



# QAC News



SUMMER 2019

## Creative Flair at QAC!

Last year we introduced QAC ArtsFest as part of our Summer Games. This year we decided it needed to be an event on its own and made it much bigger, taking place over five days just before Easter.

It was a fantastic week, with students taking part in more than 20 creative workshops including synth music, 3D pens, Anime art, rainmakers, puppet making, badgemaking and many more! They really enjoyed trying something new and creating things they could keep and share with others.

Two exhibitions took place, one organised by Photography Club and one open to all students to enter featuring a range of 2D, 3D and mixed media pieces submitted really showcasing students' imaginations.

There were some amazing performances throughout the week including a 'Shotgun' performance by Dance Club, 'Monster Mash' from Performing Arts and some great music from our band,



QAC Collective, who performed in the courtyard before prizes and certificates were awarded. ArtsFest 2019 was hugely popular with all involved, and will definitely be back next year, hopefully with even more workshops taking place.

We would like to say a huge thank you to the staff that put their creative talents on show to host the workshops and to everyone that donated towards making ArtsFest possible including Central Birmingham Soroptimists, Art Discount, Helix, Staedtler, Pegasus Paints, Cotswold Mounts, Cult Pens, Creation Station, Nestle Chocolate and The Works (Harborne).

## QAC Collective Wows!

After the excitement of closing ArtsFest, our student band – QAC Collective – really had the performance bug and were keen to do more.

In May, we were delighted to welcome Serious Studios to College, to record some of our talented musicians. It was a great experience and insight into the music industry, resulting in an actual recording of an original song, 'Never Look Back', written by Zoe and Hamzah.

But that wasn't all. In June they joined other amazing performers on stage at Birmingham Town Hall as part of

Midland Mencap's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations. They performed four songs, including 'Never Look Back', to their biggest audience yet. It was a great evening with everyone enjoying the performance, and some very loud cheers from QAC fans in the audience!

We definitely look forward to hearing more from QAC Collective next year.



## A Word from Bev



QAC continues on its journey going from strength to strength...

Our College student numbers increased again this year, the highest ever at 270. The broad curriculum offered by QAC, the staff expertise, the diverse support services and the continuous focus on adulthood for all of our EHCP supported students, continues to make QAC a highly popular choice for young people, their families and the local authorities.

The staff and student voice have an essential part to play in the direction and practices of College and the range and formats of communication and gathering views from staff continues to impact positively. We were successfully, formatively assessed for our Investors in People accreditation which remains high priority. We also maintained our Investors in Diversity Accreditation and have commenced on our Leaders in Diversity journey.

We have an exciting and ambitious five-year plan (2019-2024) that will see QAC develop its Curriculum Services, Community Services and Residential Services and we are proactively collaborating and working with external partners on new ventures.

Thanks to everyone who plays a part for QAC and your dedication to our students and our College throughout this year. I am proud to be part of such a strong team of people whose excellent skills and diverse expertise makes a real difference to QAC students and clients. QAC has even more to offer in coming months and years, watch this space...!

**Bev Jessop**  
Principal & CEO

## Highlights

Worcester Snoezelen Fun



QAC Table Cricket Team



Free Radio Studio Takeover



Oya Batucada Samba Workshop

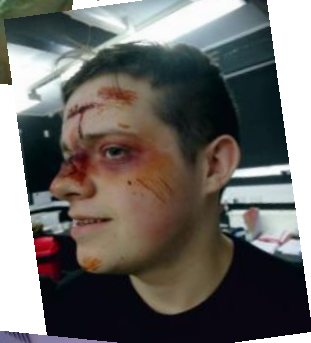


Comic Relief Photo Booth



Special Effects Gore

Fun at Conkers



### FEBRUARY

QAC's Table Cricket Team took part in The Lord's Taverners Table Cricket County Competition at Edgbaston, playing against previous champions Wilson Stuart School and Fairfax School who proved to be tough opponents.

Our football team took part in their first tournament of the season, playing 4 games in total, with 1 win (an impressive 4-0 victory), drawing 2 and losing 1.

Thanks to Dragons Den, Sensory Club and PFL Purple were excited to enjoy lots more sensory activities, using different toys and resources to explore their sensory needs, with the giant beanbags and sensory foam being very popular!

### MARCH

Students and staff had the Mardi Gras spirit as they wore festival colours and created their own carnival masks. Oya Batucada Samba band delivered some fun music workshops and UCB students created festival themed facepainting for people.

Phil Brice from Koala TV visited Creative Media students to talk about the company's work, different roles and showing them some of the media projects Koala have created.

