



# QAC News



SUMMER 2018

## A Royal Visitor!

Royalty came to QAC in March when we welcomed HRH The Princess Royal to help celebrate our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary as an independent charity. HRH is Patron of Lattitude Global Volunteering, who provide QAC with a number of volunteers to support our students each year, and the visit was part of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Lattitude working in Ecuador.

On arrival HRH was introduced to local dignitaries and representatives from QAC and Lattitude before being led to Independence Street. There, she was greeted by the Mobility Team who talked about their role at QAC and gave a sighted guiding demonstration.

The Princess Royal then visited PFL Black where she spoke to students and staff taking part in fun science experiments. LEAP Sapphire was the next stop, with students talking about the Spring planting they were doing to celebrate HRH's visit being on the first day of Spring.

## Emergency!

We hosted an 'Emergency Services Month' in June, inviting different emergency services to College to talk to students.

Woodgate Valley Fire Service visited us, with staff and students getting a closer look at the equipment, testing hoses and sitting on the truck.

Bikers from the Royal British Legion took part, bringing a number of motorbikes and memorabilia items along with them.

We were delighted to welcome Midlands Air Ambulance Charity to QAC for the first time. To the amazement of students, they brought a helipod, along with other items of kit, allowing students and our (Buddy



HRH then met groups of QAC students and staff who talked about life at College, followed by a group of Lattitude Global Volunteering's Ecuadorian volunteers, some of whom are volunteering at QAC this year.

QAC's Performing Arts group had the honour of performing to HRH and the rest of the audience, before speeches were given and students Hannah and Konnor presented her with gifts before she left.

It was a pleasure to welcome HRH and other guests to QAC and it was a wonderful experience for all involved.

Dog Rufus) to hop onboard and experience the interior of an air ambulance! We ran a competition for groups to design their own helicopter, with LEAP Ruby winning and getting to enjoy their own exciting trip to the Air Ambulance base in Strensham.

It was a fun and interesting month, giving students and staff a real insight into the roles and workings of the emergency services that help keep us safe.



## A Word from Angela & Bev



It has been another amazing and busy year for QAC! Our student and staff numbers continued to increase and we've all worked really hard to maintain a fantastic quality of experience.

Our amazing students have done us and themselves proud with their achievements in so many aspects of their College lives. QAC staff have worked so hard to ease student anxieties, to support and enable them on their QAC journey.

There is so much to celebrate, we don't want to leave anyone out! Just a few examples since January include the recent Dragon's Den projects, the visit from HRH Princess Royal and not forgetting the huge achievements of the QAC Football Team! So much fantastic work happens weekly at QAC, it is a real credit to all staff and students!

To the students leaving us this summer, we wish you every happiness and success. Please keep in touch. To our new cohort joining in September, we are looking forward to meeting you!

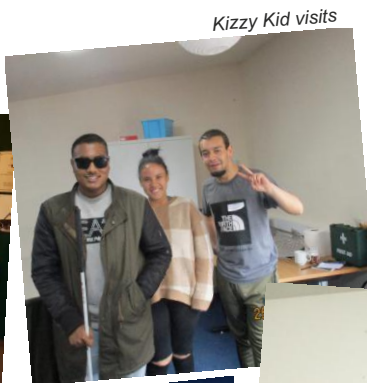
We know the years to come are going to be financially challenging, but we aim to steer a steady ship and work collaboratively to reinforce that QAC is the first choice for students. With Bev as our new Principal, we are confident of building on our achievements of the last couple of years and moving forward together onto even greater things!

**Angela Litchfield & Bev Jessop**  
Vice Principals

## Highlights



History lessons with PFL Green



Kizzy Kid visits



I am Me, We Are Kindred performance



LEAP Opal Enterprise Sales



Lego Show & Tell



Superhero Day

### JANUARY

We were thrilled to welcome Free Radio to QAC to interview some of our students and staff as part of their 'Best of Brum' project.

Show & Tell Day gave students the opportunity to talk about things of interest to them. IP client Jason regularly constructs Lego and brought some of his motorised models to show students, also telling them about the history of Lego and how using it helped him develop different skills.

This year's Storytelling Day saw friendly alien 'Greenie 4235' make a stop on planet Earth to visit QAC to learn all about happiness, kindness, love and laughter from our students. It was great fun for all involved, so much so that extra sessions had to be put on!

### FEBRUARY

In December, LEAP Opal collected games and toys as part of Free Radio's Mission Christmas Appeal, and in February we were lucky enough to receive a donation of board games. Games Club was more than happy to accept them and test them out in friendly competition, with some PFL groups also making use of them.

