

CREATIVE LIFE

ISSUE 30
2019

“There are people in this world who see a person for themselves rather than looking and judging them for this label called Autism”

Read Alex’s story in our Autism Awareness Month special feature on page 6-7

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A Word from Anna

Hello, I'm Anna Lunts, CEO of Creative Support. I would like to welcome you to the Spring Edition of Creative Life.

April is Autism Awareness Month; in this special edition we hear first-hand from Alex about his experience of being on the Autistic spectrum and how he finds writing to be a huge help. We also launch our new campaign – Positive About Autism, which gives information and useful advice about how we can all be more 'Autism-friendly.'

There are lots of stories in the magazine which I think you will enjoy. You can read about how one of our managers spent the night in a police cell to raise money for charity and follow Pauline's journey to having a home of her own. My personal favourite from this edition is a heartwarming story from Stockport about Neil and his new budgie, Kevin.

We're also launching the Green Goals Sunflower Challenge, so get planting and don't forget to take photographs. Send them in to marketing@creativesupport.co.uk. The best pictures will feature in our Autumn edition of Creative Life and there will be prizes for the tallest sunflowers!



Anna Lunts, Chief Executive



BE INVOLVED WITH CREATIVE LIFE

Have you been to one of Creative Support's recent events? What did you think about it? What do you think about the magazine? If you have an opinion on an article in Creative Life or an idea for something we could write about, please email your comments to: marketing@creativesupport.co.uk

or write to: Marketing, Wellington House, 131 Wellington Road South, Stockport, SK1 3TS.



YOUR STORIES

A Night In The Cells

Creative Support staff member and special constable Alan Pakenham has raised over £630 after spending the night in police cells for charity.

Alan, who is the Crisis and Recovery Manager at Creative Support's mental health café, Liverpool Light, spent the night in the Steelhouse Lane lock-up along with his German Shepherd dog, Bella. They raised money for the charity COPS which supports the families of serving police officers who have died in the line of duty and also for the West Midlands Police History Museum.

Alan has been a special constable for 15 years and the charity COPS is close to his heart:

"This is a charity that is really important to me," said Alan. "Just before I started working with the traffic division of Merseyside Police PC Dave Phillips was killed by a hit and run driver in 2015.

People have really got behind this cause and have been very generous with their support. I'm delighted to have raised so much money."



A Swinging 60th in Salford

In January Kevin, a lifelong Beatles fan, celebrated his 60th birthday with an unforgettable party. The staff at the service put an exceptional effort into every aspect of the event to ensure Kevin enjoyed a very special birthday. Here's what team leader Toni Brooker had to say:

"I must commend the staff at the service, especially Senior Support Worker Laura and Kevin's appointee David, for the hard work and dedication that went into planning this party.

It was absolutely fantastic and so person-centred to Kevin, not just with the Beatles theme but also things like the buffet. Kevin is normally unable to choose much food from a buffet as he doesn't like a lot of it, however Laura ensured that the food was all things Kevin likes, so he was able to take anything from the buffet table and really fill his boots!



Kevin spent the whole night with members of his family who he hadn't seen in years and some he had, dancing with cousins, nephews and nieces to a Beatles tribute band (The Cheatles) who played his favourite songs. The party went on into the night with many of our other service users attending, as well as the whole staff team including our regular bank workers. Everybody had an absolute ball and it was definitely the party of the year (if we do say so ourselves!). Kevin said he had a great night and his favourite part of the evening was the band and the cake!"

Kevin the Budgie

Neil, a resident at our Stockport learning disability services, was about to go to his Meet and Greet volunteering role at head office when he discovered that his budgie Gary had died.

Neil was so upset that kind-hearted builder Andy went out immediately to buy another one: *"He was gutted and I hated to see him so upset so I just nipped out to get him a new one,"* said Andy, whose building firm had been brought in to do some repairs in the kitchen at Neil's home.

"I was really sad," said Neil, *"and I didn't want to go into work. I was too upset to go and then Andy came back with a new budgie and I was really pleased. I've called him Kevin, after my nephew."*



Stockport Stars



Two of our Support Workers and one of our services have been recognised in the Stockport STAR Awards, which celebrate staff and services providing outstanding care in Stockport.

Felix Mitawa won 'Best Support Worker' for encouraging the person he supports to do more exercise and live a healthier lifestyle. Elaine Brammall was commended in the Outstanding Contribution to Care category for supporting a tenant to improve their mobility and Dial Park Road was awarded runner-up in Best Learning Disability Tenancy.

