



# Chadsgrove Educational Trust Specialist College

Newsletter Autumn 2



## Christmas Edition



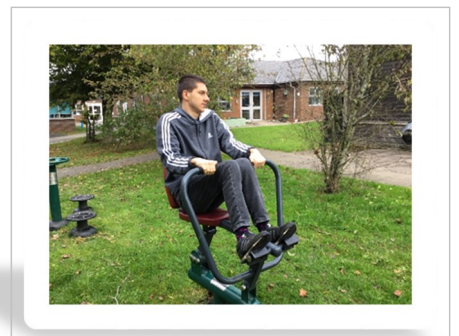
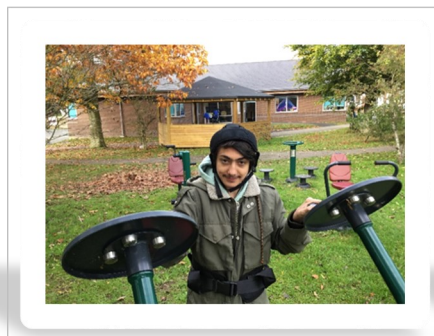
Can you believe we're at the end of the Autumn term already with Christmas just around the corner?! They say 'time flies when you're having fun' and my goodness what fun we've had this term! We've really embraced being out and about in the community, whether that be volunteering to help sell Poppies, implementing our Maths and English skills whilst out shopping, fostering new relationships by entertaining others, utilising our thinking skills when crossing roads, considering appropriate greetings when meeting new people or simply going to the pub for a tasty Christmas carvery—students have truly embraced every opportunity!

We're incredibly proud of each and every student for the amazing progress they have made since September, we look forward to what's to come in 2024.



## Outdoor Fitness

Thank you to Chadsgrove School's PE Teacher Mrs Taylor for training our Physiotherapy Technician and several members of staff on the schools outdoor fitness equipment. Our Seekers are now able to use the equipment to support their fitness programs when out on track walks and during targeted physiotherapy intervention time.



## Well-being

This half term students have been enjoying Christmas themed hand therapy massage sessions. Please find below the links to the sensory soup massage so you can do this at home if you wish and the Christmas tree hand massage which is a firm favourite of the students,

Website link:

<https://sensorysoup.co.uk/>

Christmas tree hand Massage video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S8FsPfdf9wE>



## Update from Summer Newsletter

Last Summer term our students took part in Boccia England's Virtual Boccia Challenge, the final positions are now on the Boccia England web page and we finished a very respectable 7<sup>th</sup>.

Congratulations to all who took part.



## Enrichment Day Monday 12th December

This half term's Enrichment Day focused around 'Christmas Celebrations' and what better way to celebrate than with a Christmassy disco!

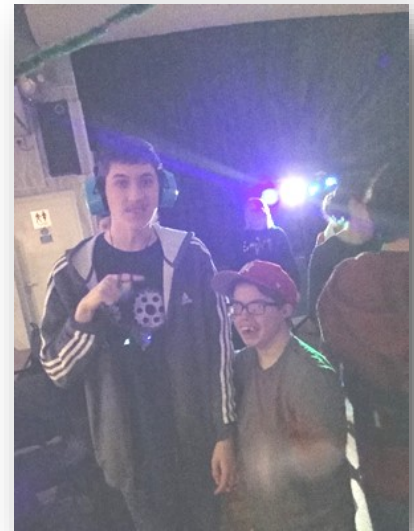
During the morning, students went over to the Catshill Social Club where they were treated to a fantastic Christmas disco hosted by our very own resident DJ 'Matty G'.

As it was Christmas we invited some of our friends from our 'Link Project' to join in the fun.

The Link Project is where Post-16 pupils from other specialist schools from across Worcestershire, visit our College to experience taster sessions for possible future placements with us.

This year we were joined by Post-16 students from Regency High School, Rigby Hall School and Chadsgrove School.

During the afternoon students watched the 'Christmas Around the World' video and were inspired to create their own ginormous bauble decorated with flags from around the world.



We're sure this is one of the biggest and most colourful baubles we've ever seen!



