

AUTUMN  
WINTER  
**2022**  
ISSUE 76



## *Autumn & Winter Newsletter 2022*

POSITIVE LIVING AND LEARNING FOR PEOPLE  
WITH EPILEPSY AND OTHER COMPLEX NEEDS

### Message from our Chief Executive, Jill Rankin:



"It is hard to believe that the nights are once again drawing in and we are heading towards winter.

The past few years for St Elizabeth's have been very challenging, with Covid, Brexit and rising costs of living all having an impact on us. In true St Elizabeth's spirit, we have all come together to support each other and get through the tough times, but this has not come without difficult decisions and changes.

As many of you will know, our Adult Care Home will be closing on 30th November. It has been a very tough time for everyone involved, but any compromise to the safety of residents or reduction in the quality of our care is simply not in keeping with our ethos, and is a long way from the type of service we have made our name in providing. We remain committed to providing support to our residents, their families and our staff teams affected by this decision.

As we look towards Christmas and 2023, my hope is that St Elizabeth's will continue to thrive through our Specialist School and College, and Adult Day Opportunities programme which will continue to operate.

Thank you for all your ongoing support and understanding this year - I wish you all a very (early) Happy Christmas!

### Message from Chair of Trustees, Christopher Kembell

"It is now nearly 4 years since I took over as Chair, and despite difficult times it has been an honour to oversee St Elizabeth's at a time of great change. Nobody could have predicted what the last few years have entailed, but I have been hugely impressed by the emotional resilience of our clients, and the hard work and dedication of the many staff in various roles who have gone above and beyond the call of duty to ensure everyone's wellbeing is cared for as best as possible.



The decision to close the Adult Care Home was an extremely difficult one, and I want to thank everyone who took the time to submit their thoughts and suggestions during the consultation period. During this process, we received many fond and caring messages about St Elizabeth's for which we are very grateful.

We are now working closely with family members, our commissioners and our regulator - the Care Quality Commission - to ensure a smooth, stress-free transfer to a new service for all of our residents.

Having achieved this transition, we are now looking forward in the New Year to successfully establishing St Elizabeth's as a primarily educational charity comprising a school and children's home, college, supported living and day opportunities with nursing care.

On behalf of the Charity's Trustees, I would like to record our thanks to all of our staff, volunteers and donors for their hard work and continuing support throughout the severely testing conditions St Elizabeth's has faced. Without your dedication and commitment, St Elizabeth's would not be able to offer the care and life opportunities it does to the clients who are placed in our care. It is deeply appreciated.



### Dylan's Story

Hi my name is Dylan, and I have been at St Elizabeth's for ten years! I was only 8 years old when I started. I first experienced seizures at the age of 4 and continued to have many different types of seizures. At 8 years old I had brain surgery to help with my epilepsy. It was a major success! At this time, St Elizabeth's helped me transition and recover from this surgery. In the past ten years, school staff, therapy and nurses have helped me develop into the confident young man I am today, ready to take on the world!

St Elizabeth's has allowed me to be compassionate, I often take on responsibility to help others, this has been

evident very recently as I was elected as a student school council leader. I am looking forward to the future, but will miss the school when I finally move on.





## 2022 at St Elizabeth's

As we say goodbye to the last of the summer sun, the arrival of autumn and winter is always a time for great reflection. 2022 has perhaps been one of the hardest years for St Elizabeth's, with many difficult challenges to overcome and hard decisions to make.

With the closure of the Adult Care Home approaching, we continue to invest all of our time and efforts into supporting our residents, their families and our staff who will experience a great deal of change as a result. We are pleased a large number of staff teams will be staying with us, relocating to our children and young people services which will be continuing on. We wish everyone the very best as they settle into a new stage of their lives.

With the difficulties we have faced, it's been more important than ever to look after each other, and appreciate the small things that surround us. We continue to emphasise this through our Employee Assistance Programme, where staff have been able to access regular support as well as taking part in mindfulness and walking sessions to help ease worktime stress. We now also have two fully functioning outdoor gym spaces for everyone to use, or as an alternative continue to offer discount memberships to staff at local gyms to the Centre.

## School

Thanks to local companies Haus Maids and MARS, our children's football team have brand new kits and equipment! With an emblem designed by them, the purple kits were delivered by sponsor Tom, who enjoyed meeting the children and having a kick about with their new balls and cones.

We want to send our warmest wishes and welcome to our new School Headteacher, Lisa Tooley! The children have already made her feel very welcome and look forward to working closely with her.

