Of course, things have changed a lot in 60 years, but people with a learning disability are growing in number and still need support and equal rights. So do their families.

Would you like to support our Diamond Jubilee? Do you know someone celebrating their 60th birthday, or diamond wedding anniversary, who would like to celebrate with us? Can you organise a coffee morning, school charity day, garden party, disco or sponsored walk with a diamond theme to raise money for the Jubilee?

We hope everyone will get involved and make it a year to remember. Email your ideas to fundraising@watfordmencap.org.uk or phone Sarah or Lauren on 01923 713622.

Key Points

- Watford Mencap celebrates its 60th birthday next year and has lots of celebrations planned.
- We hope you can come to our Jubilee Ball at the Watford Hilton on 29 January.
- Call us if you are celebrating your 60th birthday or diamond wedding anniversary in 2011.

VocaLink decorate for Watford Mencap

The Executive team at VocaLink, the international payments provider, rolled up their sleeves in June to decorate the lounge at Thorpedale in Chorleywood. Thank you, VocaLink!



Ready for action: L-R David Conkleton, Fred Bär, Claire Hafner, Debbie Lombard, VocaLink; Janet Speed, Thorpedale resident; Marion King, Mark Chapman and Tim Ensor-Clinch, VocaLink

Fundraisers keep going strong

Fundraising continues at Sandy Lodge Golf Club and Merchant Taylors' School.

Sandy Lodge held a week of golfing and social events to celebrate its Centenary Year and raise money for Watford Mencap. They ended the week with games, a barbecue, jazz band and a truly spectacular firework display.

At Merchant Taylors', pupils ran a Charity Drive week to raise money and awareness about Watford Mencap. Daniel Edwards said: "Every lunch time there was a different event and this culminated in a mini fair, where there was a variety of stalls and the much-loved Sponge the Teacher!" A big thank you to all Merchant Taylors' boys and to the members of Sandy Lodge Golf Club.

Watford 10k success

More than 1,100 runners took part in the Watford 10k race, helping to raise thousands of pounds for local charities including Watford Mencap Children's Centre. The races were started by Watford FC legend, Ian Bolton, who was joined by Harry the Hornet in a fantastic event organised by Watford Round Table.

The winner of the 10k race, Ben Hunter, came in at just 33 minutes 10 seconds whilst the Veterans' winner was Pinner resident and 2008 winner Nigel Rackham, in a time of 34 minutes 11 seconds. Ladies' winner for the second time was Metropolitan Police sergeant Sharon McHugh, of Enfield and Haringey Athletics Club, in a time of 41 minutes 5 seconds.

The total amount of sponsorship raised is still being counted so we urge you to please send your money in as soon as possible so we can announce the grand total and the top sponsorship winner.

Thank you to Camelot for once again sponsoring the event, Watford Round Table for all their hard work and all the runners and their sponsors.

Key Points

- More than 1,100 runners took part in this year's Watford 10k race.
- Please don't forget to send in your sponsorship money for local charities including Watford Mencap.

School pupils win £3k for Watford Mencap

Year 9 pupils at Rickmansworth School proved they are leaders of the future... and helped raise £3,000 for Watford Mencap!

The Youth and Philanthropy Initiative project encouraged youngsters to research and present a project on a charity of their choice as part of their citizenship class.

Will Summerton, Gabby Arderson, Akash Patel, Alex Leonides and Yusuf Waqar chose Watford Mencap as their charity, with a particular interest in our children's services. They beat strong competition to win £3,000 prize money which goes towards Watford Mencap.

Members of the winning group have relatives who use Watford Mencap Children's Services and know how important they are.

Will Summerton said: "The children really enjoy the service and it gives them self-confidence and makes them feel part of the community."

Alex Leonides added: "This charity is like a second home for these children."



Will Summerton, Akash Patel, Gabby Arderson, Yusuf Waqar and Alex Leonides with the prize money

Key Points

- Rickmansworth School pupils won £3,000 for Watford Mencap after giving a brilliant presentation about our Children's Services.
- Year 9 pupils were encouraged to research a charity as part of the Youth and Philanthropy Initiative.