Colourful Digital Art in Bromley

Regency Court and Sutherland Court extra care services have launched an exciting new programme with Computer Learning. In the first session, residents learnt how to use tablet devices and had fun playing games and doing jigsaw puzzles on them. They also created some impressive digital art pictures to show off their skills!



Blokes United Kick Off in Darwen



Following the huge success of Blackburn's Social Inclusion Football League, which helps people with mental health issues, a second weekly session has been set up for Blokes United at Darwen Aldridge Community Academy.

Since the weekly sessions started at Witton Park Academy, the team has gone from seven to more than 30 men aged between 17 and 54 attending

Positive About Autism

Being positive about Autism means to be supportive, understanding and to create an environment that helps a person feel comfortable and able to be themselves - just the same thing that you would want for yourself!

This new campaign for 2019 focuses on the things we can all do to make spaces more 'Autism-friendly'. On World Autism Awareness Day (2nd April), services across the country took to the streets to reach out to local businesses and the public to start a conversation about how we can collaborate to be Positive About Autism in our communities.



What is Autism?

Autism affects the way a person communicates and how they experience the world around them. Whilst there may be some shared characteristics, there can be enormous variation in how autism affects an individual and everyone will have a distinct set of strengths and challenges.



How can I be more Autism-friendly?

- **Understand that everyone is different;** it may not be obvious to you how someone's thinking is different
- **Be patient;** someone can think about things in a lot of detail so may need more time to respond
- **Listen;** most of the time people will mean directly what they are trying to say, do not assume that they are trying to imply something else
- **Try to avoid sudden and unexpected change;** a person might not be mentally prepared for this and it can create anxiety
- **Be interested;** ask very detailed questions about things the person is interested in as this helps a person to feel comfortable in social situations and valued
- **Don't be frustrated if a person is not looking at you when you are talking;** this can help a person to focus and give you their full attention
- **Reduce lots of stimulation if you can see a person is having difficulties;** they may be experiencing an overload of information and reducing this can help
- **Be positive;** choose language that makes people feel welcome and to show that you are being kind



“My name is Alex and I am on the autistic spectrum. This doesn't mean I am a computer console in the early 80's playing Pacman, it's a different kind of spectrum.”

We spoke to Alex in Bury about writing, which helps him to cope in stressful situations and is a tool to communicate important things he feels people should know and understand about Autism.



"I find writing helps me express myself. When I'm troubled, I write about things," said Alex. "You would be surprised how many people do feel low and how hard it is to cope with something you don't understand yourself. If you don't understand yourself, how can you expect anyone else to understand you?" Alex is keen to help others deal with their own feelings and gives regular talks to groups and organisations about Autism and how it impacts on his life.

"I think understanding Autism is all about perspective. I enjoy drama and sometimes I feel as though I'm playing a character – that's how I get through. Laughter is a form of communication, too. Laughter can always help."

Alongside his writing, Alex also enjoys drawing and believes they go hand in hand. He is a keen cook, too: *"I enjoy cooking, keeping people well fed and giving them the chance to socialise. Eating good food can help you feel better,"* he said.

Alex believes good things don't come easy: *"If you want achievement and happiness you have to work hard for it."*



An example of Alex's writing:

Autism can effect a number of parts of your life including; How you behave, speak, feel and your thought processes.

I can find it difficult to form relationships. I can find it difficult to be affectionate to others and receive affection from others. This can effect me forming long lasting relationships especially if it is with another person with autism.

Although what I have said above is a negative point of view regarding autism and could be viewed as a curse. I have a great deal of positive attributes which I believe come because of my condition, such as a terrific ability to concentrate on certain tasks, such as painting, jigsaw puzzles and writing. I hope you agree with the last one, as I have put a great deal of effort and thought into writing for you today.

When you have autism you feel as though sometimes you are put on the spot in social situations. You don't know what to say to others especially when talking about relationships.

When you have autism, you feel as though you don't want to let people down. You feel as though you have to do what you are told. This makes me feel vulnerable to other people making fun of me.

My mind goes at one hundred miles an hour. I could have an idea about something during the night if I don't write it down I could forget it the next morning. This is the reason why I have become such a prolific writer and why I have a season ticket at the local stationery shop.

When I concentrate doing one thing I will get distracted, causing me to concentrate on the next task. This will sometimes stop me from completing the first task I started.

I feel people could benefit more from life if only they knew about autism and saw the person behind the diagnosis.

This is why I am here today speaking to you.

MIND MATTERS



How do you look after your mental health and wellbeing?

