

grapevine

news & views

Spring into action!

We hear from our enthusiastic and invaluable volunteers.



Tickled pink

Pantomime show at Foxburrow Grange

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Meet Matthew Cowperthwaite and Martin Hill.

I'm delighted to start this edition of Grapevine with the news that we have been successful in winning a new contract in Greenwich for a respite service for people with learning disabilities.

The contract commences on 1 May and we are really looking forward to working with the people who use the service and welcoming the staff of Kemsing Road, Greenwich to Outlook Care.

We have recently started our latest round of Management Development Training for managers from right across Outlook Care and I was pleased to open the first session. As we went round the room hearing people talk about their own personal journey, what struck me was the huge amount of talent, experience and in some cases sheer bravery we had in that room. What was also very humbling was that people didn't really think it was anything particularly special that they had done. I left the session feeling incredibly lucky that we have been able to attract such a talented group of people and realizing how important it is that we get people to tell their stories.

Dementia Friends is a national initiative that is being run by Alzheimer's Society, funded by the government. It aims to improve people's understanding of dementia and its effects.

People with dementia sometimes need a helping hand to go about their daily lives and feel included in their local community. Dementia Friends is giving people an understanding of dementia and the small things that they can do that could make a difference to people living with dementia. You can become a Dementia Friend by attending a free session that lasts about an hour. I've just completed my session and I'm aiming to go on to be a Dementia Champion so that I can help people understand what it's like to live with dementia and the actions they can take in their communities.

We will be organizing sessions for staff over the coming months but in the meantime, if you would like to find out more about becoming a Dementia Friend or a Dementia Champion you can visit the website www.dementiafriends.org.uk for details.



A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Penny". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the bottom.

Penny Taylor
Chief Executive


 events

We take a look at what staff and customers have been up to...



Partnership working in action

Natelie Bessey, Area Manager, tells us about this great initiative...

76 Neave Crescent Supported Living Carers' Forum

Neave Supported Living started Carers' Forum meetings in the summer of 2013 and there have been three meetings in total so far. The meetings are chaired by myself and a carer representative and its a joint responsibility for both Outlook Care and the carers themselves to add items to the agenda for discussion.

The meetings have been very well attended by many family carers. It's a great forum for open communication and creative thinking to develop the service provided. We update carers on new staff who have joined us, we give updates from tenants' meetings, feedback of good practice, social activities that have taken place and information on the general management of the service.

The carers bring good ideas to the meeting to develop the service and a number of social activities that were suggested have been planned and enjoyed by the tenants. Carers have also raised ideas about the cleaning rotas and house rules; these have been well received by tenants and then implemented to develop the responsibilities and ownership of being a tenant at Neave Crescent.

The carers regularly raised housing issues to Outlook Care so the introduction of a SWAN housing representative to the carers 'meetings has been very successful in sharing information and agreeing actions. The Service Manager, Nicky Banks, and housing officers attend, and the meeting is a great commitment to joined up working. As a result of the meetings we have reviewed the

Service Level Agreement between Outlook Care, SWAN Housing and an individual family carer and this ensures every one is clear on responsibilities and time scales.

The family carers have given such good feedback, and said lots of issues have been resolved quickly as a result.

The carers have also learnt a lot about what we do as an organisation, and the rationale behind some of our care and support strategies. The tenants' personal and individual care and support is not discussed at the meetings, but the Service Manager is always available to discuss personal issues with the tenant and carer in the monthly review meetings.

OH YES THEY DID...

Foxburrow Grange residents enjoyed a pantomime on 1st February. Tickled Pink Productions produced a fun version of Aladdin involving just four performers! Everyone sang along with a variety of songs and the performers were great at getting the audience involved.

Everyone had a great time and laughed throughout the show. Around 20 residents came along plus family members. There was also a raffle and refreshments on sale; all monies raised went towards the residents' activities fund.

Next up is afternoon tea and a piano concert!



Keep up to date with all the latest news happening at Outlook Care...



Keep in touch



A three month pilot scheme trialling the HomeTouch Care Provider dashboard, a next generation service for elderly care has started. The trial primarily aims to increase the independent living skills of the customers at our chosen service. It also aims to help improve the quality and transparency of care provision, reduce the social isolation of the customers, and help improve communication with family and relatives.