Red Nose Day 2019 was busy with PFL Yellow and PFL Black organising various fun activities including "Sponge the Staff", crafts, a treasure hunt and a photo booth and Hospitality students running a samosa sale. All groups worked really hard and raised just over £200 for Comic Relief.

Our Sport and PCFA students hosted the Birmingham South Primary Schools Boccia and Kurling Competition with 9 schools competing for medals and certificates. A great day was had by all involved.

LEAP Ruby enjoyed a trip to Conkers where they explored the indoor activity centre, crossed the wobbly bridge into the woods and learnt all about recycling.

A CBSO ensemble came to College to give students a flavour of classical music where they could look at and have a go at playing a variety of musical instruments.

Students and staff from Health & Social Care and Leap Opal visited Worcester Snoezelen where they explored 5 amazing sensory rooms including an interactive room, a soft play area and beautiful chill out spaces. The trip was fun and a great way for H&SC students to learn more about the therapeutic benefits of a sensory environment.

LEAP Creative visited printing firm Hollywood Monster, where they met different members of the team who not only told them about the printing industry but also helped students design and print their very own LEAP Creative banner, which they proudly display in their classroom.

A group of UCB Level 2 Media students joined our Performing Arts group for a 'Special Effects' masterclass, showing how to apply special effects make up before transforming students with broken noses, cuts, scrapes, bruises and plenty of gore.



Hollywood Monster Visit

As part of their Employability sessions, Creative Media students visited Free Radio to find out about how a radio station works and the different roles that work there. They had a fantastic time, taking over a studio so they could listen to some live radio and have their disco!

LEAP Hub students hosted a 'Mothers Day' pop-up sale with handmade gifts they designed and made themselves, with some brilliant pieces on show, including wooden planters, personalised bags, frames and cards.

To celebrate the centenary of women getting the right to vote, our 'Inspirational Women' project explored topics such as The Suffragettes, The Women's Institute and women who are heroes, with students talking about women that inspire them – quite a few mums were mentioned!

Anime Club's 'Welcome to Japan'



'High Tea' with the Governors



'All Roads Lead to Bearwood' Performance



Trussell Trust Food Collection



Enchilada Making



Coniston Crew



Silent Disco Trial



VI Kickboxing Workshop



## APRIL

Our Community Project Group organised a food collection to support The Trussell Trust Quinton/Oldbury Foodbank, making posters and leaflets to inform people what food items were needed. At the end of the project they presented the Trust with ten very full boxes and bags of food!

Anime Club hosted a "Welcome to Japan" afternoon, showcasing Japanese culture, food, music and games. Everyone enjoyed Japanese themed performances with some dressing in Japanese inspired outfits with Photography Club on hand to capture everything.

Our Speech & Language Team introduced Construction Club where students take on roles of 'Engineer', 'Supplier' and 'Builder' to use Lego® to build different models. It involves a lot of collaboration and teamwork and is a great way to develop communication skills such as vocabulary, expressions, listening and attention as well as imagination.

IT Level 3 students have explored the world of virtual reality thanks to equipment bought as part of a Dragons Den project. They have created their own VR 360° tour of the college along with an architecture and culture based experience they shared at ArtsFest.

## MAY

IP students organised their very own sponsored walk, doing laps of our field to raise money. Those who took part really enjoyed themselves, particularly when the sun came out. They did amazingly well raising nearly £600, some of which will be used towards a trip to Minehead over the summer.

Our VI club took part in a brilliant kickboxing session delivered by PKA Kickboxing's Kerry, having great fun and learning about the techniques involved.

Students and staff from QAC SPARK group joined thousands of others in Birmingham to take part in the City's Pride event, having great fun watching the parade and soaking in the atmosphere.

Some of our residential students put their cooking skills to the test and took part in a healthy living cooking class led by Zeph, one of the chefs here at College. They joined him in the kitchen where he showed them how to prepare and assemble enchiladas from scratch, before making some themselves; it was a great session, especially the tasting part!

Members of our Governing Board visited our Hospitality café for a very special 'High Tea'. It was a great opportunity for them to see students in action and enjoy some delicious treats; they enjoyed it so much they want to do it more regularly next year.

## JUNE

As part of Men's Health Week, our Healthcare Team hosted a workshop to discuss men's health issues including testicular cancer. It was a great session, with students asking lots of questions and leaving with lots of information.

Despite the less than summer-like weather, our Duke of Edinburgh group completed two expeditions as part of their programme, staying overnight and trekking the Malvern Hills!

Working with Spectra, some students and clients took to the stage for 'All Roads Lead to Bearwood', a very interactive, community inspired performance at Bearwood Street Festival.

