

AUTUMN
WINTER
2019
ISSUE 70



Autumn & Winter Newsletter 2019

POSITIVE LIVING AND LEARNING FOR PEOPLE
WITH EPILEPSY AND OTHER COMPLEX NEEDS

Welcome from our Chief Executive, Adam Sampson



At our regular weekly tea earlier today, one of our residents looked at me suspiciously and said "You've been here for a while now, haven't you?" Well, I don't know if you call 13 months "a while" but it is beginning to feel like I am no longer the new boy. The regular rhythm of St Elizabeth's is now beginning to feel familiar: the Summer Fayre, children back in school, Apple Day, the run up to Christmas - all are less strange, more reassuring.

Because St Elizabeth's is more than an organisation. It is a community, a family, with its own traditions and culture. That is what makes it so unique, so welcoming. That is why so many people - staff, families, residents and learners - so quickly feel a sense of belonging, feel at home.

But of course, like all families and communities everywhere, we have to allow people to grow and leave. The graduation and leavers ceremonies in July are as poignant as the welcoming of the new intake in September is exciting. It is our job to enable and support our children - and our adults - to grow beyond our little community here, whenever they are ready and able to do so. We may feel sad for us but we should be happy for them.

Welcome to Dr Alec Clark



Hello everyone, thanks to you all for making me feel so very welcome here at St Elizabeth's - it really has flown since I started here in the last week of August. My role as Director of Education and Skills Development oversees the School, College, Day Opportunities, behaviour team and admissions.

The addition of skills is an important one as we will look to move forward this key agenda at all levels within St Elizabeth's. It's about getting the best from everyone; staff, visiting learners and residents, whilst maintaining the very high standards of care that St Elizabeth's does best.

I have worked in education for the past twenty years, most recently as Chief Education Officer. I have been a Head and Executive Head in the Special school arena having worked across different local authorities and with both the inspectorate and Government. I am still based in South Wales and am married with a son aged 12 and daughter aged 10. I hope to meet everyone at some point and discuss your ideas.