There are several aspects to the HomeTouch software:

- A tablet application helps socialisation for elderly people through services such as video calls, messaging, radio, photo albums and calendars
- A desktop application allows families and carers to log in and keep up-to-date with their family members and what activities they have recently been involved in
- The HomeTouch servers monitor activity and provides in-depth analysis of user activities

- Support workers will be able to set reminders in a calendar for important events and customers will be able to confirm when they have attended the event
- Staff will be able to add medication reminders and prompts so customers are aware of their medication times and dosages
- A mood tracker will ask a customer about their mood and track their response over time
- Support workers will be able to plan goals and activities based on customer care plans.

It is hoped that the trial will increase the independent living skills of our customers, there will be an increased number of activities taken up, and increased digital literacy. The findings from the pilot scheme will be made available to Local Authority commissioners as well as Outlook Care staff and trustees.

See page 8 for customer reaction to this pilot.

Just giving

Our fundraising efforts through our first Just Giving fundraising campaign now stand at over £500. All funds raised will be used to fund activities for people we support with complex needs, specifically autism.

If you would like to get involved in any fundraising for Outlook Care you can find out more at:

www.outlookcare.org.uk/support-outlook-care/

2015 conference

Following the fantastic success of 2013's Reach for the Stars conference, a special conference is being planned for both people we support and staff to take place early in 2015.

This conference will be an opportunity to celebrate achievements and agree an involvement plan of action for the next twelve months.

We are family

Our family section, now live on the OLC website and accessed via a new tab on our homepage, provides useful information to family members of people that we support. The information provided includes upcoming family events such as our Carers' Forums, minutes from relevant events, and useful information such as telephone numbers and links. We also have a number of publications in our library that can be downloaded.

Healthcare design awards

Foxburrow Grange has been successful in making the shortlist of the 3 finalists in the Pinders Healthcare Design Awards, in the category of Best Smaller Dementia Care Home.

As a finalist, we receive a trophy and a cheque for £500 for our nominated charity, which is the Alzheimer's Society. Winners are to be announced in early April - we'll keep you posted!



All change!

We've launched a new project for the people we support ensuring their involvement in decision making influences every aspect of the work we do. Working with SeaChange Creative Advocacy over the next year will help us find out what the people we support want and how we can achieve it.

SeaChange's facilitators will be using theatre and drama/music workshops alongside one-to-one and group advocacy sessions to establish the views of the people we support. The consultation phase will take place from February to April, with staff workshops shortly after.

New service

It's great news that we have been successful in winning a new contract in Greenwich for a respite service for people with learning disabilities. We will take over the contract in May and are looking forward to working with the people who use the service and their families.

Therapeutic session at Foxburrow Grange

Emma Alder, Occupational Therapist, tells us more...

RELAXATION To relieve symptoms of stress, anxiety and depression. Age Concern research discovered depression amongst older people in care homes could be as high as 40%. Around 1 in 10 people suffer from anxiety, and the move from independence to a care home environment can exacerbate this. Depression and anxiety are particularly prevalent among those with dementia.

SENSORY Consisting of interactive experiences involving some or all of the senses; vision, hearing, touch, smell and taste. Sensory deprivation can cause disorientation, irritability, confusion, lethargy and hallucinations. Addressing sensory deprivation can reduce some of the characteristics of dementia. Also, in advanced stages of dementia when people may not be aware of the surrounding environment or even his/her own body, direct stimulation of the senses can raise the person's self-awareness.

GRASP A course of upper limb rehabilitation exercises specifically designed to maintain or enhance strength and dexterity in the arms, hands and fingers. Although primarily developed for people who have had a stroke, this programme will benefit a number of residents who find it difficult to use their hands or fingers in a functional way.

FALLS PREVENTION These sessions, particularly focussing on strength, balance and safe transfers and open to all residents who are mobile, will be complemented by our Activity Worker's chair-based exercise groups.

Outlook's got talent!

Following the previous programmes for Team Leaders, a new cohort has commenced learning which now includes not only Team Leaders but also Support Co-ordinators from Services as well as those with line management responsibility

from Central Services. This latest programme is running on a monthly basis from January 2014 to August 2014 and is being facilitated by tutors from The Professional Training Centre which is a service working as part of the Colchester Institute.



volunteering update

Spring has sprung!

