

Lighting Up Christmas at Ealing Broadway Centre

There's no getting away from Ealing Mencap this Christmas if you're doing your shopping in Ealing.

All year, Ealing Broadway Shopping Centre has supported us as their 'Charity of the Year'; they've not only raised money for us but also invited us to take part in events to raise awareness about what we do. You might remember the report in the last newsletter about Learning Disability Week and how Ealing Broadway Centre let us takeover for a day!

We're carrying on our relationship with Ealing Broadway Centre throughout the festive period too. Ealing Mencap were invited to the Centre's big Celebrity Christmas Light Switch-On Celebration on the 25th November.

Braving huge crowds and the cold weather, some of our staff and service users joined in the party, selling hand-made Christmas decorations and cards at a market stall in the centre before the main event.

Eastenders actor Marc Elliot, who plays Syed Masood in the soap, was the star of the show, pushing the plunger to light up the Centre's Christmas display. And, as Ealing Broadway's Charity of the Year, we were fortunate enough to rub

shoulders with Marc afterwards, who signed autographs, posed for pictures and talked to us for ages about what Ealing Mencap does. He didn't reveal any storyline secrets or spoilers for upcoming episodes though!

But that's not it for our relationship with Ealing Broadway Centre this year.

Ealing Mencap will also be taking part in the Christmas Continental Market on Mondays and Thursdays from December 1st, between 10.00am and 3.00pm. The stall will be selling handmade candles, bracelets, Christmas cards and decorations.

We will also be selling Ealing Broadway Centre raffle tickets for 50p a strip, with all the proceeds going to Ealing Mencap. There are loads of amazing prizes to be given away, including a fully loaded Christmas hamper.

And aside from all that, I Love Thunder - who you can read an update from on page three of this newsletter - will be performing a festive outdoor gig featuring cover versions of Christmas classics.

Join them for a sing-along at the Ealing Broadway Centre on December 15th at 7.30pm near the Tesco Metro.



Top: Actor Marc Elliott poses with for pictures with some Ealing Mencap guys.

Middle: The big switch on!

Bottom: I Love Thunder singers (right to left) Lee, Anne, Amy and Paul warm up their voices for the Christmas gig.

“We Will Continue to Thrive” - a Letter from Lesley

By **Lesley Dodd**
Chief Executive



This is the final newsletter of the year and it's been quite a year for Ealing Mencap.

We've opened our new building Enterprise Lodge in Perivale, said a fond farewell to Julian Hillman as Chief Executive, and I arrived in June.

June... it seems an age ago, the time has flown by and it's been a real 'baptism of fire' for me! This is mainly due to the public sector cuts becoming a reality for our organisation, our customers and other local voluntary sector groups in Ealing.

Having lost significant funding we've had to reconfigure some of the services and support we provide. We've worked very hard during this difficult time to try and keep existing support and services working well, whilst we reorganised the areas affected by the cuts.

Unfortunately we have had to say goodbye to some staff and where possible we've been able to re-deploy others to new contracts or roles. The new services are now up and running and I know that the managers of these services have been keeping you well informed regarding the changes.

This has not been an easy time and we've had to make some very difficult choices and I expect we will have to make similar ones again in the New Year.

However, on a more positive note we're working closely with our partners; for some time now we've been working with other local Mencap groups and this is proving to be very beneficial in the areas of campaigning, raising new money for projects, and cross-borough opportunities for people, such as sport activities and events.

Plus, as part of the new grants from Ealing Council we're in a new joint consortium partnership with Ealing Centre for Independent Living (ECIL) running a Disability Advice and Advocacy Support Service (DAB). We've been working hard to try and develop new opportunities for people that have a personal budget. We're now offering different and varied activities for both children and adults and we hope that in the 2012 we will have more exciting options for people to choose from, especially around activities and respite/holidays.

In spite of all the changes and challenges, I'm confident that as an organisation we will continue to thrive and provide the support and services that children and adults with learning disabilities want and need in Ealing.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to ask you to come along to our Annual General Meeting on the 25th January 2012. It will be informative an opportunity to meet others and also to have fun, so put the date in your diaries please.

Finally this is also a chance for me to say thank you so much to all of our supporters, our staff and volunteers and everyone who uses our services.

Thank you to all of you and have a great Christmas.

Council Cuts Beds at Green Lane - the fight-back begins now

By **George Venus**
Chair



Despite strong opposition from both ourselves and Conservative councillors, the ruling council cabinet agreed a proposal this week to reduce the number of available respite beds at Green Lane from ten to six. We are not at the end of the democratic process and at the time of writing we are waiting for confirmation that this decision will be called in for further scrutiny, which will give carers and Mencap the opportunity to campaign further to have the decision overturned.