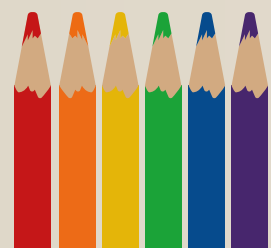
When we think about our health, we all know how important it is to look after our bodies, but it is equally important to look after our minds.

Mental health should be a priority for everyone as it is all about our emotional, psychological and social wellbeing, which can change throughout our lives. Our mental health affects how we think, feel and act. It can also affect how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. Practising activities and positive habits that promote good mental health is therefore a great way to stay healthy, whether you have experienced a mental health condition or not.

Just like we can look after our physical health by eating a balanced diet, exercising regularly and getting enough sleep, there are lots of things we can do to help maintain good mental health.

In 2019, we want to build a Mental Health 'First Aid Ideas Kit' by sharing resources and experiences from service users, staff and volunteers across the Creative Support community to help each other prioritise and enjoy good mental health. If you have a go-to activity such as music, exercise, meditation or gardening which helps you stay positive, we want to know!

With the contributions we are hoping to put together an interactive exhibition for World Mental Health Day in October, which will allow the audience to try out each wellbeing activity.



If you have a go-to activity such as music, exercise, meditation or gardening which helps you to stay positive, we want to know!

"My big thing is drawing. I take a film or music poster and draw it as near as photo-real as I can get, over some weeks. It takes effort, but you can get wrapped up in it and see the results of your effort and be really pleased with the end product"



Sarah, Manchester

"I use lavender balm to rub on my wrists and temples, usually at the end of the day but it is also revitalising to use in the middle of the day if I feel stressed"



Ruby, Tyneside

"I have a colourful box decorated with some of my favourite things. Inside it there is an adult colouring book and puzzle book to occupy my mind from invasive and repetitive thoughts"



Jodie, Dudley

"Whenever I'm feeling a bit down I like to cook a hearty meal, like a stew or a soup - something warming and comforting that is like a hug in a bowl!"



Josh, Leeds

"I find painting very relaxing and stress relieving. I mainly do landscape paintings that are inspired by my favourite artists"



Nick, St Helens



A Day in the Life of...

Cai, from Leicester

Cai secured a seasonal contract working with Amazon over the busy Christmas period, learning lots of new skills for the future.

So, tell us about a typical day on the job...

Well I worked in the stock room and helped to organise the parcels for delivery.

First, the parcels are put onto a production belt, then people organise the parcels before putting them onto pallets. When they reach a certain height, the pallets are shrink-wrapped. The pallets are then taken to the staging area to be organised and taken to the docking area. At the docking area the pallets of parcels are loaded onto lorries for delivery.



That sounds quite tiring! How long was the contract?

It was from November to January and I worked five days a week.

What were your favourite parts of the job?

Meeting new people, loading the parcels onto the lorries, playing music during working hours and we got pizza every Wednesday!

What did you learn?

How to pick up the pace, cope with tight deadlines and work under pressure

What are your hopes for the future?

I hope to work in similar roles, which will allow me to be more independent and earn money to support my girlfriend and our new baby.

Would you like to appear in this feature?

Email marketing@creativesupport.co.uk and tell us about a day in your life!

QUIZ TIME

Here's a brain-teasing pop culture quiz from Sycamore Court:

Find the
answers on
page 21!

- 1) Who is Alf Garnett's wife in 'Till Death Do Us Part'?
- 2) Where was Elvis born?
- 3) What was John Wayne's real name?
- 4) How many children does Mick Jagger have?
- 5) How many number one singles have Abba had?
- 6) Which band had three brothers in and was known for their squeaky singing?
- 7) What is Axel Rose's real name?
- 8) Which Cockney character says 'You plonker Rodney'?

WORDSEARCH

by Katrina, Meet and Greet Volunteer at Head Office

D	H	E	P	E	R	M	E	H	D
H	I	O	C	O	L	O	U	R	H
A	G	R	O	L	L	E	R	S	B
I	H	S	C	I	S	S	O	R	S
R	L	I	O	F	N	I	T	T	Q
D	I	M	O	V	N	Z	A	I	P
R	G	N	W	I	H	X	J	N	Y
Y	H	B	O	B	M	H	D	T	U
E	T	S	H	O	R	T	C	U	T
R	S	B	E	F	X	K	B	N	E

This issue's hair-raising wordsearch features words selected by Katrina based around her college course in hairdressing!

Why not try and see if you can find all of the words listed below?

