



CREATIVE LIFE

2024
ISSUE 40



Inspiring Ideas



The Year of Living Well



CONTENTS

- 3 Welcome**
A warm welcome from CEO Anna Lunts and some of our guest writers from this issue.
- 4–5 Your Good News Stories**
A round-up of what's been going on within the Creative Support community.
- 6–7 My Story on Display**
Lexi in Leeds talks about having her own display in Leeds City Museum, sharing her story of blindness.
- 8 Spring Forward, Set Goals!**
Rebekah from Birmingham shares her top tips for setting achievable goals.
- 9 Just Keep Swimming**
Linda tells us about attending a disability swim club to keep her active.
- 10 Home Town Heroes**
Adrian tells us about his hometown Rossington and why it's so special to him.
- 11 Healthy Habits**
Nathan and Charlotte chat to us about how they lead healthy lifestyles.
- 12–13 It's our 40th!**
We're celebrating our 40th issue of Creative Life! Read about our journey and some of the people who are also turning 40 this year!
- 14–15 Engagement Workshop**
We held our first ever Engagement Workshop, where seven people we support had a go at producing Creative Life magazine!
- 16 The Hidden Light Within the Darkness**
Katy in the North East talks about ways she manages her mental health while studying.
- 17 Sonia's Anxiety Tips**
Sonia in Doncaster tells us about some of the ways she overcomes her anxiety, and the progress she has made.
- 18 Pets Corner**
Read about Adam and Claire's adorable furry friends in our Pets Corner.
- 19 A Life in the Garden**
Amanda in Rochdale has been gardening since she was 16, and shares her top tips for beginners.
- 20–21 Long Lost Family**
Wilmer in Bedford reunited with his sister after having no contact for nearly 20 years!
- 22–23 Spot the Difference and Recipe**

Would you like to appear in this magazine?

Email: communications@creativesupport.co.uk and send in your story!

Hello from Anna



Hello and welcome to issue 40 of Creative Life!

Hello and welcome to our 40th issue of Creative Life! We can't believe we've already released 40 issues since we started publishing back in 2010. You can look back on some of our special editions over the years and hear from our frequent contributors, as well as celebrate some 40th birthdays happening this year in our Creative Support community.

We have some amazing stories for this issue, including Wilmer in Bedford who reunited with his sister after 20 years apart, and Lexi in Leeds who talks us through having her own museum display at Leeds City Museum. As part of our Year of Living Well, we spoke to some people about the healthy habits they're starting in 2024, and you can find a healthy recipe from Charlotte at the back of this magazine. We hope you enjoy this issue of Creative Life, and here's to 40 more!

Anna Lunts, Chief Executive

A Word From Our Contributors



Sonia
I am feeling fantastic about being in the magazine and telling everyone my story, I hope it will help others.

I hope my views will help others. I would encourage them to have a go at gardening or cooking, as a packet of seeds doesn't cost much and anyone can learn.



Amanda



Lexi
Being in Creative Life is exciting because it's going to make even more people aware of my museum display. I hope it inspires people to visit Leeds City Museum to check it out for themselves, and also to discover the wealth of other exciting exhibits.



Wilmer

I am very excited to see my story featured in this issue of Creative Life magazine. I hope other people will read it and find my story inspiring.

We would love to hear what you think of this issue!
If you'd like to get in touch, please email: communications@creativesupport.co.uk

YOUR GOOD NEWS STORIES

Let's take a look at some of the lovely things that are happening in our services all across the country. We love seeing what everyone gets up to, so if you have a good news story you'd like to share, send it to communications@creativesupport.co.uk and you could feature in the next Creative Life!



Celebrity Chef in Berkshire

Rufus in Berkshire was featured on ITV News! Rufus has cerebral palsy and can now take part in cooking classes, thanks to specially-made equipment provided by the charity REMAP. Rufus said "I live in supported living, so being able to cook makes me able to do more. While you're obviously never able to eradicate the disability, this equipment is able to give me any opportunity other students get."