Love was in the air for Valentine's Day with special 'cupid deliveries' of lovely cards and roses, romantic serenades and a dedicated photoshoot hosted by Photography Club.

### MARCH

Following financial donations to our Music Development project at the start of the academic year, music activities have increased with lots of activities on offer. Music Club has grown, with more sessions being offered, more instruments available and more students getting involved. Around 20 students attend club sessions with lots more students involved in other sessions and they decided to host their own live 'gig', which was a huge success!

LEAP Opal were busy making a range of handmade items – including cakes and decorated planters – for their Mother's Day sale as part of our 20th anniversary fundraising. They did really well, selling out in some things and having to make more to fulfil orders! Well done guys!

### APRIL

Music Development funding enabled us to offer specialist workshops, one of which saw Kizzy Kidd from Nugent Education introduce students to rapping, beatboxing and freestyling. Students got to turn their words into poetry, then into rap! It was the first event of this nature and the students involved had a great time, creating some great lyrics.

Our PCFA group, supported by The Albion Foundation, hosted a powerchair football workshop for pupils and staff from Sherbourne Fields Special School and Chadsgrove School. QAC students designed and led the sessions which included training tips, skills demonstrations and information about the sport, with everyone getting a chance to take part in matches.

Performing Arts students and IP clients took part in the fantastic Spectra show 'I Am Me, We Are Kindred' at the MAC, Birmingham. The performance involved three different coloured tribes (Blue Squares, Green Triangles and Purple Circles) using physical theatre to take the audience on a journey of realisation. Our students and clients worked hard and performed fantastically, overcoming various personal barriers and other issues, remaining professional throughout.



Music Gig

### MAY

PFL Green have been out and about, making the most of local attractions including bowling, cinemas, Sandwell Valley and The Lickey Hills. The group's trip to the Black Country Living Museum was a particular favourite with everyone.

Capes and costumes were flying high as SuperHero Day landed at QAC. Students (and staff!) dressed up as their favourite Superhero characters, with some fantastic entries taking to the stage in a parade! Students shared stories about who their favourite Superhero is, why they had chosen them and exactly what attributes make a hero. Great fun all round!





PCFA @ Naidex

Our PCFA students were busy again, this time joining The Albion Foundation at the Naidex exhibition to present their powerchair football prowess. They worked together to demonstrate games and various powerchair football skills, allowing people to learn more about our innovative course and Powerchair Football in general.

Dance Sansaar joined us for our very own Vaisakhi Mela where they talked to students about the Harvest Festival and the Punjab, also giving them the chance to try instruments such as the dhol drums and the flutes.

We were visited by various furry little animals from Dudley Zoo, with students getting to hold and stroke the animals whilst learning about their habitat and how to take care of them. The squeaky guinea pigs were extremely popular!

Students had fun playing violins and ukuleles when The Strings Club came to visit, with some even learning how to play Bob Marley's One Love. Everyone had great fun, especially our budding songwriters who got the chance to perform in front of an audience.

QAC attended the annual Natspec conference at RNC, with some students competing against other colleges from around the country in football, tennis, boccia and gym challenges. Everyone did really well, representing QAC brilliantly, with the football team winning the overall competition 8-1 in the final!

## JUNE

Some of our Trades students completed a work placement at the Macdonald Burlington Hotel where they worked with the hotel Maintenance Team to help repair a shower cubicle and paint a staff recreation area. It was a great opportunity for them to work with a professional team and it follows on from the recent work placement for Hospitality Student Kiran, who has secured a Supported Internship at the hotel which will start in September.

Students from Art & Design, Creative Media and Photography Club curated their own art exhibition, taking place at Stryx Gallery in Digbeth. The group collaborated and worked hard to make their exhibition a cohesive piece of work, showcasing work they have produced this academic year.



Furry friends



Strings Club visit



Outdoor learning



Climbing high

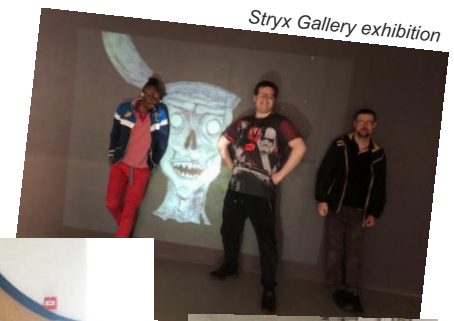
A group of IP clients enjoyed the sunshine and had a superb day out at RAF Cosford Air Show where they explored the museum and watched lots of exciting mid-air displays and pilot skills!

Photography and Dance Clubs joined forces for a 'light painting' (long exposure) workshop. All students had worked together, shared ideas and learnt a new technique to produce some stunning images, having fun in the process!

