



SUMMER 2017

## Footie Fever!

This year has seen incredible opportunities for QAC's football development. Our Wednesday sessions have proved popular with a good number of students choosing to take part, indoors and outdoors. Student' fitness and skills have improved, matches have been played but above all they had great fun!

Since November last year, we have played in a 7-a-side disability league once a month, organised by The Birmingham F.A, taking place at Portway Lifestyle Centre in Oldbury. Everyone from QAC's football club was given the opportunity to play against other colleges in the league and students' attitudes have been brilliant, reflecting great sportsmanship and QAC's values whether they won, drew or lost. The team even got a brand new kit which they wore proudly in May for the Natspec Games (where they finished 2nd) and for their disability league matches.



Along with this, Birmingham University staff came to College and supported football sessions, including our women's game. We had a great response from female students who enjoyed fun training sessions and this is something we will develop further next year. Even more great news saw QAC secure funding from The F. A. as part of their 'Grow the Game' initiative. This money will support the development of new teams over the next three years, funding equipment, kit, training, coaches and more!

All staff are extremely proud of our footballing stars and we look forward to exciting times ahead.

## A Word from Hugh



**Hugh J Williams**  
Principal

QAC celebrates 20 years of independence as a charity in 2017, as we were formerly the educational arm of Birmingham Royal Institution for the Blind (brib). Our financial statements at August 1998 show employee numbers at 100 and 131 students of whom 66 were funded by the Further Education Funding Council (reincarnated several times and now the Education Skills Funding Agency). A further 44 were on Employment Service funded programmes and the remainder on shorter job centre funded courses for assessment and 'rehabilitation'. We had a 'quadrangle', an Independent Living Skills bungalow and offered, amongst other things, engineering manufacture and technologies, signwork and glass decoration.

There have been many campus developments since that time which help us to offer an enhanced learning experience to students. We are grateful to brib for its continued support and other major donors that have supported the College. We are proud of our vocational offer, including the innovative Powerchair Football and Access to College for hard to reach young people.

QAC then, as now, remains a place where students feel they can learn in a safe and supportive environment that meets their individual, holistic needs. Our ethos remains unchanged and is reflected in our values of excellence, enabling, collaboration, respect, integrity and inclusion.

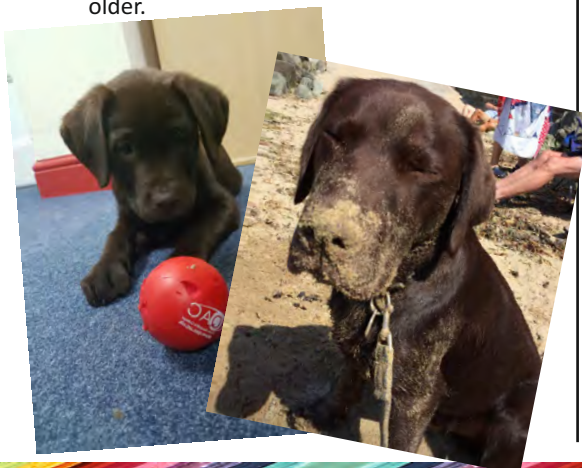
**Hugh.**

## Meet Rufus!

Many students enjoy the company of the dogs in College who provide emotional support and companionship for them.

Due to the huge demand for canine support, Jane Morel, Assistant Principal Student Services, put in a proposal for her to get a puppy who could be trained as another QAC Buddy Dog. Enter Rufus, a 10 week old Chocolate Labrador, who was an immediate hit with students (and staff) when he joined the QAC family in February. Rufus seems very happy at QAC, spending his time with students in their mentoring sessions and free time as well as snoozing in various offices around the College. There have been challenges associated with having a puppy at QAC

but these are considerably outweighed by the benefits and positive impact on the students. Rufus has undergone basic puppy training and will have more specific therapy dog training when he is a bit older.





## Highlights



Cricket Coaching

IT Computer Networking



Inspector Clueless on the Case

### JANUARY

We welcomed Andy Turnbull and Martyn Collis, cricket coaches from the Warwickshire County Cricket Club to work with our Trades and PFL Purple groups on coaching skills and the indoor game. Students practiced their game skills whilst enjoying some first class coaching!

The LRC hosted Braille Day activities, where students could learn about the life of Louis Braille and try reading and writing Braille using different technologies.

Show & Tell Day returned, coinciding with International Lego Day, giving students the opportunity to share interests, activities and showcase personal collections/models. For shy students it offered a structured platform for developing communication skills.

