



# QAC News



WINTER 2017

## Outdoor Fitness Fun!

Although the weather is taking a turn for the cold, there is plenty of excitement on campus as we recently opened our Outdoor Gym area and Traverse Wall. The equipment, made possible thanks to generous donations from trusts and foundations, will be used by students to help with physical, emotional and mental wellbeing.

Individual students will be able to use the Outdoor Gym throughout the day for their own exercise sessions, and tutors will also be able to lead group sessions. There are wheelchair friendly apparatus and some of the equipment is designed for more than one person to use at a time, so it's a great social exercise too!

Students were involved in choosing the equipment we had installed, joining staff on visits to local parks to test different pieces, and there was plenty of enthusiasm to have a go when Mikail Huggins joined us for the opening of it in November – despite the rain!

The Traverse Wall offers another outdoor opportunity for students, with sessions



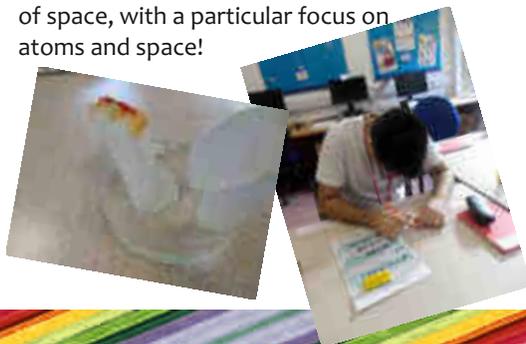
being led by a member of QAC staff, recently qualified as a Climbing Wall Instructor. Using the wall will help them build strength, mobility and flexibility whilst also having fun and developing other skills. 'Climbing Club' will be a weekly fixture, with the wall also being used during directed study and other sessions, meaning plenty of opportunities for students to get involved. We also hope to take students offsite to local climbing walls so they can test their skills going up a wall as well as across!

A big thank you to all the funders who supported the project and made it happen!

## Crazy Scientists!

Thanks to donations from Soroptimists International and The Edward & Dorothy Cadbury Trust earlier this year, science experiments and space exploration activities are coming to QAC!

This term, 'Science Club' was set up, enabling students to explore various aspects of space, with a particular focus on atoms and space!



As part of the project we welcomed ThinkTank to QAC to deliver some 'Electrifying Science' workshops where students participated in some hair-raising experiments!

PFL Blue have had great fun doing some experiments of their own as they learn about crystals and how they form.

Everyone had lots of fun learning about static and current electricity and replicated a range of scientific discoveries from Ancient Greece to the modern day.

The project has been a great success so far and we're looking forward to more workshops and activities in the New Year, especially Science Week in March!

## A Word from Angela & Bev



As we head into the Winter of 2017/18 we find ourselves increasing our student numbers significantly for another consecutive year. Our staffing number is at 358 and student numbers at nearly 250, both being the highest in our history!

We truly are becoming the college of choice for young adults and families. This Newsletter gives you a snapshot of activities so far this academic year. We don't rest on laurels though! This year we have installed a climbing wall, outdoor gym equipment, a second student centre, not to mention expanding and improving our on-site learning provision.

We continue to grow, develop and strengthen our core business year on year. The Senior Management Team is constantly looking at new ideas and initiatives to take the college forward, working with our students and staff to be innovative and excellent in all that we do.

None of this would be possible without our excellent team of staff, Governors, our sponsors and all of you that support us year on year.

We both wish you well this winter and want to say a HUGE THANK YOU!

Quite simply, we couldn't do it without you!

**Angela Litchfield & Bev Jessop**  
Vice Principals



## Highlights



Baking Week Fun



Acts of Kindness



IP Superheroes



Pudsey Visits



Rufus Celebrates!



Sports Sessions



Remembrance Day

### SEPTEMBER

LEAP Amethyst started their Tuesday morning placement at The Belfry Golf Course cleaning vehicles and machinery and helping with grounds keeping. The Director of Golf Course and Grounds, Angus, described them as 'a great bunch and a great help'. Well done all!

### OCTOBER

IP clients enjoyed a Halloween thrill as they took a spooky steam train journey along the Severn Valley Railway, travelling in eerie darkness and meeting mysterious characters as they passed through haunted stations.

Members of staff took part in a blindfolded cake decorating competition as part of National Baking Week. Cheered on by the student audience, five teams attempted to recreate individual fairy cake designs, testing their communication and artistic skills to the limit before students chose the winning team!

