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Foreword from Helen Hewitt Chief Executive

I'd like to extend a warm welcome to every reader of this summer edition of our new-look Chailey Heritage Foundation newsletter. These are challenging times for everyone, I know, but especially for our families and carers as the children and young people in their care are particularly vulnerable due to their high health needs.

We would like your feedback on the newsletter -

www.chf.org.uk/feedback



We are working to respond to the COVID-19 situation as it develops and to ensure that as many of our services as possible can continue so we can support the children, young people and families our Charity serves. They are at the heart of everything we do.

In these difficult circumstances, we hope that we can lift your spirits with some inspirational stories. In this latest newsletter, we invite you to read about all that happens within Chailey Heritage, so you can get a real sense of the variety of activities and services we offer to help children and young people pursue their full potential.

Many of the services you will be reading about are only possible because of the generosity of our supporters. Sadly, the current situation means we have had to cancel or postpone all fundraising events taking place in the coming months. This will mean a significant drop in our fundraising income, which we desperately need to keep these services available.

We are extremely grateful to everyone who has helped us to date and we know that the future is uncertain for everyone at the moment. But if you do feel able to support our work with a donation, however small, we would appreciate it now more than ever. Every penny of your donation will be used to support the children and young people at Chailey Heritage Foundation. The ways you can donate are listed on the back page.

I do hope you enjoy the stories in this issue as much as we have enjoyed being part of them here and I look forward to writing to you again in autumn when our next newsletter is due.

Celebrating World Book Day the Chailey way

On the morning of World Book Day, staff and young people entered into the swing of things by coming into Chailey Heritage School dressed as characters from their favourite stories.



Bertie came dressed as Dirty Bertie.

Jack came dressed as the pirate from *The Pirates Next Door*, and Bertie came dressed as Dirty Bertie from his favourite book.

The children were treated to a sensory telling of *Goldilocks* and the Three Bears in the multi-sensory studio where they were greeted by toy bears placed around the sensory mat. The three bears and a large *Goldilocks* doll came to say hello, and the children were able to touch and feel the bears' fur and *Goldilocks*'s long, golden hair. They were then passed three different sized bowls, to feel and compare the different sizes, textures and patterns of each bowl as well as three different sized spoons.

There was delight when the children had the opportunity to place their fingers into the cool porridge, to feel the lumpy, bumpy texture while Daddy Bear exclaimed "Who has been eating my porridge?!!" Jack particularly loved this part of the story, taking the microphone to imitate the different voices, from booming Daddy bear's voice, to squeaky baby bear's voice!

Throughout the whole story, the teacher and carers used gentle touches to guide the children through the tale, from gentle hand walking to imitate *Goldilocks* walking through the woods, to gentle tummy circles to communicate that *Goldilocks* was hungry.

In this way, the children enjoyed this classic tale with sensory cues and props that helped them to imaginatively and creatively follow the story from beginning to end.



No one could miss Louis dressed as Wally on World Book Day!

The wonder of horse riding through Hippotherapy

Hippotherapy is a unique therapy delivered by specially trained physiotherapists using the movement of the horse therapeutically. It also incorporates occupational, speech and language therapies.



Our riding team. From left to right; Millie, Melissa (Hippotherapist), Michele (Riding Assistant), Nicki (Hippotherapist) and Todd.

Most of the children and young people at Chailey Heritage Foundation are unable to stand or walk independently and rely on using wheelchairs. The horses give the children the opportunity to get out of their wheelchairs and have a completely new and exciting experience. Not only does riding build skills including core strength, head control, upper limb control and hand dexterity, it also builds communication skills as the children learn to use their voice and body to get a reaction from the horse. Cause and effect is used during riding sessions and the children learn that certain words and movements will prompt the horse to react in a certain way.

Elliot has hypotonia, global development delay and epilepsy. He can't walk or hold his head without support and has poor eyesight, allowing him to see only 30cm in front of him. Yet when Elliot is helped onto the horse, the first thing he does is lean forward to touch and feel the horse and his reaction is wonderful. As Elliot's Dad says, "The smile on Elliot's face melts us every time we see it. Riding has opened up possibilities we never imagined."

Raihana, 9, was the first child on Long Term Ventilation to be able to access Hippotherapy.





“The love that Elliot gets at Chailey Heritage is second to none. The School has opened up opportunities we never thought possible.”
Daniel, Elliot’s Dad.

Elliot may not be able to stand or walk, but he’s gained an understanding of how his voice and body can be used to command a horse. This is why riding is such an incredibly liberating, adventurous and rewarding way to access different therapies for children and young people like Elliot.

This specialist riding activity would not be possible without a team of volunteers to assist the hippotherapists. We are extremely grateful for their dedication and support. If you would like to join this friendly team, please visit www.chf.org.uk/vol-riding

Therapeutic horse riding, like many specialist activities at Chailey Heritage, is entirely funded through voluntary donations. If you would like to help us provide activities and resources for the children and young people in our care, please visit www.chf.org.uk/donate or call **01825 724 752**.



Riding helps to build core strength and head control as well as providing many other benefits.

Meet the animals helping children at Chailey Heritage

It's widely recognised that animals can unlock potential in all of us. Animals help us to be at peace, live in the moment, and consequently open ourselves to new ideas and experiences.



Summer - making new friends.



Lesley, the Farm Manager, said "I love to see how the young people react to the contrasting sensation of touching a guinea pig and then a tortoise!"

This is why Patchwork Farm is such a vital part of Chailey Heritage Foundation. The therapeutic care farm, which has donkeys, pigs, chickens and more, helps the young people who visit to feel less anxious, enriching their learning experiences by building their confidence in new situations.