HAIRDRYER

ROLLERS

PERM

HIGHLIGHTS

COLOUR

TINT

SHORTCUT

BOB

SCISSORS

TINFOIL

CREATIVE TOGETHER CENTRE



We were delighted to welcome the Mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy Burnham, to officially open our Creative Together building on Swan Street in Manchester on Wednesday 3rd April.

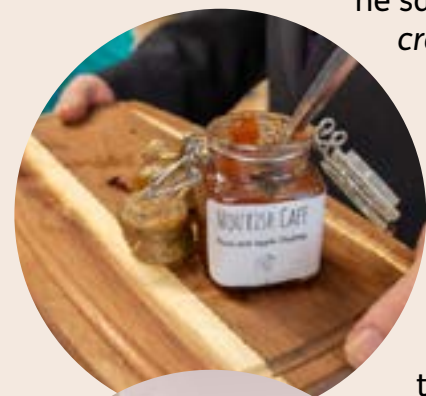
Creative Together hosts our day opportunity Breakthrough, which has been running at various locations in Manchester for over 20 years. Andy met members, guests and staff at the official launch.

Andy was given a guided tour by our CEO Anna Lunts and Centre Co-ordinator, Samantha Hipkiss. He was very impressed with the facilities, which include a large communal space, holistic therapy room, music room, training room and Nourish café. Andy was shown a film that has been made about the centre and then gave a speech as he unveiled a special plaque, marking the opening.

"It's a massive honour to be with everybody today," he said. "I think sometimes we don't value creativity, music, and art enough, to be honest. I think they're the things that make life worth living. I think we have to do much more to help people enjoy the best things in life and get the most out of life; to be independent and have a voice."

Canapés and fizz were served throughout the evening and the drama group gave a performance they had devised about inclusion and what the space at Creative Together means to them.

Errol and Nigel (AKA DJ Groover) were in charge of the music and the event was a huge success; we would like to thank all of the staff, members and volunteers.



creativity corner



CREATIVE TOGETHER

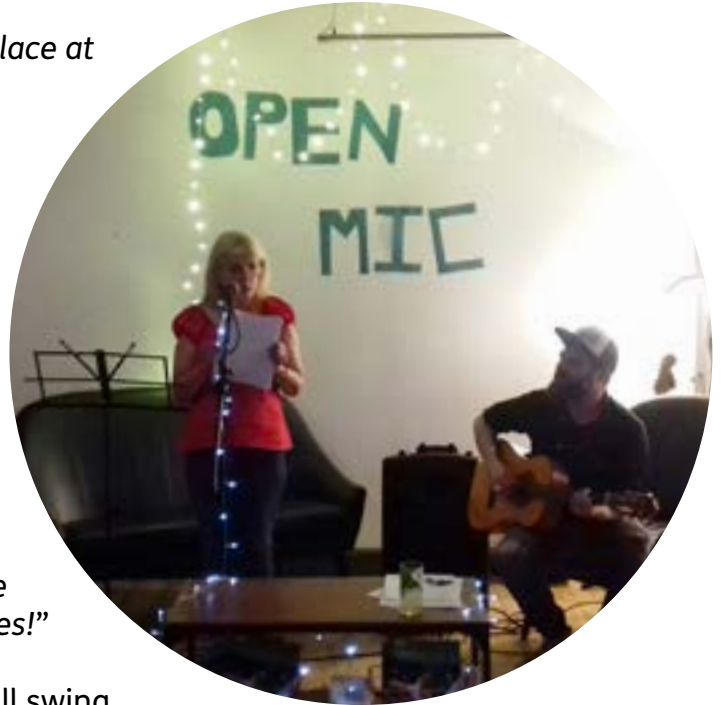
We hear about some of the great activities taking place at our new co-production centre in Manchester.

In February Creative Together held their very first open mic night. The event was an opportunity for service users who attend creative writing and music sessions at the centre to showcase their creativity, which included poetry, singing, guitar and even a sing-a-long violin jam at the end of the evening!

Centre Co-ordinator Samantha Hipkiss said: *"The open mic night was a lot of fun and we're looking forward to inviting other charities from the area to get involved in the next one. We'd like to say a huge well done to everyone for their brilliant performances!"*

Creative writing classes at the centre are now in full swing. Participants have named themselves 'Swan Feathers Writing Group'. Here is a lovely poem from Carolyn, titled 'Spring':

*Spring is full of life that
you can see.
You can see buds forming
into beautiful flowers
Buds appearing on the
trees which turn into leaves
Blossom appears on the trees
Animals coming out of
hibernation.
Birds appearing once again
in the trees, fields and lakes
You hear the birds singing
in the air.
Cattle in the fields
are bleating and mooing.
As new calves and lambs
are born.
You can smell spring in the air.*



The art sessions have also been producing some great work, including painted pebbles and jewellery making.