Fun day at Aldenham School

Aldenham School hosted a fun day for 4 Watford Mencap members.

Joshua Heller, Phoebe Smith, Chloe Spencer and Theo Suen made pots on the potter's wheel and went for a walk through the school grounds to the Hari Krishna Bhaktivedanta Manor.

The school's Reverend Dan Bond said: "It was a fantastic day. We look forward to doing it again next term."



Changes to Leisure Together

We would like to welcome Layla Rynn, who has been appointed our new Leisure Together Co-ordinator.

Layla (pictured), who has volunteered with the project in the Watford and Three

Rivers area for the past 5 years, said:

"I have always been passionate about being involved in the local community and am very pleased to have been given this opportunity to work for Watford Mencap."

Leisure Together has over 100 members in Hertsmere, Watford and Three Rivers. Layla will work closely with Senior Leisure Together Co-ordinator Lata Rees.

Please contact Lata on 07901 914154 or email leisure@watfordmencap.org.uk or Layla on 07766 801351 or email lrynn@watfordmencap.org.uk for more information.



Key Points

- Welcome to Layla Rynn who is our new Leisure Together Co-ordinator.
- She will work alongside Lata Rees to cover the Hertsmere, Watford and Three Rivers areas.

Follow us on Twitter!

You can now follow Watford Mencap on www.twitter.com/watfordmencap as well as via our Facebook page.

For news visit www.watfordobserver.co.uk/communityinfo/charity/mencap/ and you can visit

www.watfordmencap.org.uk for information about our services and activities.

To receive news by email please email smaling@watfordmencap.org.uk

ASK
Ruth



Dear Watford Mencap

I am sole carer for my son, who has learning disabilities and lives at home. I would like to do a college course. Is there any financial help available for carers?

Many organisations including Watford Mencap and the Citizens Advice Bureau use a database called Funderfinder. This lists organisations offering grants to individuals. All will have qualifying criteria, many based on your income.

Make a Difference for Carers is funded by Hertfordshire PCT and administered by Carers in Herts. The aim of this service is to support carers to find time for themselves and make a positive difference to their health. This may involve using existing services and/or one-off help, to pay for a service or equipment which will enable a carer to have some time for themselves. Contact Carers in Herts on 01992 586969 or www.carersinherts.org.uk

For more help contact Advice & Advocacy on 01923 713620 or advice@watfordmencap.org.uk

Home Sweet Home

We are delighted to have signed a 5 year lease at the Old Town Hall, Rickmansworth. Thanks to negotiator Adrian Thompson and Nick Rutter and Shaun Blake at Rumball Sedgwick, Chartered Surveyors. Over the summer we will be completing extensive work to make the building more accessible. Check our website for details of office closures and guidance on how to find our rear entrance off Bury Lane.

Talent Corner

Sylvia sells her paintings



Artist Sylvia Hatch has sold three of her paintings on eBay, the on-line auction site. With help from Watford Mencap support worker Claire Roberts, Sylvia learned how to use eBay so has been able to turn her passion into a mini business with all proceeds going to Watford Mencap.

For more information about our supported programme to allow people with a learning disability to gain retail skills, please contact Claire on 01923 7813620 or Rose Kreloff on 01923 713627.

Robert's thriller of a role

Talented Berrywood resident Robert Scullard took on the role of Jacko – the ghost of Michael Jackson – in the Hertsbeats Drama Club production of Ghostbeaters.

The show was set in New York in the 1980s and was about ghosts and ghouls making the city safe. Robert said: "All the costumes were brilliant, everyone laughed and clapped throughout. We all had a good time, especially the skeletons – they made no bones about it!"

CGT and Watford Mencap

If you are a higher rate tax payer and want Watford Mencap to benefit from the rise in Capital Gains Tax, why not give us shares? Giving shares to a charity is a highly tax-effective method of donating. Contact Veronica on development@watfordmencap.org.uk and your tax advisor.