Lesley, who runs the farm, often takes the animals into the classrooms, so the young people can get to know them in a familiar setting. From there, many feel confident enough to venture outside to visit Patchwork Farm and see their new-found friends outdoors. This was true for Henry, who was extremely nervous to leave the classroom until he befriended the animals and became confident enough to visit them at the farm.

For World Book Day this year, the animals joined a class to help tell the story of A Squash and a Squeeze. Although there are no cows at Patchwork Farm, an imaginative interpretation using fake udders and warm water was created so the children could have a go at milking a cow!



Farm Manager, Lesley, with the Patchwork Farm Pygmy Goats, Fred and Ginger.

The animals can also help young people to transition to new situations. When Toby wasn't keen on starting at his new school, he was told there were guinea pigs there. Because he'd grown to love guinea pigs at Chailey Heritage, he was immediately interested and confident enough to take the plunge to visit.

Animals provide unique sensory experiences too. Lesley tells us that guinea pigs and tortoises are often the children's favourites. She has observed how the children find the contrasting sensations of touching a guinea pig or a tortoise really engaging, especially for those who are visually impaired.

The animals allow the children to exercise choice and step out of their comfort zones. Experiences are tailored to the needs of each child, for example a child who initially lacks confidence around animals, may prefer to sit next to a classmate who is happy to hold an animal on their lap, allowing them to build confidence and trust by interacting at a slight distance. In this way, the children and young people can make friends not only with the animals, but with each other too, in an enjoyable, relaxed environment.

Who'd have thought animals could achieve so much!



The therapeutic care farm is fully accessible, with concrete paths, which allows the young people to move around easily, either in their wheelchairs or on their trikes.



Laura helps Rosie to enjoy the experience and journey of creating art.

Art in the Life Skills Centre

When you enter the Life Skills Centre, there is a real sense of light and colour – from the large windows letting sunlight in, to the walls adorned with works of art produced by the young people.

At the Life Skills Centre, we're passionate about the journey of art, not just the end product, and we witness how each young person develops in confidence and creativity on their respective journeys. When Eleanor started art classes, she wasn't confident enough to reach out and kept her hands tightly clasped to herself. With time, however, she began to show more confidence, reaching out to feel different textures and try different methods of producing art.

Laura, who has led art classes for the past three years, likes to inspire those attending art classes by introducing them to different artists and methods. Christopher was inspired by artist Bob Ross, so paint brushes were adapted to help him achieve some of the finer details, for example a large D shape made of Perspex with a fine art brush attached to it to allow Christopher more control when applying the paint, enabling him to achieve his goals.

Laura acknowledges that no two young people are the same, so she watches and learns to find new and interesting ways to engage them and help them on their artistic journeys. "At the outset, a person might reject certain

materials and strongly favour others. However, with time he or she may have a completely different reaction when offered the same materials, showing progression in their confidence, ability to make choices, creative flexibility, and a willingness to have a go at something new.”

There is a real sense that everyone’s welcome in the Art studio, even siblings have been invited to take part, proving that art can unite us all in a shared, creative and rewarding experience.

To celebrate three years of artwork, the Life Skills Centre will be holding an art exhibition in The Dream Centre later this year, where images of artwork produced by young people will be projected onto the four screen walls of a room, providing the viewer with an immersive experience surrounded by art and music. There will be a sensory art session to enjoy at the end.



Working with different materials provides a range of artistic experiences and effects.



Christopher was inspired by artist Bob Ross, so paint brushes were adapted to help him achieve some of the finer details.



New Dream Centre brings dreams to life

The children and young people at Chailey Heritage Foundation have been getting used to the new Immersive Space in the Dream Centre.

Ross, 21, lives in one of our Futures' bungalows. He's an active young man and the Dream Centre gives him the space to be able to explore.

Using 360-degree digital projection from floor to ceiling, a wide range of scenarios have been created - all with various purposes. Bespoke content based on the young people's interests and educational needs form the majority of the scenes; from photo-realistic scenes of nature to purpose-built sensory stories to more abstract visual stimuli.

One young man who has regular access to the Immersive Space is Ross. He is a big fan of the animated series *SpongeBob SquarePants*, and so we were able to create a *SpongeBob*-themed experience for him to enjoy in the Immersive Space. Ross explored the space in his walker and his support staff noted how strong his walking was as he explored all the images. They also noted that Ross, being immersed in a motivating environment, began walking straight away, whereas usually he requires an initial encouragement.



The multipurpose stage includes a sunken trampoline which means that several different activities can take place in the Dream Centre at once, including immersive experiences, rebound therapy, sport or drama.



“The first time Ross explored the immersive space it was covered wall-to-wall with SpongeBob SquarePants - his favourite! He walked around the area looking at the shapes, watching the bubbles move up the wall. He was vocalising and smiling, appearing more motivated in his walker than usual, lifting his feet and pushing himself around. It was a real joy to watch.”

With a huge smile on his face virtually the entire time he was in there, Ross clearly enjoyed investigating the bright colours and underwater effects in the Immersive Space in the Dream Centre.

Ross is a big fan of SpongeBob SquarePants, so a SpongeBob-themed experience was created for him to explore.

Please support us

If you'd like to help us continue to provide the services written about in this issue, we would be extremely grateful. Every penny goes towards helping the children and young people at Chailey Heritage Foundation.

Online: www.chf.org.uk/donate

Phone: 01825 724752 (0900-1700, Mon-Fri)

Text: **Text GIVE to 70144 to donate £5**
Texts cost £5 plus a standard rate text. Chailey Heritage Foundation will receive 100% of donation. Please ensure you have the bill payer's permission (age 16+, UK mobiles only). Customer care: 01825 724752.

Post: Please complete the form below and send it with your donation to:
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