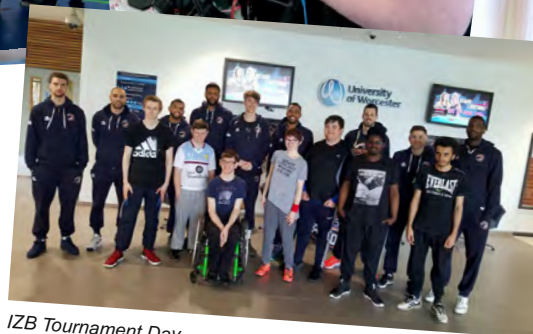
IT students began making full use of the IT Tech Lab, funded by The Karten Trust, using it to develop their networking and computer building skills.

### FEBRUARY

National Grid UK invited students to join them and other colleges to take part in Work Inspiration Week. The opportunity allowed them to try exercises and activities at various National Grid sites, giving them valuable real life experience of the working environment.

QAC became a 'love zone' to celebrate Valentine's Day with students and staff buying roses and cards for their special friends and having them delivered (with musical accompaniment) by QAC Cupids, students Jordan and George. Valentine notes were also pinned up in the Allsorts shop so that people could share the love.

Inspector Clueless called into college to help celebrate Storytelling Week, on his hunt for his missing friend, Noel. Students had to help find clues such as footprints, telephone messages and decipher a code in a poem to help solve the mystery. It was great fun with lots of laughs for everyone who attended.



IZB Tournament Day

Our panel of 'Dragons' were back, with 14 groups pitching their projects and activities to seek investment. The 'dragons' were treated to creative presentations, costumes, performances and some crazy scientific experiments and were really pleased to fund all the projects, including the development of a nature garden and student trips to local theatres and attractions.

### MARCH

We hosted a SEND Conference entitled "Employability & training for work: ambitions & your rights", aimed at students up to 25 and staff or parents supporting them. There were plenty of student views from current and former students of various colleges (including QAC) and useful employment and independence tips and plenty of expertise was shared by all who attended.

As part of one of their units, PFL Amber organised a food collection to support people less fortunate than themselves, collecting over 100kg of food in total! They delivered the parcels – individually decorated – to The Trussell Trust Smethwick Foodbank and were presented with 'thank you' certificates, which they were really proud of. A big well done to the group for their hard work and thanks to everyone who donated food

Our Trades group attended a three week placement at Citizen Coaching in the Jewellery Quarter, doing a fantastic job preparing the room as well as painting walls and woodwork. They even cleaned up after themselves, making the guys at Citizen Coaching very happy! It was a great opportunity for students to utilise skills they learn in the classroom in a real life scenario and one they really enjoyed.



PFL Amber's Food Drive



Work Inspiration Week

World Water Day takes place in March and this year's theme was 'Wastewater'. A representative from Severn Trent Water visited QAC to run workshops for students focussing on advocating sustainable management of freshwater resources. The groups took part in tactile, interactive workshops using props and language that outlined what happened to our water once it entered the sewers.

### APRIL

A group of students represented QAC in the Inclusion Zone Basketball (IZB) tournament at the University of Worcester Arena. Our team played fantastically, progressing through group stages to finish the tournament in third place, with Worcester Wolves Basketball Club players watching some of the games. Well done to all participating students and staff for a brilliant performance!



Blue Watch, our friends from Woodgate Valley Fire Station, brought one of their engines to College, giving students the opportunity to explore a real working Fire Engine. The crew also gave a fire safety talk to students, but were unfortunately called out mid presentation, leaving with the sirens and blue lights flashing, much to the students' excitement!



LEAP Orange Fire Starter Visit

The Performing Arts Spring production was 'After Juliet' written by Sharman Macdonald. Students had worked hard rehearsing since January, with the final performances involving acting, dance and physical theatre. The hard work of cast and crew paid off with audiences loving the show. Well done everyone!



'After Juliet', by Performing Arts

PFL Green were out and about making the most of sunny days when they went to the Safari Park (with students loving the dinosaur exhibit and giant gorilla!) and then playing crazy scientists at the MAD Museum in Stratford, following their Dragons' Den presentation.



Sensory Garden Fun



Outdoor Classroom Day Fun



PFL Green Adventures

## MAY

During their visit in April, Blue Watch judged our 'Fire Safety' competition, choosing LEAP Orange and their poster as the winners. Their prize was a visit to the station, where they enjoyed a guided tour and tried some of the equipment, including the hose and seeing how high they could shoot the water! A great time was had by all, and a big thank you to everyone in Blue Watch for your continued support.