A group of students and staff took part in a 3 day residential trip in Coniston, where they enjoyed all kinds of outdoor activities including sailing, kayaking and climbing. It was a great experience for all involved, especially those who had never done anything like it before.

Outdoor Club took to the water and went canoeing. The group had great fun as they worked together to build 'rafted canoes', with no-one going overboard!

## JULY

Following a successful trial earlier in the year, our residential students enjoyed a silent disco, complete with smoke machine. They loved wearing the headsets and dancing along.

Our seventh annual Summer Games saw students, staff guests and volunteers enjoy a series of sporty, and non-sporty, challenges as teams battled it out for medals and points.

We say goodbye to a number of students and staff this summer, and would like to wish them the very best of luck for their next adventures!

# Spotlight

## Criminal Justice

Following successful fundraising, we were able to deliver a Criminal Justice project looking at crime, criminals and justice. Students participated in a drama workshop with Freshwater Theatre Group to learn about democracy and women's' suffrage and took a step back in time to view items from the West Midlands Police Heritage Project including capes, huge handcuffs, hand held speedometers and whistles.

Round Midnight Theatre Company performed their interactive 'Cutting Ties' workshop which looked at issues such as friendship, bullying and knife crime in school, presenting different scenarios for students to discuss.

A highlight was a talk from prestigious Craig Pinkney, a Criminologist and Youth Specialist, who spoke about knife crime, drugs, gang culture and the impact bad life choices can have on individuals, their families and friends. Craig was emotive and was able to use personal experience to tackle a very difficult subject, giving students lots of useful advice on how to make positive life choices.

The project culminated in students putting their detective skills to the test to solve a series of clues and crime scenes to help solve the QAC 'crime' of the missing trophy!

## Celebrating Volunteers

Volunteers play an important role in life at QAC. We have a number of regular volunteers who support students and staff across College and each year we host international students on placement year who work as LSAs in classrooms.

We also welcome corporate volunteer teams who spend time on campus or at Umberslade working with students and/or completing various gardening and maintenance tasks for us. We pride ourselves on building strong relationships with many volunteers enjoying it so much they come back again and again.

To celebrate National Volunteers Week, and say thank you to our volunteers, we invited some to join us for 'tea and cake' hosted by one of our Hospitality groups. Since NVW last year, we have welcomed over 240 corporate volunteers (equating to over 1200 hours), and this was a great opportunity for them to meet other volunteers and share experiences.

## Green Fingers

Gardening is a popular activity for many students, with sessions taking place at College and at Umberslade; it enables them to experience outdoor learning and develop a range of skills whilst having fun.

After nearly 12 years in place, our onsite raised beds area needed some attention and after some successful fundraising, and a compelling Dragons' Den pitch, we were really excited to be able to update it so that it was more practical and accessible for the students we work with now.

We were even more excited when Cadent Gas wanted to be involved and help. So on June 28<sup>th</sup>, as part of West Midlands Giving Day, we welcomed a team of eager volunteers to College to work with our Maintenance team to re-develop the existing area. They painted sheds, helped deconstruct the existing gardening beds and prepare the area ready for Maintenance to finish the project over the summer.

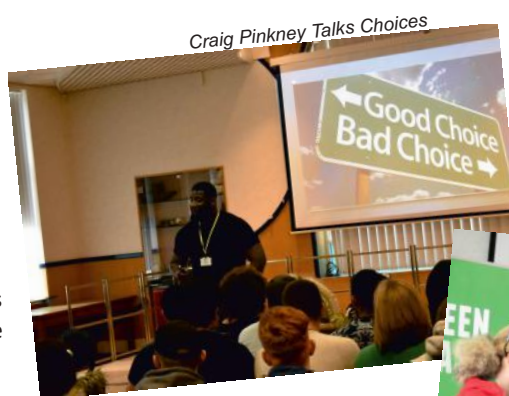
It was a great day for all involved and a couple of weeks of intense rain it was nice that the sun came out! We look forward to September when the students can get to work in the area and hopefully we can invite Cadent back to work with us even more.

## Healthy Lifestyles

At QAC, we do our best to encourage healthy lifestyles and this year we have done a number of things to support this.

In March we hosted a 'Healthy Hearts Friday' and were visited by The Active Wellbeing Society who brought with them a hula hoopist to give a demonstration to students. They also brought a smoothie bike, with students using pedal power to produce their own delicious smoothie. There was also a presentation by one of our Healthcare Team who spoke about the importance of maintaining a healthy heart.