Twitter handles: @StElizabetsCEO @AlecPBS

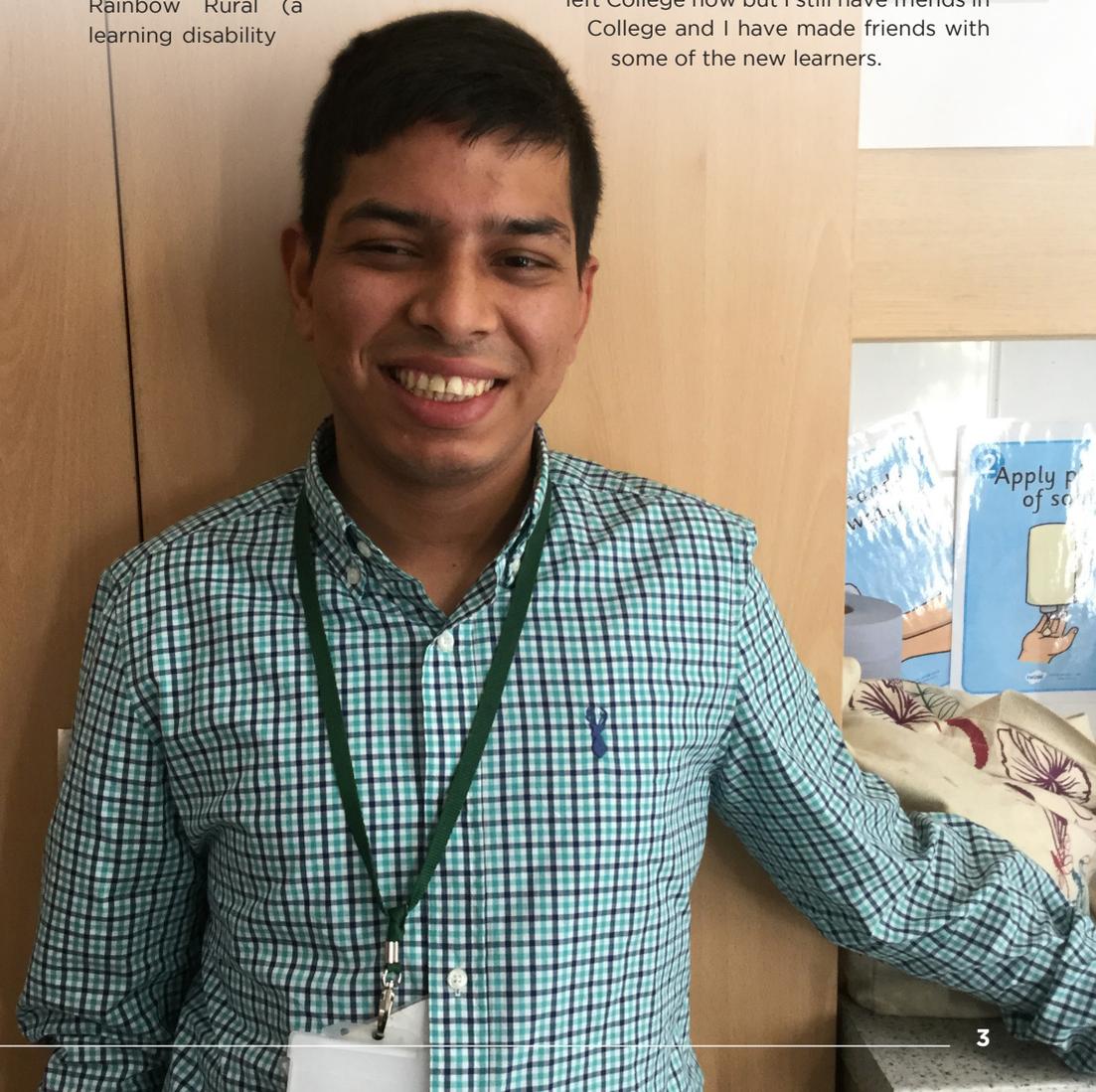
Usman's Story

I came to St Elizabeth's in 2017, two years ago. I am now a third year and I am a day learner. I come in every college day from Pinner with my Dad - it takes about an hour in our car. We use the M25. I work when I come to College. I really like to use the computer and I like planting seeds.

Last year I went to Rainbow Rural (a learning disability

farm setting) - I liked feeding the cow. I also do work experience in Handy and Candy, the College shop. I help take the money. It is important to me and I really enjoy doing it. I am also on the Learner Council. We talk a lot and after trying hard and campaigning, I am now the new Chair Person!!

I like the staff. Some of my friends have left College now but I still have friends in College and I have made friends with some of the new learners.



News from the year

St Elizabeth's Events:

♥ Our Summer Fayre was a huge success. Under 30 degree skies, we welcomed over 400 visitors and raised over £8,000!

♥ Good weather held out for our annual Apple Day, and saw us welcome lots of visitors into our orchard to pick apples. We raised over £1,500!

Facilities upgrade:

♥ We successfully fundraised enough money to resurface our damaged tennis court in the school. The tennis court has now been resurfaced with state of the art materials, and we were delighted to welcome one of our funders O2e to be the first to see it!

♥ Our new Night Monitoring System is currently being installed in the Adult Home and will be fully operational in all bungalows by the Spring.

♥ We have recently carried out a



Centre-wide roof survey and will be looking to replace and repair over the course of next year.

Tate Modern success:

♥ Some of our Day Opportunities clients attended the Tate Modern Contest Exhibition hosted by Uniting Friends.

♥ Three pieces of our artwork won a place and were exhibited at the Tate Modern Winners Gallery on 5th September!

Purple Day artwork:

♥ We hosted a successful artwork exhibition at the Centre in March to mark Purple Day 2019.

♥ Artists produced work to reflect their experience of epilepsy and what it means to them individually to live with the condition. The artwork is still on display in our main corridor!

Graduation:

♥ 6 students graduated from our Specialist School in July, with 2 going on to join our Further Education College.

♥ 7 learners graduated from our College in July, with 1 going on to join our Adult Home and 2 taking up residency at our Windhill base and accessing Day Opportunities here at the Centre.

New website:

♥ We launched our brand new website back in March and we have received some very positive feedback.

♥ The new website features updated service information, new photos and

videos, different functions like a 'Book a Visit' button and lots of family stories and case studies to show off the amazing work we are doing every day.

♥ We are always updating and adding to our website, including our family stories and case studies. If you want to tell your story, we would love to hear from you! Please do get in touch.

Challenge Events:

♥ This year we had 5 fantastic marathon runners who took to the streets of London to run the 26 mile route for St Elizabeth's!

♥ Together they raised over £10,000 - an amazing achievement and unforgettable experience.

♥ Our Ride London riders (both the 100 mile and 46 mile) this year together raised £2,810!

Recycling walk:

♥ To mark World Environment Day in June, students, learners, adults and staff walked around the Centre, visiting different stops that had been set up to teach us more about recycling, the impacts on the environment and what actions we can take to be more 'green'!

♥ Our organic Ashvale project is concentrating on becoming completely plastic free, selling and growing produce in recyclable and reusable materials.