We celebrated Outdoor Classroom Day – a day to inspire outdoor learning and play – with groups taking their sessions outside. We had 'minibeast hunts' to identify a range of insects and leaves, groups playing giant Connect 4 and Snakes and Ladders to enhance their maths skills and the IT group learned to use their newly acquired drone to take photos of the QAC campus. Thankfully the sun stayed out and everyone had a great time.

Selly Manor Museum is working hard to make the manor more accessible to all and we were invited to test and provide feedback on a guided tour developed for their visually impaired visitors. Student Rebecca Thorne, along with our Community Integration Officer, went to the museum and they were guided through this magnificent Tudor manor and medieval hall with Rebecca providing lots of constructive feedback.

Some IP clients and Performing Arts students, took part in an interactive and multisensory live performance 'Hanging in the Balance', in association with SPECTRA and mac

Birmingham. Everyone who took part was fantastic and audience reactions were full of smiles, laughter and anticipation.

The Art & Design group had a cultured trip to the Rep theatre to watch 'To Sir, With Love', part one of their Dragons' Den project. The visit was not only to watch the show, but also get some ideas and learn about stage and costume design as well as learning about a different social era. Part 2 will be a backstage theatre tour at some point soon!

## JUNE

LEAP Orange and LEAP Jade were busy getting into the summer spirit with students designing an array of different ice cream toppings. The competition was part of a new relationship with Second City Whippy ice cream vans, with the winning creation being made and sold on their vans in the local area, helping raise money for QAC. Students had lots of fun with sweets, nuts, sauces and all sorts being used to create a range of 'interesting' toppings!

Some of our IP clients enjoyed a superb day out at the RAF Cosford Air Show, watching skilled displays and seeing a range of 'on the ground' vehicles.

Well done to all the students who took part in this year's QAFactor, showcasing their talents and musical abilities. With around 30 students taking part in the auditions, competition for a

place in the final – hosted as part of the Summer Games – was high, with 8 people getting through to that stage and having to perform again!

A big thank you and well done to all the FS ICT groups who worked extremely hard to organise a range of fantastic events to raise money for our sensory garden project including a mini music festival and cake sale. They also organised their own 'Sensory Garden Fayre' with a variety of stalls, games and activities for people to take part in from name the teddy and human fruit machines to portrait art and wet sponge throwing challenge. It was fantastic to see so much enthusiasm from students involved and lots of fun was had by everyone, raising over £300 in total!

## JULY

As we go to print, the end of the academic year will soon be upon us. Students and staff are working hard to complete coursework before enjoying the fun, laughter and competition of the Summer Games. We will then say farewell to over 40 students who finish their programmes this year. We would like to take this opportunity to wish them the very best of luck as they move to pastures new, whatever those may be.

## Enterprises News

Following support from John Lewis, including a secondment, Umberslade continues to build on its success, launching a new menu and revamping the shop and tea room. Since reopening in March, visitor numbers have increased and more groups are getting involved, including local schools and the local police. Events have been popular with a Wonderland Fayre, Beach Party and Line Dance planned for the summer.

Feelgood Fitness Centre continues to support students, staff and members of the public, and now looks after the sports hall, hiring it out to local sports clubs and groups. The team are looking forward to their first open day in early July, showcasing what the gym and sports hall have to offer, and hope to welcome new members very soon.

Sight Village 2017 season is well underway with the Edinburgh and Glasgow events having taken place in April, and focus now on our flagship event in Birmingham, taking place at New Bingley Hall on the 18th & 19th July. With over 60 exhibitors attending, showcasing the latest products and services available, as well as sport taster sessions and interactive workshops, it will be worth a visit for anyone who has vision impairment or has an age related eye condition.

All Formats produces a range of accessible information (Braille, large print and Audio formats) on behalf of companies and organisations for their vision impaired end users. Increased demand has led to exciting times, and we have invested in both staff and facilities. Now spread across two rooms, the team have much more space and capacity to undertake more work than ever before.

## On The Bug Hunt!

As part of Umberslade's Nature activities, and thanks to funding from Field Studies Council, LEAP groups Jade, Orange and Red along with PFL Amber, visited Bishops Wood FSC Centre near Stourport. Students had great fun hunting for mini beasts, making their own bug houses to take home and pond dipping, which was new to a lot of them! The visits were great fun and really got students thinking about the natural environment around them, with many getting more involved in nature activities at Umberslade and at home, with some coming up with ideas for a nature garden here at College. Thanks to everyone at FSC and Bishops Wood for their support.