The first day of Spring on March 1 this year brought not only sunshine but gardening volunteers to Summit Road in Walthamstow to help with the service's sustainable garden project. Funded by Awards for All, and organised by the staff, the project aims to create a garden that will provide food and recreation for the people who live there. It will also be easier to maintain and will involve the local community. For the planting day we were lucky enough to have the help of the amazing Walthamstow Village residents association, who run a monthly gardening day, which looks after a multitude of raised beds and planted edges around the village.

The team did an amazing job, first of all spreading compost to feed the soil, then helping to plant fruit trees and shrubs, as well as an array of flowering plants to create an entrance area to the service that is welcoming to customers and to the garden's wildlife.

Another community day will be organised, this time to extend the vegetable growing area and to build a raised bed for customers to harvest from : please contact Karen Howell Lyons, Service Manager at Summit Road if you, or anyone you know, would like to get involved.

"It's amazing what you can achieve with enthusiastic volunteers; I was really inspired by the energy and joy that the WVRA brought to our planting day. The volunteers were a mix of ages and abilities, and did a great job, while making the work look easy. We couldn't have done it without them."

Rachel Francis
Project's sustainable gardener



Hello!

A warm welcome to some of our new volunteers...



Christmas comes early!

A team of 12 staff from London Metropolitan University joined us for an employee volunteering day in November 2013. Choosing Outlook Care from amongst other organisations who had put forward suggestions for the day, on the basis that they liked our people centred approach, the team came along to our Supported Living service in Manor Road, Leyton.

The weather was kind and the volunteers were able to repaint the garden fence and put together a bird feeder. They also planted spring flowering bulbs across the lawn as well as a plum tree. Indoor tasks included making Christmas wreaths and brightly coloured paper chains. The day's efforts were crowned by the decorating of a real Christmas tree!

Jeanette Eriksson, LMU's coordinator on the day, said: "It's the first time we have done this and it really made a change from our normal office based team building. We had a great day and we are so happy we could help the tenants. We will keep in touch and we hope to see some pictures in the spring when the bulbs have flowered."

74 Neave Crescent

Over the past year at 74 Neave, we have had a young man called Areeb come in for 8 hours a week as a volunteer. Areeb is studying to be a doctor and part of his placement is to choose some volunteer work to gain experience. He chose 74 Neave Crescent as he was interested in working with people with learning disabilities; it was a field that he said in his own words he 'would never normally have met'. He said that he had never really spoken to or dealt with people who have a learning disability before.

Areeb thinks the home is a warm caring place and feels very comfortable, he never felt 'awkward' and was always made very welcome by both the customers and the staff. He said that it appeared well run and that the management were nice and friendly.

Areeb now sees more to people than their disability; he has supported customers with numerous activities including sensory, rug making, housework, such as supporting them to tidy their bedrooms. He has also helped out at mealtimes by supporting someone to eat their dinner. Areeb has enjoyed learning about them and getting to know about them and also said he had learnt that you needed a lot of patience as well!

*Abi Fakoya, Service Manager,
74 Neave Crescent*

Waterside Lodge

Eugenia Angioni has joined as a volunteer at Waterside Lodge. She has settled in quickly to become a valued member of the team and is enjoying gaining extra experience to supplement her studies at London Metropolitan University. She tells us, "The knowledge I have acquired is already very significant. I have learnt how to relate to people who have mental health issues and I have enjoyed interacting with them. I overcame my initial fears and thanks to the help and support of the staff I feel I am building a fundamental basis for my future career."

Foxburrow Grange

Debbie Fitch has joined as a volunteer at Foxburrow Grange. Taking time out from her busy job in London, which she commutes to from Colchester every day, Debbie volunteers each Sunday.

"I love my visits! I spend time with residents chatting and walking round the lounge. I encourage people to mingle and tell their stories. I also found out that a resident was interested in aircraft so I bought him a model airplane which we sat and assembled together. I work in the travel industry so this was a nice link!

Mental Health Services

Sam Ayorinde is on a three month placement with Mental Health Services as part of his degree studies at the University of Sligo in the Republic of Ireland. Sam has been working with tenants across our services and finding out more about them plus, of course, gaining valuable knowledge and experience for his course.



Meet the mayor

Steve, who lives at Goodmayes Lodge, provided invaluable support at a Volunteering Recruitment event in November 2013 at Ilford Town Hall.

Around forty voluntary organisations active in the borough had stands and many of them were household names like the Samaritans and Mencap.