Riding High in Bedford

Trevor from Bedford is a dedicated horse rider, and was thrilled to receive his rosette and certificate for completing his latest round of sessions! "This term he showcased his growing expertise by mastering the art of holding the reins and skilfully steering his companion Dixie," said Emily, Acting Registered Manager. Trevor's commitment to listening during his lessons has improved his riding ability and also boosted his confidence. Well done!

Happy New Home in Leicester

"Hi, I'm Stuart and I have just moved into my new place. I am really starting to settle in now and the staff are wonderful. I am feeling so much more relaxed and I am a lot happier with the right support, a great manager and landlord. I am getting on well with a lot of the tenants and have made some new friends here too. My hobbies are arts and crafts, social media, fantasy football, TV and visiting family." Welcome Stuart!



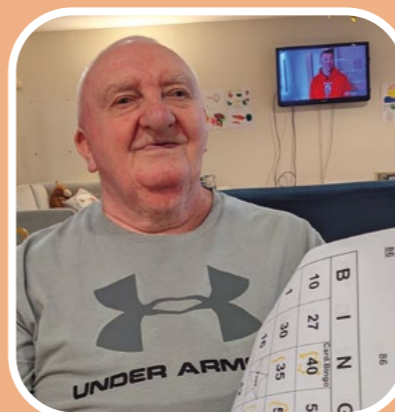
Bowling Buzz in the North East

The North East have set up their own bowling league! The group began as a way to build friendships, and many members had enjoyed bowling together in the past. "Coming to the bowling group is amazing, I love meeting new people," said David. In the future, they hope to open up the league and compete with other Creative Support teams- their main message is that everyone is welcome. Cassey said "Everyone is friendly and makes me feel comfortable." Ashley, David and Nicole got strikes- you'll all be pro bowlers in no time!



Hungry Visitors in Stockport

Helen from Stockport has been spotting foxes in the garden of her service! The hungry visitors have been coming back after being fed tasty treats by Helen and the staff. "Me and Claire watch the foxes at night time and take lots of pictures," said Helen. "Three of them come to the back garden and they like eating boiled eggs." How cute!



Finding Fitness in London

Frederick from London has lost 17 pounds since starting exercise classes! He's been trying healthy new meals, spends his time getting out and about in the community for some fresh air and has been enjoying meeting new people in his classes. "I've had nice salads and tried new things like yoghurt, and I've been going out on trips," said Frederick. "I'm doing well and I'm going to keep going."

Have you got an interesting story, some exciting news or a photo of something that you're really proud of?

We want to hear about it!

We can share your story on our website, social media, or maybe even feature you in the next issue of Creative Life!

Keep up to date with our good news by following us [@crtvspprt](https://www.instagram.com/crtvspprt)



My Story On Display

Lexi in Leeds has her own display case at Leeds City Museum! After using her voice to make an accessible change to one of the museum's displays, Lexi was offered her own part in an exhibition to share her story about blindness, and how there's not just limitations, but many possibilities.

How did your display come about?

"Recently I set myself a goal to visit lots of museums, so I went to Leeds City Museum with a friend. We went to an exhibition called 'Overlooked' which was made by a group of volunteers, all about people in history who have been discriminated against. There was one item about blind people, and it was a model of a bridge used in a planning meeting to show blind people how it would be part of the environment.

However, they'd put it in a glass case so I couldn't touch it! Characteristic of how I am, I wasn't going to stop going on about it, so the lady at the museum put me in touch with the person who led the group of volunteers called Jordan Keighley. He said he agreed with me and got it taken out of its case so I could have a proper look at it. He said that was the only item he had about blindness, so asked me if I wanted to do my own display!"

How did you create your display?

"I had a meeting with Jordan and recorded spoken histories about my chosen topics, and talked about what I wanted to put in the case. I told him glass cases aren't much use to me, so he said I didn't have to put much in it and they could make my display more interactive. They made a bench which has the braille alphabet and a message underneath that you can work out, and a game of dominos you can play by touch. The bench will be permanent in the museum to use in more interactive displays in the future!"