## Happy Birthday QAC!

2017 marks our 20th year as an independent charity, having a history aligned to Birmingham Royal Institution for the Blind dating back over 150 years. To celebrate, we have a range of activities and events taking place throughout the year with students and staff getting involved. One such activity saw students creating a time capsule that was buried during the Summer Games event, in the hope that students in years to come find it and look back on a piece of history.

The Fundraising team has set themselves an ambitious target of organising 20 events, to raise £20,000 to support 20 students focused projects, with a range of events taking place over the next few months.

As part of the celebrations, we are asking ex-students and staff to get in touch to help us relive the amazing 20 years we've had. We have received some great stories and photos so far, which you can find on our social media pages, but would still like to see more. So no matter how long ago you were with QAC – get in touch via email at [alumni@qac.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@qac.ac.uk)!

## Judo Joy!

Our Judo club continues to go from strength to strength. We have a new coach leading the club and following a student competition, the club has its very own logo printed t-shirts.

As always, students have worked hard, developing skills and confidence in the sport, enabling all of them to progress. We have been lucky to have regional delivery officers and international referees from British Judo as well as members of the GB Paralympic team visiting sessions to work with students which was a fantastic experience for all involved.

In May, representatives from the club were invited to a presentation lunch, hosted by the Gentlemen's Night Out charity. We were delighted to attend and hear inspirational stories of individuals and groups they support, and were humbled to be one of the chosen charities presented with a £1500 cheque.



Judo GNO Presentation

## Hello YPP Team!

We are excited to announce that following a successful tender process, we now have a new team implementing the Youth Promise Plus (YPP) programme, which supports 15-29 year olds with a disability, who are not in education, employment or training (NEET), living in Birmingham or Solihull.

Our YPP team are experienced Intervention workers, working across the region to offer personalised holistic support, tailored to the young person's needs. The programme has a "Work First" approach, aiming to bring opportunities for employment experience to individuals early on, helping them increase confidence, gain experience and sustained employment. The team also offers dedicated support to employers to ensure the creation of work environments that meet young peoples' needs and are positive for the businesses themselves.

For more information please contact the Intervention Team Leader, Hannah Griffiths [hgriffiths@qac.ac.uk](mailto:hgriffiths@qac.ac.uk)

Bug Hunting at Bishops Wood



YPP Team



# Events

## Fundraising

As part of our 20th anniversary celebrations, we are organising 20 events, to raise £20,000 to support 20 student focused projects around college. Events are well underway, with 3 having already taken place.

In April we hosted a Curry & Quiz Night which was great fun for all, with 15 teams taking part. Questions ranged from sport, to music, to questions based around the past 20 years - and teams even had to test their creative skills and build the highest tinfoil tower! 'Meat & 2 Veg' were the overall winners by half a point, with our Maintenance Team coming a very close second.

The evening raised almost £400 and at the time of writing, our Quizmaster was busy writing questions for the next quiz night in July!

The Birmingham 10k took place in April with three runners from 'Team QAC' taking part. The trio were The Brave, The Brawn and The Blind - Alex Stitt, a member of staff at the gym, was 'The Blind', running with his guide runner Stephen ('The Brave') and family friend Janos ('The Brawn'). Stephen and Janos hadn't run long distance before, but they did 'Team QAC' proud as they ran the 10k in great time. They are all now training for the Birmingham International Marathon which is taking place on 15th October.

QAC's Comedy Night took place on the 21st June, where a range of up and coming and professional comedians gave the audience an evening full of laughter. This event was one of fundraising's 20 events, so all money raised will be going towards our £20,000 target. Thank you to all of our guests, the comedians and a massive thank you to Gill and Jon (QAC staff members) who performed their first comedy set for our guests.

Our 20th anniversary celebrations will continue with a range of events taking place throughout the year including Team QAC members taking on the 'Wild Warrior' challenge run and our annual skydive in September and Birmingham International Marathon in October, along with a Fashion Show in October and Dinner in the Dark and Christmas Fayre in November. For more information about any of these events please contact fundraising@qac.ac.uk or 0121 428 5064.

We would like to take this opportunity to say a big thank you and good luck to the teams and individuals who have decided to take on their own challenges to support us over the summer and everyone who supports the events we organise.



Alison, Our John Lewis Secondee

## Corporate & Community

A group of UCB students organised an event as part of their university course, with all proceeds of that event coming to QAC. The event was a well-being and mindfulness event and went down really well with all of their guests, raising £197 which will be going towards our 20th anniversary campaign.