Undaunted, Steve played a major role in getting prospective volunteers to stop at the Outlook Care stall and it made a real difference to have him give his personal experiences of living at a service in getting the message across. The event was opened by the Mayor of Redbridge who stopped to talk to and have her photo taken with Steve.

My name is Fred

Hi, I am Fred. I found the transition from hospital to Crescent Road surprisingly smooth. The support workers initially acted like nurses but gradually they are transforming the support to the real world. I am confident they will have me ready to move to my own flat in plenty of time. They are lovely people. I have been able to perform tasks like preparing my food, taking care of my hygiene, used the washing machine and socialising with other tenants.

I spend quality time with my mother and I find the other tenants friendly. When I get bored I surf the internet. I chat with the support workers and it really is worth giving it a go getting out of hospital. When I have my funny turns, it is tough but I tell myself it will soon be tomorrow. I really am enjoying my stay here in Crescent Road.

Goodmayes get online

The tenants at Goodmayes Lodge are excited about being chosen for a pilot scheme, (see News Page 4) which involves tenants being given a tablet computer which they can use to communicate with people involved in their care. Jamie Wilson, CEO of Home Touch, came to a meeting at Goodmayes Lodge in early January 2014 to discuss his plans for this new project. Four tenants attended the meeting and were supported by staff. There were many questions from the tenants about how the tablets were going to be used. Some tenants did not want to get involved as they find computers difficult, but most people are keen to try them out and many cannot wait!

Fingers crossed that this exciting project brings new skills and experiences to the tenants involved.

JD's story

My name is JD. I am a 28-year-old and live in one of the Outlook Care projects in London. I have Asperger Syndrome and Autism

I moved to this project in 2013 and since then, my goal and aspiration has been uplifted by the motivation of the staff in this project.

My aspiration since I was 17 years old was to be a model but this has been difficult for me to achieve because of lack of self-confidence. This is what staff at this project have given to me. My self-confidence has helped me to attend photo shoots for different modelling agencies.

I am now on the register list of a well-established modelling agency in London. I am now looking forward to my first modelling contract with this organisation. The journey to this point has been rough but it is well worth it.



Kind words

Sara Costa, Quality Manager tells us about a compliment which shows real success with communication at one of our services:

Whilst at 76 Neave Crescent I was introduced to Jennifer Cutler, Consultant Forensic Psychologist, who had been visiting one of the people we support.

Jennifer said:

"I have been very pleasantly impressed by the use of augmented communication here where words and pictures are used around the house. Also with the medication sheets - which clearly says what the medications are, how often they are administered, what they are for and the side effects. This shows really good communication with staff about things their residents may experience in terms of risk. The staff are friendly and cheerful and Nicky (Service Manager) has spoken in an informed way about the person I came to see."



do you
know a
star?

The Staff Recognition Scheme, which allows managers to nominate individuals and teams for an award of £250 for exceptional performance continues to recognise and reward staff and OCB workers who have shone.

Anyone can make a nomination using the form on the SDA. Each quarter many entries are received for these awards, all of which are carefully considered by our judging panel, and its often a tough decision to decide from the many strong entries received who should be selected to receive a staff recognition award. Here are last quarter's winners...

WINNERS:

Janet Thomas and Zeinab Ali
For the positive outcomes they are delivering to the people supported at Buxton Court.

WINNER:

Alderney Street Team
Exceptional support to customer MB over an extended period.

WINNER:

Rebecca Stone
Secondment to Foxburrow Grange exceeding her normal role.

To nominate someone please send your entries to Robert Smith, Director of HR at robert.smith@outlookcare.org.uk.



Ben Nevis at night

Emma Alder, Occupational Therapist at Foxburrow Grange tells us about her fundraising climb:

Myself and my friend, Libby Bearman, are completing the Ben Nevis Challenge. And we're climbing it overnight!

Working with people with dementia has really highlighted the importance of this cause to me on a personal level. The Alzheimer's Society not only funds research into prevention and cure for dementia, but also supports those living with it, their families and delivers training and resources to people working within dementia care. It makes a huge difference to people in the UK and I'm happy to support it by challenging myself.

You can donate at www.justgiving.com/EmmaAlder

Ymddeoliad hapus!

That's Welsh for Happy Retirement and a fond farewell was said to Linda Davies, Service Manager, in November 2013, after 16 years with Outlook Care. Staff and customers came together at Raydons Road to say goodbye to Linda as she began her well deserved retirement. Linda has moved back to Wales and plans to spend her retirement gardening and relaxing.