♥ As an organisation, we are striving to be more green and considerate of our beautiful surroundings. We will

be implementing more recycling systems and taking bigger steps to reduce our carbon footprint in the coming year.



Fundraising news

As we head towards Christmas, we've been busy getting ready for our Christmas Bazaar on 30th November, as well as our annual Service of Reflection on the 1st December and our Santa Dash on the 6th December when the whole Centre takes part in a jog/walk/wheel/scoot around our beautiful site.

Our Summer Fayre back in June was a great success, with over 400 visitors – including family and friends of our residents and learners, and a huge number of people from the local area – and beautiful sunshine. Guests were treated to some fabulous choir singing, salsa dancing and live bands, plus a range of different stalls, all whilst enjoying burgers, cakes, Pimms and ice cream, helping to raise over £8,000. We also launched our first ever Art Competition for learners, residents and staff, which was judged by Billy Byrne from BBC One's DIY SOS, who had the difficult choice of choosing winners from over 100 entries.

Apple Day saw over 42 crates of apples picked from our 3-acre Orchard, whilst listening to blues and rock music and eating vast quantities of soup and cake! The team from Ashvale, our on-site Horticultural Project, made £431.75 on apple picking alone, contributing to our £1,966 total!



If you've been to the Centre recently, you will have seen that the Tennis Court in the School – which had been closed due to the unsafe damaged surface – has changed colour to a bright green. Thanks to the support of a number of funders, we have been able to resurface and re-secure the whole area. Since it was completed it has been in constant use for Sports lessons and therapy sessions, and is proving very popular!

We are also delighted to announce that the new Night Monitoring System for the Adult Home has been ordered and installation has started. This has been a huge fundraising project over a number of years – over £120,000 was raised by some very generous donors, and the night staff are very much looking forward to having a much more modern system to monitor night-time seizures.

However we can't rest on our laurels! We are now focusing our fundraising activities on a number of vital projects here at the Centre – including bungalows renovations, sensory room upgrades, holidays for our children and adult residents, and music therapy programmes in the School and College – and are looking for support



from community groups, companies, charitable trusts and individuals to ensure we can continue to provide the best possible service to those we help.

Make sure you stay in touch with what we are up to! Follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, check out our website (www.stelizabeths.org.uk) or sign up to our mailing list (if you haven't already).

Shops

♥ Our 'Pop-Up' charity shop on Terminus Street in Harlow closed on Friday 4th October. The shop was always a temporary arrangement, and in the year it was open did very well in selling large pieces of furniture and clearance items. We are now looking to find a more permanent home so watch this space! We would like to thank all of our supporters who shopped in Terminus over the year, and encourage you to still visit us in our nearby Bush Fair and Staple Tye shops!

♥ Our branch in Florence Walk is going from strength to strength selling high-end, designer items. We have just renewed the lease for a third year and look forward to continuing to welcome our loyal customers and donors!

Community news

♥ We want to say a HUGE thank you to Bishop's Stortford Chamber of Commerce who, as their charity of the year, raised over £6,000 (holding their annual quiz and donations at the monthly chamber meetings)! We have put this towards the purchase of a brand new, power assisted wheelchair bike! Members of the Chamber visited the Centre to see sixth former Jack model (and test out!) the new bike, before posing for a picture afterwards. Jack's mum Catherine (see page 8) said it was

very emotional to see Jack back on a bike again as he gave up cycling some time ago. Teacher Alex Way explained how the children love the bike as they enjoy the sensory movements and sensations they experience while riding it.



♥ We have welcomed 215 volunteers from 12 companies as part of our Corporate Volunteering programme, 5 of which were new companies. Thank you for all their hard work and we look forward to welcoming you back in 2020. If you are a local company and would like to volunteer next year please contact our Fundraising team!

♥ We were also very lucky to welcome the East Regional Waitrose Directors who used St Elizabeth's as a base for their team meeting in the morning and helped volunteering in the afternoon, digging potatoes with our Ashvale team.

♥ A huge thank you to Cannon Travel Ltd who have already raised a fantastic £1000 for St Elizabeth's as their charity of the year! The team have worked hard with their fundraising, including holding a stall at our Summer Fayre this year, with 'Guess the Weight' of the suitcase!

♥ The Sputnik Bowls Club at Witham Bowls Club have chosen St Elizabeth's as their charity of the year for two years, and have raised £2,000 from raffles, fines and forfeits from both the home side and opponents.