Thanks to funding from the Field Studies Council, four student groups have visited Bishops Wood Nature Centre, near Stourport. PFL Blue, PFL Black, LEAP Sapphire and LEAP Topaz won a competition and were the lucky groups chosen to take part in outdoor learning activities including pond dipping, bug exploring and using tools to make wooden bug houses. Each group had a great time exploring the forested area and we hope to work with the team at Bishops Wood next academic year.

Climbing Club took a trip to Blackwell Court in Bromsgrove, where they got to experience what it's like on a bigger climbing wall and put their new climbing skills to the test.

Our Footie team had a fantastic season, playing over 20 matches and remaining unbeaten throughout! Players have shown great teamwork and respect in all matches, both for each other and their opposition, and have been a credit to QAC. Well done all!



Stryx Gallery exhibition



Trades Placement

## JULY

Our YPP team has worked hard this year with great success. More employers have been recruited to offer opportunities, meaning fantastic client experiences. They have seen clients complete courses and placements in vehicle maintenance, sports leadership, business admin and 3D design amongst many others!

Early July saw us host our first QAC ArtsFest showcasing everything arty and creative! There was an exhibition featuring students' work including art, photography, sculptures and drawings. This was followed by an afternoon of performances from our Choir, Music and Dance Clubs along with our Performing Arts students recreating 'Grease' for the audience, who couldn't help singing along!

The annual Summer Games returned, bigger than ever with more competitions and activities across more days. There were plenty of sports for everyone to take part in, along with art activities, bake off challenge and of course the QA Factor. With lots of fun and lots of medals, it was a great way to round off a fantastic academic year!

# Spotlight

## DKH Mentoring Programme

This year we had two groups of students taking part in mentoring programmes with The Dame Kelly Holmes Trust. 'The Unlocking Potential' and 'On Track to Achieve' programmes introduced students to athlete mentors Anna Turney and Darren Harris, and aim to help students develop a range of skills including confidence and communication whilst also promoting the idea of positive self-reflection.

As part of the programme they worked on projects to raise awareness and/or money for social problems they see as important. These were very much

student led, from choosing the subject issue, explaining why it was important and looking at what they could do to help. Lots of group discussion, debate and compromise took place, with a broad range of projects emerging including issues such as homelessness, mental health, autism and the family, cancer, dog mess and the masks we wear to hide who we are.

Students attended monthly sessions and worked really hard on their projects, with 19 students completing the programme. At the start of July we hosted a celebration at QAC where they spoke to staff, other students and invited guests about their projects and their experience of the programme before being presented with an award and certificate. Well done to all the students involved and to the staff who supported them – you're all a credit to QAC!

## KHFC vs QACFC!

In May, we were delighted to welcome some players from Kidderminster Harriers FC Academy to QAC to work with students. It was an opportunity for the players to find out more about disability, how sport can be delivered in accessible ways and how it plays an important part in many of our students' lives. They delivered various skills sessions to students from across PFL, LEAP and Vocational groups, before taking part in a series of multi-sports activities hosted by our own Sports Leaders.

The afternoon finished with a penalty shootout and mini-match, with QAC players putting KHFC to the test! Great fun was had and it was a really valuable experience for all involved. We look forward to many visits to come next academic year.

## 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dragons Den

Throughout last year we celebrated our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary as an independent charity and as part of this we ran a fundraising campaign aiming to raise £20,000 to support 20 student focused projects. Although we didn't quite reach our target, we successfully raised just over £15,000 which was fantastic!

The money raised will go towards making a range of projects happen. Students and staff were encouraged to think of project ideas, up to the value of £700, that would benefit College and leave a legacy at QAC. Groups then took part in a Dragons' Den style panel where they presented to a panel of (friendly) 'dragons' who decided whether or not to fund the project.

There were some fantastic ideas put forward, many incorporating QAC values such as equality and inclusion. Students and staff put a lot of effort into their presentations and it was great to hear how passionate they were about projects they thought would make a difference to College and future students.

Some of the successful projects include wheelchair friendly benches, VR equipment, Lego based therapy, sensory resources and kit for our Powerchair football team.

Thank you to everyone that supported us with our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary fundraising, it really will make a huge difference to all around QAC. We can't wait to see the projects in action next academic year!

## DofE Activities

Duke of Edinburgh Club has been very busy this year! Following a generous donation from The North Face to the DofE Central England Office, we were delighted to receive a donation of clothing and footwear, to support students on their DofE expeditions. This will enable us to promote our DofE programme more as it means students and their parents do not have the worry of securing outdoor gear.