"There's also a white cane where people can have a go walking around on the spot. I would love it if people could embrace and accept using a white cane. There's a lot of stigma, but I see them as a key rather than a barrier. In my spoken history I talk about hating my cane when I was a child, then being able to use it and it becoming something positive. I think it's very liberating to have one. It gives me independence, it gives me a feel of what's in front of me, it gives me chances and opens doors. I customise mine with a hair bobble and a light so it feels like a part of me and I can express myself."



How do you feel about being part of the exhibition?

"It's quite strange, especially the way it came about, as the door opened when I became angry about something being inaccessible! It's a nice feeling, because I want to be heard and I want people to know what it's like to be me in the world, and hopefully help other people have a validating experience. I'm blind and autistic and I have diagnosed anxiety, and these things make me different enough to want to tell my story.

They were really flexible to change the glass case and to try something new, and they even had a group of blind people in afterwards to look at it. I've been very involved in the creative process."

What do you hope people learn?

"The main point of my message is that it's not the end of the world to lose your sight. I've been blind all my life, but I find that people who lose their sight feel like it's the end of the world. My message is to show all of the things you can do- you've started reading braille, you can play dominoes. There's a lot of limitations and there's a lot of possibilities, it's about being shown what can be done and the idea that life carries on."

If you want to visit Lexi's display, check out the 'Overlooked Legacies' exhibition at Leeds City museum. The exhibition is open until October 2024 and you can ask a visitor assistant upon arrival to direct you.

Just keep swimming



Spring Forward, Set Goals!

Rebekah Salisbury from Birmingham shares her top tips for setting achievable goals.

Spring is a great time to think about new aspirations and set new goals. Setting new goals can typically start off positive but, as motivation can fade it can seem like a chore, even making us feel guilty when our goals are not reached. The main reasons why motivation fades include setting goals that are too difficult, or not choosing something meaningful. Here are a few tips that I have found helpful when thinking about what I want to achieve.

Try new things

Instead of treating this as a challenge, view this as a great way to expand your horizons to many different opportunities you have always wanted to do. Why not write down a list of your top ten hobbies and see which of these you can get more involved in?

Keep in touch

Socialising in itself can be difficult, so if that seems too much to think about, how about focusing on your current friends and family? Be more involved with little daily activities that might help them; such as watering their plants or taking time to make a telephone call to keep in touch.

Be more active

Taking time for yourself should be a priority, for both mental and physical reasons. Being more active is a positive step to help calm the mind, focus on wellbeing and to keep fit. This could

be as simple as a leisurely stroll through the local park a few times a week, taking pets out more for walks or even enjoying a 30 minute swim session at your local pool. These are all steps in the right direction towards a better and healthier you, all helping to break up the usual mundane routine.

Help the environment

A final way to better ourselves this year is to help the environment. If we all do our own part, the united effect of everybody's actions will be huge. We can start to reduce our waste from all aspects of our lives, from not buying clothes that we don't really need, to reducing our food wastage when we cook at home. We can recycle our packaging from once we've been grocery shopping and reuse newspapers or scrap paper for crafts.

Whatever you decide to do, make it mean something special. Don't push yourself too far and think about what hobbies, interests and ideas can benefit you for the better.

I am going to focus on myself and realise what my priorities are. I also want to take a look at my wastage and see how I can better the environment around me, including packaging and recycling.

I wish you all the best for a great and productive rest of the year!

By Rebekah Salisbury

Linda in London started attending the disability swim club 'We Swim', which was featured on TV for winning a BBC Sports Award! Linda tells us all about what she enjoys about swimming, and her top tips for getting in the water.

"The group teaches people how to swim," said Linda. "I like swimming, it's super. I feel free!"

Linda joined her club in November and attends once a month. "I wanted to go out more and improve my muscles. It makes me feel calm and good. It's been great."

One of the club's volunteers, Megan Allen, won the 'Unsung Hero Award' at the BBC Sports Awards in December. The club aims to increase the opportunities for people with disabilities to swim in London, for just £2 a session.