Family story – Catherine, Martin, Jack and Dylan's Story

Jack was born 9 weeks early and suffered a bleed on the brain which left him brain damaged with hydrocephalus, quadriplegic cerebral palsy, visual impairment and ultimately, epilepsy. He turned our lives upside down. His first smile came at 4 months when he was still in hospital having his 3rd shunt put in. He eventually had 6. We knew he was a fighter and also a charmer from a very early age! He loves people, is incredibly empathetic – when you're having a bad day, he will always say 'you need a cuddle?'

In the early days, the medical, educational and social care we received was fantastic but sadly due to cuts in local services, support services he had access to were withdrawn.

I first came across St E's when I visited a college open day 3 years ago with a friend in a similar situation. I was blown away by the care and understanding of the staff and the facilities/opportunities – particularly in terms of vocational prospects. I went back again with Martin on his 50th birthday and we were both moved to tears watching the students presenting their achievements. We knew then that we would move heaven and earth to get Jack there. It actually happened even sooner when the Cambridge 6th form placement became a crisis situation and Jack joined St E's 6th form.

We have noticed a huge increase in Jack's confidence. He still has seizures but they are so 'normal' at St E's, he feels safe and protected so doesn't worry like



he used to. He loves learning and that is wonderful to see. He lost so much over the last 2 years with all the barriers he faced. He actually thanked me and Martin over the summer for sending him to St E's. That's just wonderful. And although he does struggle to socialise with young people his age, he is slowly making progress and talking about his friends at home.

His learning is so well adapted to what he feels confident about. He also loves spending time in his house with his carers, chasing them around the grounds in his chair, going for walks and discussing social outings with his peer group. I am already recommending St E's to families in the same position – it is a place full of hope and optimism, a place where Jack's dreams might actually come true. After years of struggling, the months of fighting were well worth the effort.

Recruitment

New Year, New Career?

Some 200 adults and children call St Elizabeth's their home. We have a team of over 650 staff who make it all possible. We're always looking to welcome enthusiastic, compassionate people into our teams across the Centre and what better time to join us than the new year! You don't need experience in care to join us – you just need to be dedicated, caring and passionate about people. We provide full training and will also support you to achieve recognised qualifications in care. We have full time, part time and bank vacancies in our Adult Home, Children's Home and College. We have daytime and night shifts available to suit whatever suits you best.

If you, or someone you know is looking for a fabulous opportunity to work in a busy social care setting with a difference, then contact us today!

To apply and to find out more information about St Elizabeth's, please visit our website - www.stelizabeths.org.uk or telephone 01279 844209.

Jenny's Story

I have been working at St Elizabeth's Centre for over 5 years and started as a Care Support Worker in Hood House. I had no previous experience working in the care sector but immediately loved the day to day challenges and variety that this role had to offer. It was fascinating getting to know different people and learning something new every day.

After a year, I was successfully appointed a role as a Lead Instructor within Day Opportunities which was another varied role with lots more to learn. With a strong musical background, it felt inspiring being able to put some of this to good use when supporting residents and day clients to engage in new and exciting activities.

I then applied for the role as Home Care Manager within Adult Services and moved into this role in August 2017. Although challenging and extremely busy, this role has enabled me to oversee the residents' care and lead on meaningful changes to support our adult residents. I have loved every minute of working with St Elizabeth's and enjoy the diversity that is on offer.



Highlights from 2019 at St Elizabeth's



Please Support St Elizabeth's

Thank You!

Follow us:  @st_elizabeths  @StElizabethsCEO

 /StElizabethsepilepsycare  @stelizabeths_centre

We hope you have enjoyed reading our newsletter and will feel inspired to support St Elizabeth's. There are many ways to help, for example by making a donation, supporting one of our fundraising events, volunteering or by sharing this Newsletter with someone you know.

If you would like to make a donation, please complete the enclosed form and return to the Freepost address below. Alternatively, you can use the Donate button on our website to give via bank transfer.

If you would like further information on the Centre or how to support us, please contact our Fundraising team at fundraising@stelizabeths.org.uk or on 01279 844355.



Follow St Elizabeth's Centre updates
<https://en-gb.facebook.com/stelizabethsepilepsycare/>

2019/20 dates for your Diary

St Elizabeth's Christmas Bazaar

Saturday 30th November 2019

Reflections Service

Sunday 1st December 2019

St Elizabeth's Summer Fayre

Saturday 27th June 2020

St Elizabeth's Apple Day

Saturday 26th September 2020

Please send to:

FREEPOST, St Elizabeth's, Much Hadham, Herts SG10 6BR

☎ 01279 844355 ✉ fundraising@stelizabeths.org.uk