I am personally dismayed at the position some carers will find themselves in if they are not able to get the kind of support Green Lane provides so that they can have a break. Some carers are almost as vulnerable as the people they care for due to ill health, age or simply exhaustion as a result of their having to care in extremely difficult circumstances.

The reason the council say they have decided to do this is to save £237,000, because the four beds will be used as a staging post for people with learning disabilities who are living out of borough at the moment, before being moved on again to services in Ealing or close by. Whilst we are very much in favour of enabling people to move closer to friends and

family, we question why this has to involve two moves rather than one, which is poor social care practice to say the least.

We have also argued that if families are unable to cope because they cannot get sufficient appropriate respite breaks, the increased cost of care to support people with learning disabilities will far exceed the amount the council is hoping to save. Even the officers have recognised this as a 'high risk'.

Carers are angry that the government have promised more, not less, resources to support carers and ensure that they have adequate breaks. This makes sense because in the end it saves money, however this is not happening because the money has been given to Ealing Primary Care Trust, who have not used it for the purpose it was intended and the Department of Health didn't require them to ring fence the money.

The leader of Ealing council made promises to protect frontline services like Green Lane but these are now being broken and carers in Ealing have already seen funding in other services cut.

We will continue to campaign on this and all the other issues which affect carers and their families, but it will help enormously if you also tell your councillors, council officers and MPs how your lives are being affected by their decisions, which frankly make no sense whatsoever in terms of our desire to see both fairness and justice in our community. Despite the economic climate, this should still be possible.

Travel Trainers Unveil New Pack for Parents

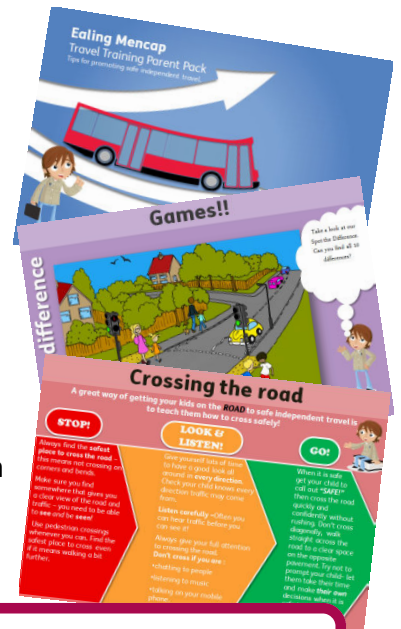
Info for parents with primary school children now available

It's been a hectic time at the Travel Training Project, but there's good news! The long-awaited Travel Training Parent Pack is about to hit the printers.

The aim of the Parent Pack is to help parents support their children to develop safe travel skills from an early age, and to set them on the path towards achieving independent travel when they're older.

There's loads of advice and information, activities for parents to work through together with their children, and plenty of fun to be had along the way. Some of the pages can be seen on the right.

We're making the pack available to parents of primary-aged children with SEN in Ealing; if you would like to request a copy, please email travel.training@ealingmencap.org.uk, or call us on 020 8567 9185.



Key Point: Ealing Mencap's Travel Trainers have made a new pack for school children and parents for staying safe on the roads.

In the News: I Love Thunder

Band are still rocking - not reeling - through tough times

taken from the **EALING Gazette**, 13th October 2011

Ealing Mencap's band **I Love Thunder** have proved they are not just a flash in the pan after vital funding was slashed this summer.

When the nine-piece band, eight of whom have learning disabilities, lost their manager to funding cuts in August, it looked like they were left high and dry without a studio and no instruments.

But guitarist Nick Radclyffe, who plays in the band with son Luke, 14, who has learning difficulties, volunteered to be the new manager.

In return, Ealing Mencap offered the band free space at its new centre Enterprise Lodge, in Stockdove Way, Perivale, where the rock band now meet for acoustic sessions every Monday.

Mr Radclyffe said bright things have come out of a dreary situation.

"Before in the studio everybody used to hide behind their instruments, all competing to be the loudest, and we'd have the odd moment when it all came together.

"It seems to have all come together here in the acoustic sessions. They listen to each other



Above: Guitarist Eric tests out a few chords.

and vote on what songs to play. "It's a great opportunity for them to learn a variety of skills and interpersonal skills."

They played at Greenford Carnival last year, Acton Carnival this year and performed when the prime minister's wife Samantha Cameron opened Enterprise Lodge in May.

Singer Anne Corrigan, 44, has high hopes for the band. "I want to get paid for a gig. It'll be good when we get our own equipment but at the moment this building echoes.

"I love singing, and it gets me out of the house. I do Irish dancing as well and sung in the church choir and school choir."