DWP teams have continued to volunteer with us this year. One group joined the creative fun at Umberslade's Easter Fun Day in April, and another team joined the fun and chaos of the Summer Games.

Back in February we welcomed the Zurich Cares Programme Manager to college to talk about various activities and volunteering projects they could get involved in, all of which have since been taken up by teams, which is fantastic. We have already welcomed one team to Umberslade to plant some trees, with more visiting over the summer. We are looking forward to returning the favour in July, when we visit their offices to offer disability awareness training to staff.

We were lucky enough to secure a secondment through John Lewis' Golden Jubilee Trust, supporting Umberslade over a four month period. The secondment went really well, generating new links and initiatives for us, also gaining the expertise of the local Visual Marketing team and not one, but two, display kitchens for us! John Lewis are also kindly supporting our fashion show event later in the year, and we look forward to working with them in other ways too.

We have recently developed a link with The West Brom Building Society who will also be taking on various volunteering challenges over the next few months, helping us get various manual and creative tasks completed. We are also hoping to welcome the management team to college later in the year for their team meeting and an insight into life at QAC!

A big thank you to all the companies and organisations that support us, whether through volunteering, donations or offering placements and internships to students, we really appreciate it.

**Thank you to everyone who has supported us this year!**  
**If you would like to know more about how you can get involved in supporting us, please contact fundraising@qac.ac.uk or 0121 428 5064**

Getting Crafty with DWP



Zurich Volunteering at Umberslade



UCB Students' Wellbeing Event





**QAC Enterprises consists of a wide range of businesses that raise money for College and provide excellent work opportunities for students.**

**They raise invaluable funds for the College and promote good practice in disability employment. Many of the enterprises offer students work placements in real-life establishments, enhancing their learning experiences.**

**If you would like to know more about them please contact the team directly or contact: [cdarling@qac.ac.uk](mailto:cdarling@qac.ac.uk)**



**We provide a specialist service transcribing documents into alternative formats (Braille, Large Print, Audio) for people with a visual impairment.**

**Contact us on 0121 428 5018**



**QAC is the UK distributor of acclaimed Revolution Carbon Fibre Canes which are lighter in weight and more durable than traditional aluminium canes.**

**Contact us on 0121 428 5041**

## **Conference & Training Facilities available for hire**

**We have excellent conference and training facilities available to hire, including Sports Hall. Contact us on 0121 428 5041**



**Open to QAC students and the local community, we are a fully equipped commercial gym designed to meet the needs of everyone including wheelchair users and people with limited mobility as well as able bodied members. Flexible membership options are available.**

**Contact us on 0121 428 5010**



**Located in Selly Oak, we are a rural idyll in an urban setting comprising of a small retail outlet, the 'Potting Shed' tea rooms & various horticultural facilities for hire.**

**Contact us on 0121 472 4894**



**Based in Bearwood, we offer a wide range of bicycles, spares, accessories and clothing for all aspects of cycling. The fully trained team also provide expert maintenance and repair services keeping your bike in first-rate condition.**

**Contact us on 0121 428 5040**

## **CHILDREN'S PARTIES**

**The beautiful traditional yurt and sensory garden at Umberslade, in Selly Oak, is the perfect place to hire for children's parties. Or hire our wonderful sports hall - available evenings, weekends and out of term time.**

**Contact Nicky on 0121 472 4894 (Yurt) or Dave Farmer on 0121 472 5010 (Sports Hall)**



**QAC Sight Village events are the UK's leading exhibitions of technology, equipment and support services for people with visual impairment and for people experiencing age related sight problems. For a full exhibitor and workshop/seminar list please visit our website; [www.qacsightvillage.org.uk](http://www.qacsightvillage.org.uk) or call 0121 428 5041 for more information. Sight Village events are free to visit – see you there!**

**Birmingham  
18th/19th July**

**Manchester  
29th September**

**London  
7th/8th November**



**Autism Central showcases a range of products and services, with a full programme of workshops and seminars throughout the day. Entry is free and a full range of presentations will take place.**

**Villa Park, Birmingham  
17th October**

**Queen Alexandra College, Court Oak Road, Harborne, Birmingham B17 9TG  
Tel: 0121 428 5050 E-mail: [info@qac.ac.uk](mailto:info@qac.ac.uk)**

**Registered Charity No. 1065794 Registered in England No. 3387540**

**For more information about what is happening at QAC and our Enterprises, and how you can get involved, visit [www.qac.ac.uk](http://www.qac.ac.uk) or follow us on Twitter & Facebook.**



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