Spirit of Djembe, an African drumming group, came to college for Black History Month, giving students insight into djembe drums. We also welcomed Dance Sansaar who brought a range of traditional instruments and Punjabi fashion items enabling students to learn more about how Diwali is traditionally celebrated.

### NOVEMBER

'Pudsey Power' struck as the big yellow bear helped kick off our CiN fundraising. Students (and staff) filled the library as Photography Club was on hand to capture the smiles and laughter. The PFL Penny Trail was a success as always and Hospitality students hosted a café morning dedicated to CiN.

To celebrate Remembrance Day we welcomed the British Legion to talk to students about their role. Students also enjoyed looking at some WWI and WWII artefacts borrowed from the Birmingham Museum and photos of Harborne during the war, comparing them to the Harborne they know today.

World Kindness Day saw staff and students performing acts of kindness across a whole week! A kindness corner was created in the library for people to share the kind acts that had been performed and IT Level 1 & 2 groups were seen delivering flowers and kind messages to individuals across campus.

IP clients dressed up as their favourite superheroes and joined the fun and excitement at this year's MCC Birmingham Comic Con. It was a fascinating celebration of all things movies, sci-fi, comics and gaming with plenty of superheroes to save the day.

As part of Alcohol Awareness Week, The White Ribbon Association delivered some workshops around the effect alcohol has on the body and provide some hints and tips on staying safe whilst drinking. Students were given 'beer goggles' to wear as they attempted various tasks, with many of them not liking the experience, saying they didn't feel in control and deciding to stick to good old water instead!

Friend and Patron, Mikail Huggins, was back at QAC running exercise sessions for Sport and Powerchair students to develop strength, movement and flexibility. Sport students then helped deliver sessions to other groups with lots of fun for all involved.

Rufus, the QAC Buddy Puppy celebrated his 1<sup>st</sup> birthday with a party! Students and staff joined the fun, along with the other College dogs, with plenty of treats for everyone especially Rufus!

PFL Bronze got creative with a Jackson Pollock inspired splatter activity in Art sessions, creating future masterpieces!

### DECEMBER

Our LGBTQ group kicked off, providing a safe space for students who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender or Questioning to meet and talk with others about things that matter to them and promote acceptance. The group, led by two students and our PSHE team has also promoted the LGBTQ message to other colleges at a recent Natspec event.

LEAP Opal worked hard to support Free Radio's Mission Christmas Appeal, collecting toys and gifts for local disadvantaged children to receive at Christmas. As part of the project they sent flyers home and had collection boxes around college, then delivered the toys to the Free Radio depot in Coventry where they helped the team sort through all the donations received.

Students and staff travelled to Manchester for the launch event of this year's AQA Unlocking Potential Programme, run by The Dame Kelly Holmes Trust. We have 8 students lucky enough to be part of it over the next few months.

As always, students and staff got into the festive spirit with fayres, tree decorating competitions, café specials, Winter Woolly Day and student performances taking place across College!



# Spotlight

## Bright For Sight

October saw students and staff across College celebrate Bright 4 Sight Week.

There was a day dedicated to interactive sessions where people could use simulation glasses to experience different types of sight loss and learn more about the use of different canes. Some of the workshops were led by visually impaired students who did an amazing job, sharing their experiences and challenges.

Sport students offered the chance for people to participate in goalball activities, leading demonstrations and giving advice on techniques of the game, designed and played for visually impaired players. Everyone had lots of fun taking part!

There were plenty of competitions running throughout the week including the brightest dressed person and group, and the brightest story or poem. The biggest competition though was to design an eye to celebrate our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary and incorporate our Bright 4 Sight logo. Groups really got creative with some amazing entries using tactile and sensory materials, car bonnets and 3D printing, making it a tough decision for the judges. Well done to all groups, in particular PFL Amber who were crowned winners and will be enjoying a day at Dudley Zoo in the Spring as their prize!



Bright Eyes Entry



Bright Eyes Entry

## YPP Programme Takes Strides Forward

Our Youth Promise Plus (YPP) team has had a very busy and exciting 6 months with some excellent achievements. As part of the programme, clients have successfully completed short courses including Toolkit; our bespoke employability course, Frame Academy; an accredited two day bike maintenance course and Fab Lab, a three day course involving 3D scanning and 3D printing.