The band was set up in 2009 to save three people paying separately for music therapy and now has members aged 14 to 65.

Mr Radclyffe said the band also helps to raise the profile of musicians with learning difficulties.

"There have been much wider benefits to the learning disability community in Ealing," he said.

"As every time the band perform it highlights the strengths of what is a traditionally marginalised group."

Key Points

- Rock band I Love Thunder have got some new instruments.
- They practise at Enterprise Lodge on Monday evenings.

Step project Thrives at Gardening Competition

Prizes won for photography, ketchup and potatoes.

Step have walked away with three awards for their creativity, gardening and cookery skills.

Step - based at Enterprise Lodge - won two first and one second prize at the Thrive Battersea Garden Project. Like the Step gardening group, Thrive uses gardening as a way to enable disabled people to be positive and creative in gardens and outdoor spaces.

The theme for this year's completion was "Best of British," and over the course of a few weeks some of the Step trainees, staff and volunteers worked hard to prepare their final pieces for the day.

The first competition was the Potato Head, making famous characters out of allotment-grown potatoes. Step chose a Henry VIII and Wives theme and won first prize.

Next up was the homemade ketchup contest, and the trainees' spicy sauce made in our cooking sessions saw off the competition and claimed another first prize.

Step also bagged a second place prize for their gallery of pictures of British vegetables that they had grown on the allotments next door to the Lodge.



Top: Mary, Lee, Stacey and Angie show off first prize and their winning ketchup

Above: The winning 'Potato Head' entry - Henry VIII and his six wives, including a beheaded potato Anne Boleyn

Key Point

- The Step project won prizes for their tomato sauce, photos and vegetables.

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Ealing
mencap

Wednesday 25th January

At Enterprise Lodge, Stockdove Way, Perivale, UB6 8TJ

Ealing Mencap's Annual General Meeting is coming up soon, and we would like to invite you to come along. There will be some presentations from projects, the chance to see how the last year has gone and how we're looking forward at the next 12 months. More importantly, it's a great chance to catch up with staff, volunteers and other members of Ealing Mencap.

6.30pm snacks and chat
7.00pm down to business!



Ealing Special Olympics Sessions

Brentford FC Community Sports Trust, Ealing Mencap and Active Ealing are working together to offer young people and adults with supported needs and learning disabilities the chance to

take part in sports.

The Special Olympics programme offers people the chance to take part in athletics and tennis sessions. The details for both are as follows:

Athletics

Venue: Perivale Track, Perivale Park, Stockdove Way, Greenford UB6 8TJ

Day / Time: Monday 7.30 – 8.30pm

Age range: 16+

For further information please contact:

Bob Densley on **01895 675522** or Peter Shears on **020 8326 7047** or visit **www.esm.org.uk**

Tennis

Venue: West Middlesex Lawn Tennis Club, 6 Berners Drive, Drayton Bridge Rd, West Ealing W13 0JS

Day / Time: Thursday 10.00 – 12.00noon

Age range: 16+

For further information please contact:

Chris Tribe on **020 8326 7053** or Peter Shears on **020 8326 7047** or visit **www.brentfordfcst.com**

Synergy Project Gets Underway

Our new project for young people in transition, Synergy, has got off to a good start, and work is starting with small groups in Harrow, Brent and Ealing.

Anna Simpkinson and James Thurgill - our Synergy project workers - are already supporting young people to articulate what direction they want to go in, whether it's learning, working, volunteering, or making new connections beyond their home area.

We are using Click Start, a website for young people with

additional needs, to build up better information and to empower them to set up their own web pages.

Two young people took part in introductory training for professionals in the borough about Clickstart, and two more are getting material together for new pages.

As a result, we have some fabulous and innovative art work to share and are looking forward to launching the Ealing portal early in 2012. Watch this space and we'll let you know when it's live!

Value Life Service Update from Alison

Value Life bases its work around the needs of people with learning disabilities by providing short break services.

We have had to restructure our service, look at what has been working well, what not and make some changes to how we deliver our service from November, in line with new funding requirements.

These changes will be introduced gradually over the coming months and I will update as and when.

We are offering a core programme of quality activities.

This includes day and evening support. Sessions can be from 3 to 5 hours. One to one support can be provided if needed.

The decision about when

the programme runs has been based on feedback from service users' and the popularity of planned activities.

Every week there are two building based sessions and two community based sessions, which gives variety and choice.

We will be piloting our new service from Monday 7th November for 6 weeks, and will review in December. We plan to re-launch the service from January 2012.