Lula, Sessional Activity Worker, attends the sessions with Linda. "We've invited some more people from the service to come," said Lula. "We definitely want to get more people involved!"

When starting her sessions Linda was a 'natural' and she didn't find it hard at all! "Linda was so calm in the water, it was really impressive," said Lula. "She was very brave!"

For people just starting off on their swim journey, Linda gives her top tips for starting out. "Just go for it, keep trying and don't give up!" said Linda. When swimming, Linda says it's really important to "keep calm, listen to the instructors, and keep safe."

Keep on swimming Linda!

Find out more about We Swim here:
<https://weswim.club/>



Linda enjoying her swimming session.



Carrying the Torch for Rossington

Adrian is going to tell us all about his hometown, Rossington, and why it's so special to him. Rossington is in South Yorkshire and it used to be a mining village. It is one of the largest villages in England, with a population of 13,557!

"I've always lived in Doncaster. I was born in Rossington in 1964 and I love living close by to my family so I can visit them easily. I like helping out at my local church and attending my community group at the town hall. My favourite places are the church and the shops.

If someone was visiting my hometown I will tell them to visit:

- **St Michael's church.** I help out at the church and wear a gown during the Sunday Service.
- **The water feature near Styrrup in Doncaster.** It was used for horses to drink and people say Dick Turpin has used it!
- **The Memorial Hall.** It has model of a Pit Wheel outside, which is a giant wheel used in mining to lower miners into the pit shafts.



Adrian holding the Olympic torch

One of my favourite memories in Doncaster is carrying the Olympic torch in 2012. I love doing athletics and I used to run after the trains at Doncaster station. My brother put me forward and I ended up being chosen to take part in the Special Olympics in 2012! I still have my torch and my medals.

I also like going to events by the Miner's Welfare, which a charity that puts on social events and sports.

Other favourite memories include May Day celebrations, where there was a maypole and lots of dancing. I was also a litter picker at the Summer Festival."



St Michael's church where Adrian volunteers

St Michael's Church, Rossington by John Slater

Healthy Inspiration

Charlotte, Warwickshire

Charlotte is excited to spend more time exercising and cooking healthy recipes in 2024.

"Trying new healthy recipes helps me find out what I like and don't like, and I've tried making new things like homemade pea and mint soup. I've also been using my air fryer I got for Christmas a couple of years ago. I've made salmon and rice, and a delicious Sunday roast using it!

I get my recipes online which helps me to learn about different cuisines. My staff are from different backgrounds and cultures, so it's good to learn from them too. The ladies at our service taught us how to make Jollof Rice from West Africa, which is a mixture of rice, tomatoes and vegetables.

I have also been going on a little walk every day, as I enjoy the fresh air and it's a bit of exercise. There are also lots of dance fitness classes on YouTube, so I've been taking part in those too. This is especially good when it's cold outside!"

You're an inspiration, Charlotte!



Charlotte enjoying her new health routine

Nathan, Grimsby

Nathan in Grimsby has taken up boxing to keep fit. After enjoying a session at his local boxing gym he has set himself a goal to attend three more!

In the session he had a go at punching bags, running between two bags, step ups, and battle ropes. Despite the fact he worked incredibly hard for 45 minutes, he persevered because he wanted to make it to a full hour. His coach, Raych, said she was impressed and that he is welcome to volunteer in her sessions.

Not only does Nathan now box once a week, he also goes for walks around his local community. Nathan is keen to continue boxing and really enjoyed himself.

Keep going, Nathan, you're amazing!



Nathan enjoying his boxing class

It's Our 40th Issue!



We're celebrating our 40th issue of Creative Life! We first started publishing in 2010, and over the years we've had so many wonderful stories and articles written by our service users and staff.

Our first issue, 'Hot off the Press', featured our editorial team made up of support workers, people we support, administrators and development officers from across the country. A regular feature was our Sandy Lane Allotment, where the gardening group was set up in 2009. In 2018 the group were featured in the papers for winning the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service!