In recent months, the children have been learning more about sustainability, recycling and plastic pollution in our oceans. World Environment Day is always a key focus in lessons, where the children can learn more about our planet and how they can help.

Halloween was enjoyed by everyone! Activities included trips out to pumpkin pick and carve, decorating classrooms and their houses and of course, lots of indulging in sweets and treats!

## College

Thanks to our Tesco Corporate Volunteering group, some of our College learners were able to incorporate planting up their donated plants into their sensory therapy sessions. Learners were able to practice their motor and memory skills, and enjoy the sensory experience of using soil and different textures.

Learners recently enjoyed a trip out to different places of worship, including a visit to the fantastic Gaia Art exhibition at Chelmsford Cathedral and a local Synagogue. The learners took great delight from the giant rotating 3D visual of earth from NASA.

In College, learners have been learning about different authors in their English classes, including the work of Roald Dahl and other literacy greats.

## Day Services & Enterprise Projects

In September, our team managed to pick 1589.3kg of apples from our orchard, which have now been transformed into our delicious apple juice! Juice is now for sale in 750ml bottles for £3.50 each. Get in touch for more information!

Summer was a busy time for our Enterprise Projects, as they attended many markets and events to sell beautiful items made by our residents and day clients. Events included Barkway Market, Braughing Wheelbarrow and of course our very own Summer Fayre.



Our Day Services team submitted a scarecrow for the annual High Wych Scarecrow Festival, which now sits outside waving to our visitors! They also decorated one of our vans as part of the Bishop's Stortford Carnival back in the summer, and came third overall in the competition! We gratefully received £100 for our efforts.

## Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II



Everyone at St Elizabeth's continues to mourn the loss of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

We were thrilled to come together back in June to celebrate her Platinum Jubilee, one of the first events where we were all able to be together again after such a difficult few years. We planted a tree in her name, and were able to incorporate her life and reign into many of our school lessons to teach the next generation.

Her Majesty The Queen devoted her life to our country and was a symbol of unity, strength and hope. The Union Flag flew at half-mast at St Elizabeth's during the national period of mourning, as a mark of respect for her extraordinary life and reign.

We continue to send our thoughts and prayers to The Royal Family, and share in the sadness felt across the nation and the world.



## News from Fundraising

2022 has been a year of great change for Fundraising, as we've seen lots of new trends to keep up with post-Covid. We've been working extra hard to generate more restricted funds, to be spent on things like specialist and sensory equipment, technology and outdoor spaces for everyone to enjoy all year round.

We've also been busy writing more grant applications and building community links, to respectfully reflect the new direction of the charity going forward.

We continue to be so grateful for the generous donations we have received this year. Every donation we receive enables us to develop some much needed projects across site, and make every experience at St Elizabeth's a joyous and uplifting one.

This has only been possible year on year with your amazing support so we want to say a huge THANK YOU!

As well as a QR Code (featured on the back), we now have a 'text to donate' function, making it even easier to donate to St Elizabeth's! It's quick and easy, and just adds your donation to your next phone bill. To donate £5, £10 or £20, text 5DONATE, 10DONATE or 20DONATE to 70470!

Missed out on a ballot place this year for the London Marathon, but still want to run? Get in touch! We still have charity places left and would love to hear from you. Please email [fundraising@stelizabeths.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@stelizabeths.org.uk) for more information.



## Community Update:

♥ A huge thank you to all of the Corporate groups that joined us this year, to help us tidy important areas of the site. We were so grateful to be joined by teams from Tesco, GSK, Tees Law, Eliemtx, Handelsbanken and Johnson Matthey.

♥ We've had some amazing Fundraisers this year! Congratulations and thanks to our fantastic London Marathon runners, challenge fundraisers, open gardens and stall holders...everything helps our great cause.

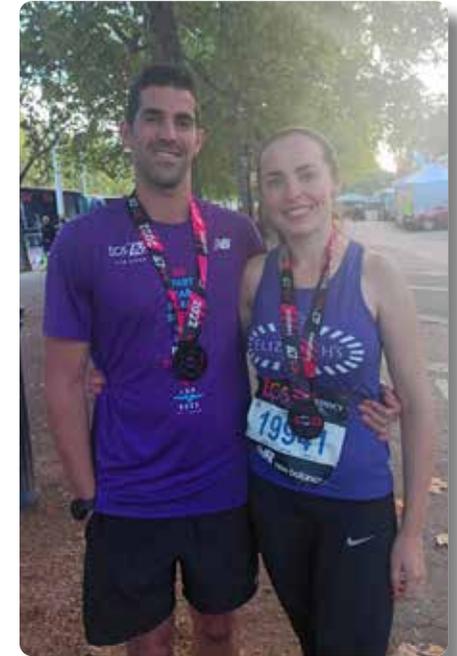
♥ Thanks to a grant from Screw Fix, we were able to fix and rebuild the Chilton House garden, making it a safe and sensory environment for all the children.