At a taster session open to the public, participants went on a street art tour around Manchester City Centre and then designed their own tote bags inspired by what they saw.



Green Goals

Non-recyclable plastic is a growing problem for our planet. As part of May's Green Goals campaign, we're highlighting some creative and practical ways the Creative Support community are tackling this issue.



Halton Lodge, Creative Support's accommodation service for adults at risk of homelessness, have been awarded a £7,000 grant from the Merseyside Waste and Recycling Authority to fund an exciting new project: 'Halton Ecobricks'. Working with community groups and partners, Halton Lodge will reuse otherwise non-recyclable plastic waste to make ecobricks which will then be used to build structures that will benefit the local community, such as a raised garden bed, a garden bench, or decorative garden wall!

An ecobrick is created by packing clean and dry used plastic into a plastic bottle to a set density. Ecobricks enable us to take personal responsibility for our plastic and build in an environmentally-conscious and community-minded way.

Halton Lodge residents and members of community groups who have worked together to make the ecobricks will also hold meetings to vote on the type of structures they'd like to build. Local artists will then support the project by designing and constructing public structures that can be enjoyed by everybody!

If you would like to get involved in this project, Halton Lodge would be grateful to receive your donated Ecobricks. For more information about the project or how to make your own, please email Lydia O'Hara, Activities and Engagement Worker: lydia.ohara@creativesupport.org.uk.



Sunflower Challenge

Contact the Marketing Team to get your seeds! marketing@creativesupport.co.uk

As part of Green Goals, we are setting a challenge across Creative Support for service users, staff and volunteers to grow the tallest, most beautiful sunflower! You can enter on your own or as a service. Take pictures of you and your sunflower regularly so we can see how big it is growing and share the entries on social media. Here are some instructions to help you care for your bloom:

You can either plant your seeds straight into the garden in late May, or to start growing them earlier inside:

1. Put some damp compost in a plastic cup so it comes almost to the top. Poke your finger in the soil to make a hole for your sunflower seed. Drop the seed in the middle and cover with compost.
2. Put your pot in a sunny place inside – a south facing windowsill is a good place.
3. Water it regularly to make sure the compost never dries out.
4. When your plant grows too big for the plastic cups, replant it into a larger pot by half filling the new pot with compost. Ease the plant gently out of the small pot and put it in the bigger one. Carefully fill the space around the plant with compost.
5. If there is no risk of frost (usually by the beginning of May) you can put your pot in a sunny place outside until it is ready to plant in the garden (or a bigger pot if you can't do this).
6. Watch your sunflower grow – don't forget to measure it! Email your pictures to marketing@creativesupport.co.uk.



In Style

Lodi, from London

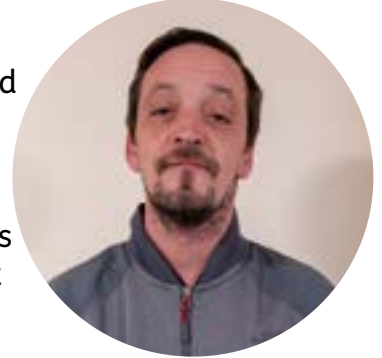
“These are the first pair of shoes I’ve properly looked after; I polish them with white shoe polish. My skirt is from Petticoat Lane. I got my first tattoo in 1983, one of them is a German cartoon character called Verna. I’ve been covering my head recently as part of my fashion, it makes me feel more confident.”



Service User Awards

In this edition of Creative Life, we would like to recognise some recent Service User Award winners and runners up who have worked hard on their personal development.

Howard was a massive help at his service in Runcorn over the Christmas period, preparing and serving the Christmas Dinner and generally being helpful and considerate towards other residents. Howard also started a maths course with Crisis and hopes to volunteer in the near future, helping others who have experienced hardship. Howard was also nominated for stepping in and helping when a road traffic accident occurred involving two other residents.