Throughout the past 14 years we've had many special editions to commemorate important milestones within Creative Support, and in the world. Our '25th anniversary special' in 2015 featured the first introduction from CEO Anna Lunts, before 'Hello from Anna' became a regular feature in issue 30. From issue 38 onwards we introduced 'A Word From Our Contributors', where the people who feature have a space to introduce themselves and welcome you to our magazine!

In 2020 we released our Black History Month special edition, following the Black Lives Matter protests to highlight our incredible Black staff and people we support, and educate people on Black mental health, history and more. The amazing front cover artwork was designed by Ash, who is a talented artist and digital illustrator who we support in London.

In 2021, we celebrated 30 years of Creative Support with a special edition showing our journey from 1990 to now. We also celebrated some of our longstanding staff members, and shared stories from the people we support who have been part of our journey.

Speaking of those who have been with us on our journey, John Macdonald who we support in Manchester has been featured in a whopping 13 issues since 2011 – make that 14! He's had two articles, one front cover and been in seven of our Manchester Pride spreads.

"I put Creative Life up on the wall when it comes out," said John. "Being on the front cover of issue 31 made me feel like a celebrity! It's great to see my picture in the Pride articles. I used to go to Pride with my wife Donna, it's a cracking day. Last year, I was waving like the queen from the bus! Every time there's a new issue I look for myself in it."

Thank you to everyone who has taken the time to write an article or be interviewed by our team to produce 40 wonderful issues of Creative Life magazine – here's to another 40 more!

Read our past issues on our website: www.creativesupport.co.uk/creative-life-magazine/



CELEBRATING OUR 40TH!

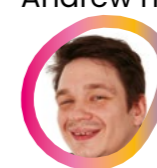
It's not just us who are celebrating our 40th! Here are some of the people we support across the country who are blowing out 40 candles this year:

KIRSTY, DONCASTER – 23RD JANUARY



Kirsty had her birthday party at her local pub with all of her friends from nearby services! Kirsty loves music and likes singing along to her favourite tunes. She also enjoys wooden puzzles and relaxing in the bath – who doesn't love a good pamper!

ANDREW, LONDON – 2ND FEBRUARY



Andrew has "best smile and the kindest heart". He loves speaking to his mum over the phone and visits her once a month. For his birthday last year he had a party in the conservatory, and he loves sensory things like music and lights. Happy birthday!

CARL, MANCHESTER – 26TH FEBRUARY



Carl loves to garden and for his birthday this year he will enjoy some cake with his housemates and staff. "I usually celebrate my birthday with my housemate Andrew, who is a few years younger than me. We like to hang out together and chat," said Carl. Happy 40th Carl, and happy birthday Andrew!

DEREK, FLEETWOOD – 25TH JANUARY



Since Derek loves taking photos and prefers experiences over gifts, he spent a day at the zoo where he enjoyed looking at the giraffes. On his birthday, he had a lovely time with his mum and ate Victoria sponge with custard, one of his favourites. That sounds delicious, Derek, we hope you enjoyed it!

Engagement Workshop

Ever wondered what it is like to write and design Creative Life magazine? Seven people we support and seven staff members from our services in Stockport, Manchester, Tameside, Warrington and the North East travelled to Head Office to discover what it takes to produce Creative Life by taking part in the first ever Engagement Workshop.

The Engagement Workshop was a great opportunity to find out what the Marketing and Communications Team do, and learn more about storytelling and graphic design. Starting with a warm welcome and introductions from the team, everyone enjoyed a buffet lunch and getting to know one another before it was time to take part in the different workshops.

We had four different activities centred around what the Marketing and Communications Team do. In the Boardroom we had a feedback table where people could share ideas and suggestions for future marketing campaigns and publications, and an art table for everyone to get creative.

Everyone who took part in the first Engagement Workshop is an official co-editor of this issue of Creative Life! They shared brilliant ideas for magazine articles, including a 'Pets Corner' page which you'll find on page 18. Our co-editors wrote some fantastic good news stories to include in this issue.