The team are actively working with 63 young people who have multiple barriers, including disability, mental health issues, homelessness, social isolation and criminal records, 66% of whom have gone in to employment education or training. We have supported young people in to jobs and work placements with Marks and Spencers, the NHS, Fortem/Wilmott Dixon, Halfords and Jaguar Land Rover to name a few, and have also supported transitions back in to college, working closely with South and City College, Birmingham Met, as well as the Princes Trust and University Learning Hub.

Clients on the programme are doing really well and getting a lot out of being involved and the support and advice we offer.

YPP Fab Lab Results



TEDx Workshop

## TEDx comes to QAC

TEDx is a programme of local, self-organized events that bring people together to enjoy a TED-like idea sharing experience. With TEDx Brum coming to the City in October, we were delighted to welcome the Community Outreach team to college to deliver a presentation about the work TEDx does globally and locally.

In line with this year's theme of 'perspectives', Natalie posed a series of socially relevant questions – including politics and the concept of celebrity - to students, asking if they agreed or disagreed before getting the group to discuss their perspectives on why. They then watched some previous TEDx videos which sparked lots of conversation around how they thought the ideas reflected QAC's own values. Students really enjoyed the workshop and were inspired by what they saw, so we hope to work with them again in the future.

We were really proud of our very own Gill Leno who secured a spot as speaker at the TEDx Brum event at Birmingham Hippodrome in October. Speaking to an audience of over 1500 people about the concept of sexual citizenship, she was one of a small number of speakers who got through the open auditions.

Gill Leno - TEDx Speaker



# Spotlight

## Campus Changes Take Place

This September saw our biggest intake of students, with numbers now at nearly 250. To accommodate the increase a series of building works took place across campus over the summer.

Our Maintenance team created 6 new teaching areas and 3 new mentoring rooms across the site and we also had a new student centre installed which is being well used at breaks and as the new home to Music Club. With new classrooms taking over the old library space in the Bradbury Centre, a new library was created in the Main Building, with Rufus keeping an eye on progress over the summer.

New storage rooms have been created and by the time we break for Christmas we will also have a new breakout building at the top of campus to support students in our Evolution block.

## iCycle Closes

Unfortunately our social enterprise iCycle will be closing its doors at the end of the year.

After starting life on the College site, then moving to Harborne High Street followed by Bearwood, the team has provided a valuable retail and maintenance service to local cyclists for nearly forty years. However, with increased competition in the market, the difficult decision has been made to close.

We are exploring options for the use of the shop space which will still play a part on the Bearwood high street and more news will be announced in the next few months.



New Classrooms



Rufus Supervises

## Work Placement Success Stories

We are three months into the college year and over 100 of our students are already accessing work placements, with over 40 of these being external placements.

Our Work Placement team are currently engaging with over 50 employers offering experience in different sectors in line with students' long term career goals. These employers include The Belfry Golf Course, Martineau Gardens, #CoffeeCrew and CPMidlands to name a few.

Success stories include Rachel, a Hospitality student who secured a placement at Rowheath Pavilion Café once a week, splitting her time between baking and working in the café with customers.

David, who started working at the Co-Op last year has seen his café placement turn into a 1-2 day a week internship position, complete with his own uniform and name badge.

Chris is completing a supported internship at Thrift Vintage Interiors where he works with customers, visual merchandising, cleaning and taking deliveries.

Brandon and Emily are completing their work experience at Jonathans in the Park, the new tea rooms at Lightwoods House, Bearwood. They are getting a feel for serving customers, kitchen preparation and washing up!

Charlie is a sports student working in the offices of The Albion Foundation where he is taking bookings, organising payments and carrying out various administration tasks.

Work placements can be for one day a week and last up to six weeks, or be for more days and longer periods of time. Our students get lots from the opportunities both personally and in terms of their employability skills.

We are always looking for new employers to engage with so if you would like to know more about how you could support our work placements, please contact Chrissy on [csadik@qac.ac.uk](mailto:csadik@qac.ac.uk)

## Powerful Powerchair Performances

Last year we wrote about how we had introduced the Powerchair Football Academy (PCFA) programme to QAC, in conjunction with The Albion Foundation. The programme has been a great success, with students doing really well in both the theory sessions and practical match days at West Brom Leisure Centre.

Since the programme started we have been able to establish our very own powerchair team, competing in the West Midlands Powerchair Regional League – which is fantastic!