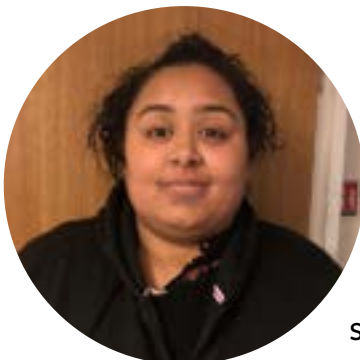
Lewis from Dudley was nominated for being a committed and dedicated volunteer at Garden Pathways. Being a part of this project has brought some structure to Lewis's days and given him a great sense of achievement. Lewis enjoys socialising with like-minded people and the staff at the project are really proud of his accomplishments.



Kyle from Widnes was nominated for his proactive approach to improving his skills and opportunities. Kyle regularly engages in activities, and excels in cookery sessions at the service. Kyle has also completed a Widnes Vikings pre-employment course with 100% attendance and has engaged with a Talent Match Programme. On top of this, Kyle always pays his rent on time!



Charlotte from Birmingham recently took a huge stride outside her comfort zone when she applied for a placement with the NHS, overcoming social anxieties to follow her dream of working to support deaf students. Charlotte also created a presentation which she bravely delivered to staff on her NHS placement, a great achievement! She has now been taken on as a permanent member of staff and enrolled onto a sign language course to improve her skills and help her to support others.



Do you know someone who deserves recognition?

If you would like to nominate someone for a Service User Award, you can request a nomination form and further information by emailing: business.development@creativesupport.co.uk.

Achieve Q

Achieve Q is our internal award for Creative Support staff, which represents and recognises the attributes expected of each of us within the organisation:

Aspirational | **C**ompassionate | **H**ardworking | **I**nclusive | **E**ffective | **V**alue Based | **E**mpowering

Everyone can get involved to ensure our staff are recognised – colleagues, managers, service users, their families and other stakeholders are all able to nominate an individual or a team.

The **Highfield Road** team in Calderdale were awarded Silver for their commitment to co-production when organising a Macmillan World's Biggest Coffee morning event. The staff team and four tenants worked hard to secure donations for tombola prizes and to make scrumptious cakes for the big day.

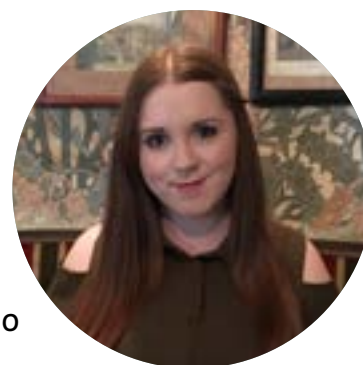
The team had won an award in 2017 and decided the best way to use the prize they received was to build on what had already been achieved. They spent the entire voucher from the award to make sure the day was the best it could possibly be.

On the day a fantastic £478.17 was raised for Macmillan and a great day was had by all. Well done!



Jodie Andrews, a Support Worker at Lea Hall Place in Rugeley won Silver for planning activities and encouraging service user involvement and inclusion. She successfully applied for a Be Involved Internal Grant to develop the garden space and hold activities aimed at increasing independent living skills. Jodie also secured a donation from Morrison's supermarket of baking equipment for cookery sessions. She has organised fun trips, such as pumpkin picking at Halloween and contacted a local company to get a Christmas tree donated.

Grace McDougall, Acting Service Manager at Birmingham Mental Health Recovery and Employment Service, won Silver for her outstanding dedication. The project launched in April 2018 and, despite unexpected management changes, Grace has done her absolute best to keep the service functioning well and providing high quality support. She has a very thorough understanding of Creative Support's policies and procedures and is always well-informed to deal with any situation. She also prioritises staff support, ensuring her team can count on her to help them.



Is there a staff member you know who goes above and beyond?

If there is a team or individual that you think is doing a great job and deserves to be recognised, please email: achieveq@creativesupport.co.uk for a nomination form or for more information.



A habit is something we do regularly. Some habits are good for us, like brushing our teeth every morning. Others have a negative impact on our health, like eating biscuits every day.

We want to break these habits that are bad for us and start making positive changes.

Simply watching what you are putting into your body and how much activity you do can get good results.

The Health Promotion team is inviting everyone across the Creative Support community to step up to the challenge and practise more 'Healthy Habits'! We have created a workbook which you can use to help you on your journey to a healthier lifestyle. In the workbook you can identify which habits you would like to change, choosing one habit to start with, and keep a record of your progress over the next 12 weeks.

Are there any of these 'habits' you would like to change?



Quit Smoking:

Stopping smoking can increase your lung capacity and drastically reduce the risk of life-threatening illness.



Healthy Diet:

Try to eat a healthy diet that has lots of fruit, vegetables and whole grains but is low in red meat, saturated fats and sugar.