Jamie in Stockport wrote about attending a football game with his support staff: "The food was great and the football was greater. We beat them 5-0 and I was winding them up. Blue Army! Wrexham get battered everywhere they go. Stockport County is my life and I wouldn't have it any other way."

Jenny in Warrington wrote about some of her favourite concerts that she's been to: "I went to a Blue concert and I really enjoyed it. It was really nice and I had fun and my sister Sui enjoyed it too and she even brought me a t-shirt. It had writing on the back and with their logo on it and it was a black colour too."



SM in Manchester wrote about the importance of self-love: "Self-love is the most important love and the greatest love of all. When you stop trying to impress the wrong people and trying to 'fit in' (not being yourself) you have a huge weight lifted off your shoulder."

People could also have a go at designing their own magazine spread on the computer! The Marketing Team was on hand to give advice about how magazine pages are designed.



Helen designed a spooky Halloween-themed double page spread, while Jenny created two pages about JLS and S Club 5.

Once the workshops were wrapped up, everyone gathered back in the Boardroom to talk about some of the successes of the day. Everyone received their own personalised certificate, including Most Engaged Person, Best Feedback, Best Storyteller, and Best Artwork!

Congrats to each and every person who came along to our workshop, you were fantastic to work with and we really value all of your incredible ideas and input for our future campaigns.

"I thought it was a really good day, I've really enjoyed it and learnt a lot!" said Sven, who came from the North East.

"The South Manchester ladies had a great day, and I personally had a lovely time meeting everyone and facilitating some on-the-spot creativity!" said staff member Lauren. "Get my name down for the next one."

We are looking forward to hosting more Engagement Workshops in the future – keep an eye on our website and social media for further announcements.



The Hidden Light Within The Darkness

Katy Taylor from Tyneside has recently started an English Literature and Creative Writing Course at Northumbria University. Katy talks about ways she manages her mental health while studying, and what the course means to her.



Photo by Trevor Littlewood / Buildings of Northumbria University

Mental health can sometimes take a toll on us all. It can be very difficult to achieve our goals but over time we can learn to adapt and live with our conditions.

In September of 2022 I applied for a position at Northumbria University where I would take on an English Literature and Creative Writing course. This has been my passion for a very long time. I've always enjoyed writing and learning about different writers throughout time.

I not only have mental health conditions, but I also have learning difficulties, however this wouldn't hinder my performance as during my time with exams and assignments I utilised the support I am given by Creative Support and Northumbria University. This ranges from one-to-one support and specialised equipment to help achieve a goal that I can

accomplish. Although it has taken me eight years to get to where I wish to be, I believe that with time anyone can achieve their goals.

Although, with mental health complications it can be very difficult to manage time and work. Taking things at a reasonable pace will always help you in the long run. Even waking up and getting dressed at the start of a day is a step in the right direction.

Over my year in university, I have found that Northumbria University is a place where anyone can achieve their goals and aspirations. They have been very accommodating towards my mental health and have supported me. To help manage my stress levels I often attend an appointment at Driftwood Spa, which is a floatation tank used to help holistically.

By Katy Taylor

Sonia's Anxiety Tips



My name is Sonia, I live in a supported living house in Doncaster. I'm going to tell you a bit about my anxiety and ways I overcome it.

Sometimes I struggle with certain triggers that can make me anxious. One of my triggers is feeling left out, and I used to feel this way when the other tenants would go on holidays with staff. I had a chat with one of my support workers about what I wanted, and got started planning a trip. Me and Karen went away to Blackpool for two nights and I had a brilliant time! It helped me to feel like I was the same as everyone else.



Here are some other things I do when I am feeling anxious:

- I go into my bedroom with a cup of coffee, read a book and put my iPad on to feel calm.
- I made a memorial garden that I help to look after and say my worries out loud so I don't bottle it up, as it's good to talk.
- I have a book where I write down my thoughts and feelings.
- I approach support staff if I ever want to talk.
- I enjoy watching videos about exercise and yoga and participate where I can.
- I practise breathing exercises.
- I do a weekly walk and talk.