Climb every mountain

Katie Lay, Assistant Director of Business Services, tells us about her forthcoming challenge:

"After much soul searching I decided to attempt to raise at least £3,000 for Helen Rollaston Cancer charity and if that wasn't enough I also decided to train in order to compete a 5 day trek in the Himalayas. I am absolutely terrified. I've never raised more than a few quid for charity in the past and the longest walk I've done in recent years is a couple of hours on a pleasant summers evening around Broomfield! I have already raised in excess of this amount by holding events such as a tea and cakes get together and a casino night. Thanks to all of you who have supported me so far."

Ladies give their support

Staff at Central Services have been enthusiastically donating their unwanted bras to BCR Global Textiles which runs the UK's first online recycling scheme. This innovative scheme generates £1,000 per tonne of bras received of which a donation is made to Breast Cancer Campaign. Cardboard bra banks are available for receptions and offices with a free courier collection service when the bank is full.



staff profiles

Matthew Cowperthwaite, Head of Housing and Property Services and Area Manager tells us a bit about himself in his own words:

I joined from Swan Housing in 2001 as Housing & Care Co-ordinator with initial responsibility for recovery of high rent and service charge arrears and the implementation of a repairs recording system. I also had a 12-month Area Manager Secondment managing eight learning disability registered care services and, after only working a short time for Outlook Care and never having worked in the care field, this was a steep learning curve for me.

Now, in addition to my main housing and property responsibilities, I lead on health and safety, environment and project work, as well as being the Area Manager for Barking & Dagenham LD Supported Living services.

I think Outlook Care is always ahead of the game, ready to quickly change direction to react to external environmental changes and to be a leader in its field. Since working here I have learnt so much about care and support and fully understanding people's needs and requirements. People with disabilities have as much right to live their lives as anyone else and their voices should be just as powerful as Joe Bloggs on the street. Providing advice and support to our customers and their families is very rewarding.

On a personal note, I am married and have two lovely daughters aged



15 and 13 years, both daddy's girls! We love doing everything together, cycling and swimming and, of course, I have to attend and watch netball matches, and sit and watch endless dancing and singing shows with discreet earplugs! As a family we love hot beach holidays to get away from the mundane side of life and I enjoy chilling with a strawberry daiquiri watching the sunset or, as those who really know me, a double JD and coke or two!

If I had the opportunity to be the CEO for a day I would introduce measures against my main bugbears:

- **Ban all meetings for a month. If you want to talk to people, get up and do it now.**
- **When meetings are reintroduced have no chairs so no one can get too comfortable therefore no lengthy meetings**
- **Insist that calendars can only be filled to a maximum of 50% of the time - that leaves time for actually doing work**
- **Reintroduce the tea lady (oops not PC!) 'person' who will come round with refreshments twice a day and ensure everybody has their fulfilment of chocolate cake!**

Finally, if I had to describe Outlook Care in 3 words I would say passionate, professional and exciting.



Welcome to new Service Manager, Martin Hill...

My social care journey started around 10 years ago. I was a Phones 4u store manager when, one day whilst climbing a mountain on holiday in Europe (one of my passions), I decided enough was enough and I wanted a career change. I went back to University to study Adventure Tourism and Business Management but, of course, still needed to work. I stumbled across social care and became a support worker with individuals with learning disabilities and challenging behaviour. The shift work fitted brilliantly with my Uni days and I loved it immediately.

As a people person I found this so much more rewarding than my previous job and soon became a team leader. I progressed to a senior community coordinator role with SummerCare in and around Chelmsford. My knowledge developed and I took the opportunity of the operational management of the block contract. By working hard I continued to be promoted and became part of Summercare's Senior Management Team in 2009.

Why Outlook Care? The attraction was the organisation's outstanding reputation for care, promoting independence, choice and control for the people it supports. It's a fresh challenge and the opportunity to gain experience of housing related support plus the potential for further career development.

Everybody I have met so far has made me feel very welcome. There has been a lot to take in and learn but I think I am getting there slowly but surely and look forward to meeting more people in the coming weeks and months.

Contributions

If you'd like to contribute to the next edition of **grapevine**, please contact Bonnie Longfoot, Business Services Officer at Bonnie.Longfoot@outlookcare.org.uk

thank
you

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