Reduce Alcohol:

Drinking less alcohol is better for your liver and will reduce your chance of developing serious health issues.



Sleep & Rest:

Getting the right amount of sleep is vital to repair your body and immune system, whilst improving attention and concentration.



Drink Water:

Aim to drink 6 - 8 glasses of water a day to stay hydrated. This will also help you to feel more alert and energised.



Active Lifestyle:

Doing 30 minutes of moderate exercise a day can help maintain a healthy weight and improve your strength and stamina.



Be Kind to Yourself:

Don't put yourself under too much pressure and make sure to take time out and check in with your wellbeing.



Healthy Weight:

Maintaining a healthy weight lowers your risk of heart disease and diabetes, whilst improving your mobility and energy levels.

If you would like more information on the 'Healthy Habits' campaign, or to order your workbook, please contact health.promotion@creativesupport.co.uk.

Creative Cooking



Overnight Oats

James at Creative Coffee in Northallerton says:

“Overnight oats are super easy to make and a great healthy breakfast option. You just leave them in the fridge and the next morning they are ready!”

Difficulty Rating: ● ○ ○ ○ ○

Step 1

Defrost mixed berries in the microwave for 5-6 minutes (stir and put in for an extra 2-3 minutes if needed).

Spoon the defrosted berries into the bottom of a pot or Tupperware, keeping one large berry back.



Step 2

Empty a pot of yoghurt into a bowl.

Measure out $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of oats and pour over the yoghurt.

Mix the yoghurt and oats well until all of the oats are covered.



Step 3

Spoon the mixture into the pot with the berries at the bottom.

Put the large berry on top with a little juice.

Place in the fridge overnight.



Step 4

Rinse out all of the empty yoghurt pots and put them in the recycling bin.

Clear your area and wipe the worktop down.

Enjoy your oats the next morning!



Would you like to appear in this feature?

Email marketing@creativesupport.co.uk with your healthy recipe!



Fundraising: Everyone's Invited!

Arise, manager at one of our Supported Living services in Trafford, Greater Manchester, talks about his successful Christmas Ball and aspirations for other fundraising activities with the people who live at the service.



What was your most recent fundraising event?

We held a Christmas Ball in Trafford on 8th December 2018.

How were service users involved in the event?

We asked everyone's opinion on what they would like their Christmas Ball to be like and consulted them on things like the venue, food and drink, activities and when the event would take place. I think we can further expand on this using questionnaires for feedback on the success of the event, so that we can take more ideas for the future. I would also like to look at an organising committee where service users are invited to meetings to help plan events and given a key responsibility.

How can you enable greater involvement in fundraising activities?

We could make our approach more person-centred and focus on the strengths and interests of the individuals. We can use alternative communication strategies to aid conversation and use visuals to express ideas and thoughts.

What are the positives of getting service users involved in fundraising activities?

- It can be empowering for the people we support
- It is a good way to develop friendships and social skills
- People will be more integrated into their community
- It is important that the people we support feel a sense of ownership of Creative Support and things that affect them

What's next on the agenda for fundraising in Greater Manchester?

- To build on joint working between the Trafford and Greater Manchester fundraising groups
- To encourage more managers in Greater Manchester to get involved to further improve the quality of the activities and events
 - To look at better service user involvement in the initial planning stages
 - To develop questionnaires to get formal feedback on the success of the events



Interested in fundraising at your service? We can help you get started with one of our checklists, or arrange a visit to your service to give you some support with your idea.

✉ fundraising@creativesupport.co.uk

☎ 0161 236 0829

Three's Company at Grove Place

We chat with Amy about her rewarding Volunteer Befriender role at Grove Place in Alcester.

Tell us about your volunteer role...

As a volunteer befriender, I visit my local service twice a week and spend time chatting and doing activities with two lovely service users. We particularly enjoy arts and crafts, listening to music, playing a range of different puzzles and games and having fun decorating biscuits and cakes.

What do you like most about volunteering?

I really enjoy getting to know new people, and this has been a fantastic opportunity to do that. I look forward to visiting the service users every week and planning new activities for us. Knowing that they also look forward to my visits each week is wonderful and my role is very rewarding.



What have you learnt while volunteering?

The services that Creative Support provide are outstanding and I am continuing to learn so much about a range of things, from different medical conditions and disabilities to how incredibly beneficial supported living is for all of the service users that I have had the pleasure of meeting.