Most of all I feel a lot better now. It's all about taking little steps, it's all you can do.

"In 18 months Sonia has really worked hard to overcome her anxiety and take her time with things. She has already planned next year's holiday. We are so proud of you Sonia!" said Karen, Support Worker.





Welcome to Pets Corner! Pets can lift our mood and give us company, and we want to celebrate all the adorable pets that make us smile every day. We hope you enjoy reading about these furry friends!

Sonic the Hamster

“Sonic is my hamster, I’ve had him for over a year. I used to have three hamsters that sadly passed a couple of years ago, so I decided last year to get another one. He’s my favourite hamster I’ve ever had! He comes out when I open the cage and likes to run around, he’s so friendly.”

Dogs used to be my favourite animal but now it’s hamsters. It feels good to have a pet because I have responsibilities to feed him and clean his cage. I always say hello to him when I come in and I like talking to him. He’s a good hamster, he’s really chilled out.

He sometimes runs in his wheel when I’m trying to sleep, but it’s worth it though as he makes me dead happy. One time I didn’t realise he was out of his cage and he started nibbling away at my packet of crisps, he makes me laugh so much!”

– Claire in Manchester



Harry and Nonny

“My sisters both have a dog and I like going to see them at the weekend.”

One of my sisters has a dog called Harris and my other sister has a dog called Nonny. They’re both rescue dogs and they live close by to me.

I like going on walks with them and playing fetch, they wag their tails a lot when they see me. It makes me feel good to spend time with them.”

– Adam in Calderdale

Want to feature in Pets Corner? If you don’t have a pet, don’t worry – you can tell us about a friend or a family member’s!
Send us your photos to:
communications@creativesupport.co.uk.



Amanda in Rochdale has been gardening since she was 16, and now she’s an expert. Read on to see the impact gardening has had on her happiness and her top tips to grow your own!

As a child, Amanda spent lots of time outside with her mum, and when she left school she bought her own plot on an allotment. “Gardening is a hobby that has been passed down through my family. I just love being outside,” said Amanda.

Now, Amanda lives with her husband and has her own greenhouse. “My husband helps me in the garden, even if it’s not his passion. We did the Creative Support sunflower competition and it grew to about five feet tall!”

“The hardest things to grow are cauliflowers and sprouts, but these are also some of my favourite things to grow too. I am proud of my cauliflowers,” said Amanda. “Although it can be hard work, it’s worth it.”

Recently she’s used her home-grown veg as ingredients in cauliflower cheese, pasta dishes, casseroles and shepherd’s pie. In the winter, Amanda blanches her produce before freezing so they keep their flavour and texture. “We boil the veg then let it cool a little before putting them in the freezer. When we come to use them, they taste fresh,” she said.

Even if you don’t have a garden, Amanda says anything can grow with the right amount of care. For example, she uses her balcony to plant strawberries and tomatoes in pots. “If you’ve got a small outdoor space, you can grow just about anything. I’d recommend planting seeds indoors first then moving them outside when they begin to shoot.”

Amanda is keen that people can pursue gardening as a hobby, even if the results don’t show straight away. “A packet of seeds is really cheap, and gardening helps turn negative thoughts into positive ones,” she said.

Her most valuable tip is to “plant a lot of seeds in the hope some will pop up. Don’t be disheartened. Just get a big bag of soil and keep going!”



Long Lost Family



Wilmer in Bedford was reunited with his sister after having no contact with her for nearly 20 years! Wilmer tells us about finding the “missing piece” of his life, and how important his family is to him.

Wilmer’s sister was adopted around 20 years ago, and he hadn’t had any contact with her since then. Wilmer always thought about his sister and he would talk about her every day. “I told staff all about her,” said Wilmer. “The

only picture I had of her is when she was adopted at around 6 years old. I was 12 or 13 at the time.”