The Core programme is specifically for those who do NOT have or qualify for a cash budget/direct payment. It is also possible to access the core programme, if you currently pay for your service and Value Life is no longer in a

position to subsidise its service, and although it is part-funded there will be some charges.

For more information please visit our website www.ealingmencap.org.uk and look at the Value Life page in the Projects list. You will be able to download a full detailed list there.

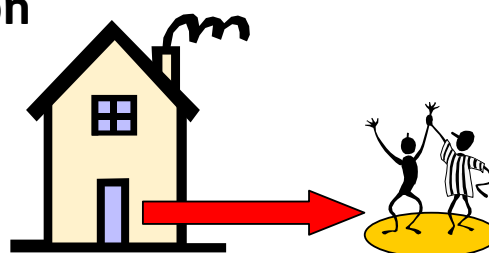
Outside of the core programme we can support those who have a cash budget/ direct payment to access activities with or without direct support.

We can support you to

develop Life Skills, Getting Out and About, Trips to Museums, Football Games, Cinemas, Gym, Religious Events, Concerts, Nightclubs, Meals Out, Pubs, Snooker Nights, Leisure weekends, supported holidays or other alternatives to overnight respite. The list is endless!

This is 'work in progress' and we need to make so many changes in a short time frame. There will be many more updates!

If you have any questions, please phone Alison at the Hanwell office.



A Message from Manpreet

Ealing Mencap's Volunteer Coordinator introduces herself

Hello Everyone! My name is Manpreet Roopra and I am the Volunteer Coordinator for Ealing Mencap. We have lots of fun, rewarding and exciting volunteering opportunities that you could take part in!

We're looking for people from all walks of life. Everyone is an individual and everyone can bring something unique to Ealing Mencap. Whether you fancy driving for a couple of hours a week to help get our members to the various clubs we run, or take part in supporting the service users in their sessions.

Just a couple of hours a week would be all that we would ask – the choice is yours dependant on your own ability to help us. But those few hours could open up a new world for someone with a learning disability. Make a difference today!

For more information and an informal chat, please get in touch in one of the following ways:

e-mail:

manpreet.roopra@ealingmencap.org.uk

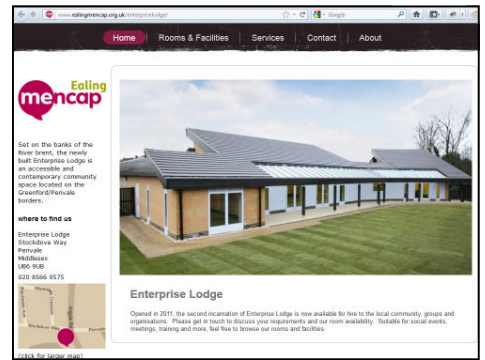
Phone: 020 8566 9575

Post: I Want to Volunteer!
Ealing Mencap
Enterprise Lodge
Stockdove Way
Perivale
Middlesex
UB6 8TJ

Web: www.ealingmencap.org.uk/volunteer



New Lodge, New Website



Above: the Enterprise Lodge website

Enterprise Lodge has a new website advertising available facilities. Why not have a look at www.ealingmencap.org.uk/enterpriselodge to find out more about what's on offer at the Lodge for meetings, away days, parties and more.

Update from 3Cs Counselling service



Just a quick update on things at 3Cs counselling.

We have been fortunate enough to receive funding to continue our project offering counselling to the parents and carers of children aged 0-19 years; also, Ealing Mencap in partnership with ECIL have received a small amount of funding which will enable counselling to now be available to parents and carers of children over the age of 19.

This is of particular importance

at a time of such enormous financial cutbacks which have hit adults with disability even harder and it also allows for a level of continuity that has previously not been possible.

We continue to work closely with our colleagues within all the services helping to support families with a child with additional needs living in the borough of Ealing and we continue to offer individual and couples counselling at the St Andrew's Church Centre in Mount Park Road W5, which is also the home of Contact a Family Ealing.

To discuss the possibility of counselling or simply to find out more, please phone: Lesley Beck on 07968 871 459 or Linda Shampan on 07813 095 383 or you can email us on this address: counselling@ealingmencap.org.uk

Big thanks to all our 2011 members and donors!

We would like to express our sincere thanks to all the members who have renewed their membership and made donations this year.

For more information on how to donate money via JustGiving or Virgin Money Giving please visit the www.ealingmencap.org.uk and click on the donate button.

Over the last year these donations have made a huge difference in helping Ealing Mencap to provide support and opportunities for people with learning disabilities.

If you need more help on how to make a donation or you would like to become a member please contact Kate at the Hanwell office on 020 8567 9185 or you can email kate.venus@ealingmencap.org.uk and you'll get all the assistance you need. Thank you once again.