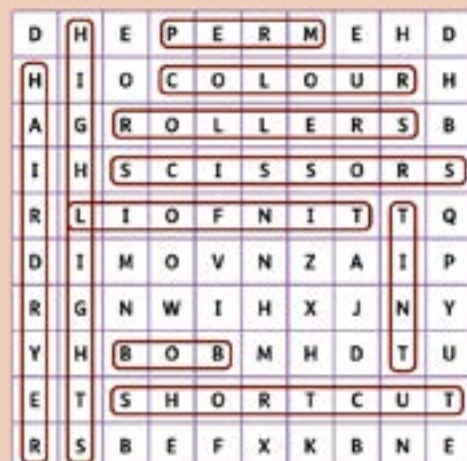
What are your plans for the future?

Volunteering at Creative Support has taught me so much about myself and has cemented my decision to begin a career in care in the future. I have worked in various different roles and environments, however volunteering at my local service is by far the most rewarding opportunity that I have taken and I couldn't imagine pursuing a role in any other field now!

If you have an idea for a volunteer role at your service, or would like the support of a volunteer, we'd love to hear from you. You can get in touch with the Volunteer Team by calling **0161 236 0829** or sending an email to volunteer@creativesupport.co.uk.

Quiz & Wordsearch Answers

- 1) Else Garnett
- 2) Tupelo, Mississippi
- 3) Marion Robert Morrison
- 4) Eight
- 5) Nine
- 6) Bee Gees
- 7) William Bruce Rose
- 8) Del Boy Trotter



MY JOURNEY

Our special feature where we catch up with a Creative Support member and hear about their journey.

In this issue we speak to Pauline from Widnes, who has overcome a number of challenges including homelessness and mental health issues to make a new life for herself.

Here she talks about getting back on track and managing her own tenancy:

“I arrived at Brennan Lodge through a very bad relationship with my ex-partner.

I was suicidal and I knew I needed some counselling so I asked for help. I did ten weeks of counselling and now I’m doing every Tuesday morning for an hour or so to help me become a better person.

I have now moved into my own flat which I love very much. I can’t thank the staff at Brennan Lodge enough for what they’ve done to support me to get into my new home. I’m going back to Brennan Lodge twice a week on a Tuesday and a Thursday to do volunteer work. It feels so wonderful to be a volunteer at the hostel because all the staff are absolutely made up with me and they can’t believe how far I’ve come.

It feels wonderful having my own front door. I can go out when I want to go out and come in when I want too.

It’s nice to do what I want with the flat.

I’m going to keep on volunteering two days a week and see how I go on. If they want me to do more I will, because I love going. Sometimes we do activities and we talk about keeping your flat clean and tidy and paying the bills.

I’ve done all the right things this time. House insurance, gas and electric, I’m getting broadband put in and a house

phone. I know what my budget is and I can manage it. I’ve organised my broadband all on my own.

I’ve been in bad relationships before where I’ve been taken advantage of, but I’m a much better judge of character now than I used to be.

I’m hoping to go on holiday next year to Benidorm. I’ve come a long, long, long way and I am a better person.”



If you would like to share your story in the next edition, email marketing@creativesupport.co.uk.

What's on

Check out our guide below - you'll find plenty of events and activities to keep you busy for the next few months!

opportunity, choice and wellbeing



What does 'opportunity, choice and wellbeing' mean to you?

You are invited to have your say at a series of Person Centred Practice events, which will provide a chance to think about quality of life, goals and achievements and how your support plan can impact on this.

Thursday 18th April - Stockport

Friday 3rd May - Leicester

Friday 31st May - Scunthorpe

Friday 7th June - Birmingham

Wednesday 12th June - Reading

Thursday 13th June - London

Thursday 20th June - Bedford

Friday 5th July - Manchester

For more information please contact claire.lumb@creativesupport.co.uk.

Green Goals

Climate change is a big issue, but there are small steps we can all take to look after our world. This month we want to look at how we can reduce waste and recycle more creatively. It's also a great opportunity to get out on the garden - why not have a go at our sunflower challenge? See page 14 of this magazine!



Volunteering

For Volunteer's Week we are encouraging services to celebrate their volunteers by joining us for 'The Big Lunch'. Whether you take your sandwiches to the park or treat your volunteers to a local café, the Volunteer Team can help you organise your celebration! For more information please email volunteer@creativesupport.co.uk.

Get Active

Summer is all about getting out and about. Try to think about the exercise you do that you might not notice, such as walking, dancing or sport, and how you can do more of this. We will be setting challenges for the chance to win exclusive Creative Support water bottles!



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