Registered Manager Serah knew how much reuniting with his sister would mean to Wilmer, and sent letters to the adoption agency to try and get in touch. “From the time he moved in here 12 years ago he would always talk about his sister,” said Serah. “We got in touch with the Bedford adoption team many years ago,

but they could not release information about Kellie until she was 18. However, her family let us know that Kellie was not ready to meet yet, and you have to respect that it’s a big thing to do.”

Finally, after many years of waiting, Kellie’s family wrote back to tell Wilmer she would like to meet. “Serah came into the office and told me that I was going to see my sister this year. I was shocked, at first I didn’t realise which sister she meant. I was gobsmacked!” said Wilmer. “We spoke on FaceTime first so it wasn’t too overwhelming. She was very shy and nervous. She told us over FaceTime that she would like to go to Nandos, and I told her I love it there, it’s my favourite restaurant. I thought we are definitely related!”

“This was the best day of my life, I told her what I’ve been doing and what I’m doing now, and she told me all about what she likes to do. We both have a food obsession, which runs in my family!”
said Wilmer

Wilmer and Kellie and are both looking forward to what the future brings, and hope to reunite with their other siblings. “Wilmer has another brother who moved to Scotland some years ago, and they eventually lost touch,” said Serah.

“I managed to get through to him recently so we’re hoping to arrange a meet-up. Next we want to get in contact with his other sister, who he never met as she was born after he moved away from home. Our ultimate goal is to get all the siblings to meet up together!”



Wilmer and Kellie met up in Nandos along with Kellie’s family and support worker Suzanna. “This was the best day of my life,” said Wilmer. “I told her what I’ve been doing and what I’m doing now, and she told me all about what she likes to do. We both have a food obsession, which runs in my family!”

After their first meeting the pair exchanged WhatsApp numbers, and the rest is history! Wilmer and Kellie speak to one another daily, and met up again a few weeks later to exchange Christmas presents. “Staff worked really hard with the adoption team to connect me with her,” said Wilmer. “I have been wondering what happened to her and I didn’t want to show I was sad, but it was weighing heavily on me. The weight I have been carrying was lifted, as this was a missing piece in my life.”



Spot The Difference

There are 10 differences in these two pictures, grab a pen or pencil and see how many differences you can find! If you find all 10 you could be in with the chance of winning a £10 Love2shop voucher. Send your answers to marketing@creativesupport.co.uk

A



B



Charlotte's Recipe

Pea & Mint Soup

Serves 4 people

Ingredients:

- 1 onion peeled and finely chopped
- 2 celery sticks finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves peeled and finely chopped
- 600g frozen peas
- 1 litre vegetable stock
- 6 tablespoons very finely chopped fresh mint
- Fat free natural yoghurt to serve
- Freshly ground black pepper

Method:

Place the onion, celery, garlic, peas and stock in a non-stick saucepan over a medium heat and bring to the boil. Reduce the heat to medium and cook for 20 minutes.

Using a stick blender or food processor, blend the soup with the chopped mint until smooth. Remove from the heat and serve immediately, drizzled with the yoghurt and a sprinkling of black pepper.

If you have a recipe that you love to cook and want to share it in the magazine send it to: communications@creativesupport.co.uk to be in with a chance of winning a voucher!



“I have made it a few times now. Every time it’s been very warm and delicious.”

- Charlotte from Warwickshire

Would you like to appear in this magazine?

Email: communications@creativesupport.co.uk and send in your story!

Tell us your views on Creative Life magazine!

We're looking for people to join the Creative Life Committee.

The Committee will meet three to four times a year online and in-person to chat about the upcoming issue of Creative Life and share feedback on previous issues of the magazine. It is an opportunity for the people we support, and our staff, to let us know what they would like to see in Creative Life, as well as learn more about how the magazine is created.

Photos of our Committee members will be featured in future issues of Creative Life, and they will also receive a 'We Care' hoodie for taking part.

If you would like to join the Committee, please email us at communications@creativesupport.co.uk



Contact Us



@crtvspprt



marketing@creativesupport.co.uk



0161 236 0829



Creative Support Head Office, Wellington House,
131 Wellington Road South, Stockport SK1 3TS



www.creativesupport.co.uk