Three students – Izzy, Chris and Jack - achieved their Bronze award. This involved them developing a skill, taking part in a physical activity and doing some voluntary work, as well as attending three overnight camping trips and a walking expedition in Derbyshire! They have been doing DofE for two years, demonstrating the dedication and commitment required to achieve the award, working extremely hard throughout.

Finally, two members of staff, Debbie and Mel, were invited to the Gold Awards presentation as special guests of DofE Central England. They were privileged to meet renowned cameraman, photographer, author, inspirational speaker, Mountain Guide and environmentalist Alan Hinkes OBE and Princess Beatrice, who spoke to the award holders and congratulated them on their success. A fun and inspirational day for all.



Clothing collection for the homeless



Footie with KHFC Academy



The North Face donation for DofE



# Events

## Fundraising

In May, four runners took on the Birmingham 10k as part of Team QAC. Running conditions were hard due to the scorching heat, but they all ran over the finish line in great time. For two of our runners, taking on a running event was a new challenge, so we were very pleased to see them cross the finish line with smiles on their faces. The group did really well, raising over £550 for QAC – a huge thank you and well done to all!

We held our first quiz night of the year in March and it was great to see lots of new faces taking part, as well as returning players. There was plenty of fun and friendly competition throughout the evening, even with the addition of a tricky

round from the quiz master! A team from DWP were crowned the winners this time around and the event raised over £340 towards our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary fundraising, which was a fantastic amount. Another quiz was held in July, with lots of staff taking part before the summer holiday began. We hold our quizzes three times a year, so keep your eyes peeled for more information about the next one at the end of the year!

This year was Team QAC's first entry into the Gung-Ho run. A group of 8 QAC staff took on the 5k inflatable obstacle course, adding to the fun by dressing as Cruella de Vil and some dalmatians. They had great fun, raising over £600, and are already looking forward to taking part again next year!

Also as part of our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary campaign we asked students to help us with our fundraising and two groups came up with great ideas and really got stuck in. Both groups presented their ideas to the fundraising team – and were then given £25 to put their ideas into practice. Over a period of a month, LEAP Opal did a sponsored silence, a Mother's Day sale and an Easter sale and raffle. They worked really hard and raised just over £230! Our Art and Design group also took part in the enterprise and offered creative services including bespoke water bottle designs and a pop-up photo booth for all to get involved in. The group did amazingly well and raised just under £30. Well done to all!

**We would like to say a big well done and thank you to everyone that has supported us so far this year. We're busy planning events for the rest of the year - including a Spooky Halloween Zumba Party - so please keep looking on our website and social media for more information.**

## Corporate & Community

We were lucky enough to be selected by The Warwickshire Freemasons as one of their local charities to support at the start of the year. We were invited to their charity lunch where we met with other charities they support and were presented with a cheque for £1500 towards student activities.

In May we were invited to attend the 'We Are All Making A Difference' Charitable Trust's presentation lunch at Hilton Metropole Hotel. Judo Club coaches Colin and Wayne, as well as Fundraising Officer Paisley, took students Harry, Chris and Debbie to join the celebrations. It was an honour to be surrounded by so many amazing people who are making a huge difference to the lives of others and to our excitement, we were awarded another £1,500 donation towards the club.

We have welcomed a number of corporate volunteers to lend a hand this year. DWP employees have been busy at Umberslade, as have teams from Zurich, Lloyds Bank and The West Brom. We also had three groups from RBS visit Umberslade doing a range of tasks including a living tree art mural. The groups also donated lots of tools for use at Umberslade which is very much appreciated.

Teams from DWP, Zurich and The West Brom have also completed, painting and maintenance activities, as well as supporting our Summer Games. We also welcomed a team from XL Catlin to work with three PFL groups as part of their Global Day of Giving in June, which was enjoyed by students as much as the volunteers!

Earlier this year, St Mary's Catholic School in Harborne worked hard to raise over £1300 towards our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary fundraising campaign and we were delighted to welcome a group of pupils and staff from the school to QAC in June. It was an opportunity to tell them more about QAC, what we do and what their money will be used on. They met some students, along with buddy dog Rufus, who joined in the cheque presentation.

**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**

10k finish smiles



Team QAC goes Gung-Ho!



Judo Club success



Artistic RBS volunteering



St Mary's pupils meet Rufus



**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)**

## 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!

**Central (Solihull)  
10<sup>th</sup> /11<sup>th</sup> July**

**North-East (Leeds)  
26<sup>th</sup> September**

**South-East (London)  
7<sup>th</sup> /8<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.

**Villa Park, Birmingham  
9<sup>th</sup> October**

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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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