Our biggest event was the School Food Showdown where teams of students and staff competed against each other, and the clock, to prepare the healthiest meal from the ingredients provided. The audience then voted for the best meal using their red and green pepper cards, and plenty of cheering. It was lots of fun for everyone involved, with H&SC and LEAP Ruby walking away as winners!



Craig Pinkney Talks Choices



School Food Showdown



Volunteers Week Celebration



Cadent Volunteering

# Events

## Fundraising

In April, QAC SPARK group joined other Team QAC runners at Cofton Park excited for this year's Gung-Ho! run but sadly, Storm Hannah had other ideas and the event was cancelled. Although the obstacles were deflated our team was not, instead choosing to brave the cold, wet and windy conditions to run the length of the 5k circuit.

We hosted our first 'Afternoon of Wellbeing' in May, where visitors enjoyed activities such as Pilates, Archery and Qigong, different holistic therapies and stalls to mooch around, selling products such as crystals and candles. People left feeling thoroughly relaxed and recharged, giving us great feedback to grow the event for next year.

A number of staff joined Team QAC (and hundreds of others) to pound the streets of Birmingham, take in the sights and take on local City runs. In May Jakub completed the Simplyhealth Great Birmingham 10k, and in June some brave souls left the comfort of their beds to take part in a very wet, very early Sunrise 5k!

Our summer fete was a scorcher as the sun shone brightly all day as people enjoyed samba music, dance demonstrations, archery, games and ferret handling as well as a range of stalls to look around. It was a great day, raising over £1100 for College.

To show that fundraising should be fun, Bev (Principal) and Jan (Deputy Principal) were great sports and took on a series of challenges in a bid to raise money to develop our sensory provision. They took part in a sports wheelchair race, rode a tandem and even formed 'dance off' crews to battle it out, all to the amusement of students and staff!

We have now launched our Amazon wishlist, which features a range of items that you can buy and donate directly to us. The list includes sensory toys and resources, books, gardening tools and other supplies for use in classrooms and can be found by searching for Queen Alexandra College on Amazon's wishlist tab.

Big thanks to everyone who has supported our events this year, we couldn't do it without you. We are busy planning upcoming events including our first Firewalk (4<sup>th</sup> October) and Dinner in the Dark (21<sup>st</sup> November) amongst others!

Gung Ho! Smiles



Summer Fete Samba



10k Complete



Grand Central Basketball



Soggy Sunrise 5k

Gardening with The West Brom



UCB Students



RBS Hospitality Cafe



LoveBrum Presentation

## Corporate & Community

We were awarded £1000 from LoveBrum towards our community workshops at Umberslade, with representatives visiting a session a few weeks later to see what the support meant. We also had the opportunity to attend their 4<sup>th</sup> birthday event and speak to guests about the work we do.

City of Birmingham Rockets Basketball Club took to Grand Central Station to showcase wheelchair basketball to travellers and shoppers, whilst raising over £600 for QAC – thanks guys!

At the start of June, students and staff from Judo Club attended the annual We Are all Making A Difference awards lunch. The group had a great time at the event, talking about what judo means to them and were delighted to accept a cheque for £2000 towards Judo Club for next year.

It has been a busy, and fun, few months with lots of great corporate volunteering sessions happening. We have worked with our friends at RBS, The West Brom DWP, AXA XL and Zurich to complete a number of maintenance, gardening and student activities at QAC and Umberslade.

UCB students supported ArtsFest with fun facepainting sessions and worked with Performing Arts students in a special effects masterclass as well as their regular sessions with Looking & Feeling Good Club.

We are excited to be building relationships with Waitrose Harborne, Cadent Gas and Equiniti who have all started volunteering with us and which we look forward to developing over the next few months.

A big thank you to all the companies and individuals that have supported us this year whether through volunteering or donating items and/or money to us; your support really does make a difference to our students and helps us help them.

**If you would like to know more about how you can get involved in supporting us, please contact [fundraising@qac.ac.uk](mailto:fundraising@qac.ac.uk) or 0121 428 5064**





**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.**

**By supporting our enterprises, not only will you benefit from first rate service and our friendly and helpful staff, you will be supporting our services for people with disabilities.**

**If you would like to know more about them please contact the team directly.**

## all formats

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**



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**

## Conference & Training Facilities available for hire

We have a varied range of excellent facilities available for hire which are ideal for conferences, training, meetings and corporate away days. Our friendly and helpful staff are on-hand to support your needs during your time onsite.

Facilities include meeting rooms and a sports hall.

**Contact us on 0121 428 5041**

## 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 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 more information 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!

North-West (Manchester)  
1<sup>st</sup> October

South-East (London)  
5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> 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.

Cranmore Park, Solihull Birmingham  
24<sup>th</sup> October

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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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