♥ The Catholic Charitable Trust made a generous donation in order to take one of our residents to Lourdes, more information on page 8!

♥ Back in August, we were delighted to welcome Kelly's Donkeys to St Elizabeth's, where we hosted Josh and Aubrey for a visit! The visit was paid for by generous funders and donations so a huge thank you for making this possible.

♥ Our Charity Shops are busy working through your donations and getting ready for seasonal stock! Staff and volunteers have worked so hard these past few months as we adapt to a world post-Covid, and are looking forward to welcoming our lovely customers in through the festive period. We are always looking for volunteers - please get in touch for further information!

♥ We were pleased to attend the annual Bishop's Stortford Means Business event in October, networking with local businesses and talking more about our new direction as a charity.



### Message from Pauline Meaney, our Catholic Ethos Advocate

This year has been a time of reflection and appreciation for all. I have had the privilege of getting to know and feeling the absolute abundance of joy, that spending valuable time with the most inspirational residents, learners and staff at St Elizabeth's family can bring. I have witnessed many extraordinary occasions of adversity and triumph, that have shown the light of hope and determination that exist here.

To be welcomed in every team in the centre and embrace the culture of nurture, sacrifice and compassion, has been incredible. The highlight...and there have been so many, is probably the offsite trips to various places with adults and college, fundraising events both on and off site, not to mention weekly wellbeing and spiritual trips with residents locally and abroad. Being in the school and engaging with our wonderful school children and incredible staff.

With huge support, love and guidance from Fr Paul and the Sisters, organising celebration and reflection services, and connecting with our confirmation candidates and people in our local

community. Our people bring so much joy to everyone they meet and I felt like a beaming proud parent every time they made someone smile. The offsite visits with our college learners gave me another insight into their intriguing personalities and bonds were strengthened away from the usual environment, for staff too...

As the adult section closes their doors, the children and college must now thrive to keep the light of hope and achievement for our children and young learners burning through the sadness of an exceptional era of care. The remarkable care and high standard of education, must continue at St Elizabeth's, to ensure that our vulnerable children can continue to live life to the full and receive the unique care and nurturing that has kept our services going, through these last few turbulent years. We will rise to the challenge, and only a humble and compassionate workforce will prevail against all challenges as they arise with kindness and patience in their hearts.

God bless.

### St Elizabeth's Long Service Awards 2022

We were absolutely delighted to honour some of our staff members recently with a small ceremony and certificate to congratulate and thank them for their years of commitment to St Elizabeth's.

Lengths of service varied from 10 to a staggering 40 years, and all those in attendance were presented with a

certificate and gift voucher from our Chief Executive, Jill Rankin.

On behalf of everyone at St Elizabeth's, we want to say a huge thank you for your service and loyalty to our work. We are so very lucky to have each and every one of you!



# 2022 Photo Montage



# Please Support St Elizabeth's

Thank You!

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We hope you have enjoyed reading our newsletter and will feel inspired to support St Elizabeth's. There are many ways to help, for example by making a donation, supporting one of our fundraising events, volunteering with us or by sharing this newsletter with someone you know.

If you would like to make a donation, please complete the enclosed form and return to the Freepost address below. Alternatively, you can use the Donate button on our website to give via debit or credit card, or use our brand new QR code!



Our Christmas Raffle will be drawn on **15th December 2022**.

If you would like further information on the Centre or how to support us, please contact our Fundraising team at [fundraising@stelizabeths.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@stelizabeths.org.uk) or on **01279 844355**.



## Dates for your Diary

**St Elizabeth's Christmas Bazaar**

CANCELLED

**St Elizabeth's Reflections Service**

Sunday 27th November 2022

**St Elizabeth's Summer Fayre**

Saturday 24th June 2023

*Please send to:*

**FREEPOST, St Elizabeth's, Much Hadham, Herts SG10 6BR**

**☎ 01279 844355 ☒ [fundraising@stelizabeths.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@stelizabeths.org.uk)**

**[www.stelizabeths.org.uk](http://www.stelizabeths.org.uk)**