The team has played four matches so far, with mixed results, but lots of fun has been had by everyone involved – our very own Amy even won 'Man of the Match' at the November meet!

A big well done to all the students, and thank you to everyone involved in supporting them. We're looking forward to our next matches in January!

QAC Powerchair Team



Work Placement - Chris



Work Placement - David



# Events

## Fundraising

As part of our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations, our aim was to organise 20 events to raise £20,000 to support 20 student focused projects around college. We have successfully organised 18 events this year, with the last couple scheduled for the New Year. We have had great support throughout the year, with lots of money raised for QAC and we feel very grateful for all the support we have received so far.

Team QAC was busy in September with five people taking on the tandem skydive – the weather was cold and gloomy but all jumpers were lucky enough to complete their jumps before the rain arrived. They did really well, raising just over

£1000! We also had seven runners challenge themselves to the Wild Warrior obstacle course in September, taking on over 30 obstacles around a 10k course. Despite lots (and lots) of mud, everyone finished with smiles on their faces – thanks guys!

In October Team QAC joined the first Birmingham International Marathon with five runners taking part for us. We had two visually impaired runners – running with their guide runners – as well as two other runners taking on the 26.2 mile challenge. All made it round the course in great time and raised over £1500 – a fantastic total! We will be signing people up for the 2018 event in January, so please get in touch if you want to challenge yourself!

At the end of November we hosted our 6<sup>th</sup> 'Dinner in the Dark' event at Macdonald Burlington Hotel, with diners plunged into darkness for a couple of hours as they enjoyed a two course meal. Lots of fun was had with people exploring their plates, chatting with friends and adjusting to the concept of eating with no sight. The event raised over £700, and lots of VI awareness, so a big thanks to all involved.

With December came our Christmas festivities including our Christmas Fayre raising over £500 and a Christmas Concert, in partnership with HRUK, featuring local performers including QAC students and The Rock Choir!

On the 14<sup>th</sup> December we held our last event of the year – our Christmas Quiz Night! We welcomed old teams trying to defend their title, as well as new teams and together raised over £300 for our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations. It was a great event to finish off the 2017 year!

Marathon Finishers



QAC Wild Warriors



Scafell Pike Views



Dinner in the Dark

Disability Awareness



Morrisons Presentation



The West Brom



Barclays

## Corporate & Community

In August a group of staff scaled Scafell Pike – the weather was kind to them and they reached the summit, raising over £500 in the process – thank you!

As part of a school project a staff member's children organised their own swim-a-thon. They raised almost £250, making their school, mum and QAC proud, thanks boys!

Barclays Operational Performance Team joined LEAP Opal in September to help plant pots to brighten up the courtyard. After their 'potting' session, the group had an afternoon of disability awareness training, which they hope to put into practice back at Barclays!

We also welcomed a group of managers from The West Brom to do a morning of volunteering and an afternoon of disability awareness training. Their task was to clean and bolt tyres together ready to make a tyre wall for the outdoor gym. A few weeks later another group from The West Brom came to volunteer, working with PFL Bronze to position and plant the tyre wall. Everyone worked really hard to get the wall finished and had lots of fun at the same time!

In October we hosted a disability awareness day for contacts from John Lewis, The West Brom, Arthur J. Gallagher Insurance Brokers, Ecclesiastical Insurance and Zurich. Participants experienced sighted guide and deaf blind manual training before putting their new skills to the test in a series of fun challenges. Everyone had an enjoyable day, getting a better insight into the world of disability.

We were delighted to visit Morrison's Rubery to accept a cheque for over £17,000! The money will be used to fund music activities including Music Club, guest workshops and student sessions with a range of instruments.

Throughout the year we have been fortunate to receive a range of donations including food for residential students, art supplies, beauty products and uniforms for Looking

**A big well done & thank you to everyone who has supported us this year, whether you've donated, volunteered or taken part in an event, we really appreciate it!**

**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)**





**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 or contact: [alitchfield@qac.ac.uk](mailto:alitchfield@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**



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 exhibitions are premier UK events showcasing technology, support and services for people who are blind or visually impaired and those experiencing age related sight problems.

The events take place in various UK cities throughout the year and are free to attend.

Information on dates and venues for 2018 will be announced on our website.



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  
9th October 2018**

Queen Alexandra College, Court Oak Road, Harborne, Birmingham B17 9TG

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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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