# Community and Relationships

## Swan Inn 18th December

On Monday 18<sup>th</sup> December students chose to visit the Swan Pub for our annual Christmas celebratory meal. Students used the profits from their enterprise scheme to pay for their meals which everyone really enjoyed.

A huge thank you to the wonderful team at the Swan in Wychbold for being so welcoming and making our day so special.

We also had a wonderful surprise on the day... A mystery benefactor had paid £100 towards our meals. The benefactor did not want to be named but said they really wanted to treat everyone after all their hard work this term.

Thank you mystery benefactor!!



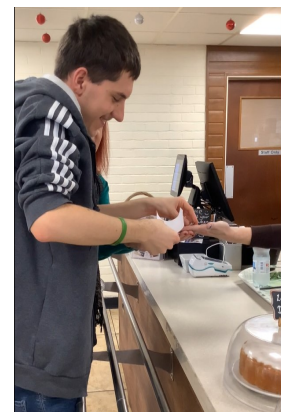


## Rowberry's Garden Centre

Seekers visited Rowberry's Nursery and Farm Shop on Monday 11th December. They enjoyed walking around the garden centre and even had time to pop to the restaurant to have a tasty lunch.

Ordering and paying for their own meals provided great opportunities for students to put in to practise their Maths, English and Communication Skills that they have been working on in College.

The visit was fully funded by monies raised from enterprise projects across the year.



## Catshill Pensioners Lunch Sing and Sign

On Friday 22nd December, Seekers ventured up to the Catshill Village Hall to sing and sign to local pensioners for their Catshill Community Christmas Lunch.

Students sang a number of Christmas songs to help get the local residents in the festive mood. Students even taught their audience some signs so they could all join in the celebrations together.



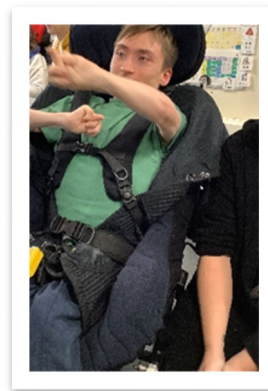
We'd like to thank Cllr. Shirley Webb for inviting our students to perform at this lovely event.



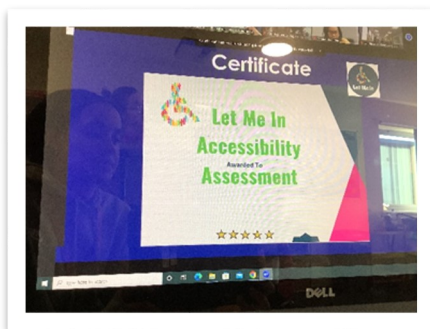


## Student Voice

On 30<sup>th</sup> November Natspec hosted the Student Parliament which we attended virtually. Ambassadors from our Explorer's Pathway joined in and what a fantastic contribution they made. Mason used the switch to contribute and wasn't shy about shouting 'Yes' when important comments were made, Gashow used her voca and signalong to let us know her thoughts in discussions too.



There was a fantastic piece from Trelor College - they shared their project based around the idea of creating accessible communities, they designed a certificate for establishments that meet the requirements of accessibility.



During the second half of the day we hosted a segment discussing the importance of raising awareness of using 'Communicate in Print' (CIP) in the community, we want to allow people with disabilities equal opportunities to be able to communicate when out and about – the response and engagement from other colleges was amazing.

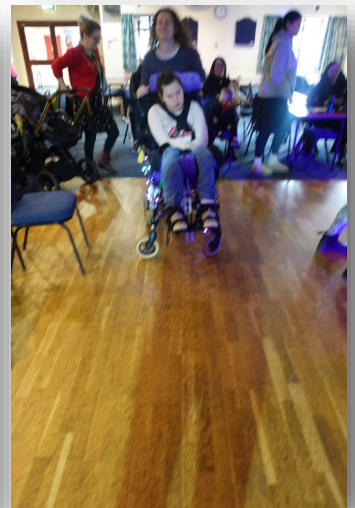


# Community and Relationships

## Christmas Celebration

Our annual Christmas Celebrations and Achievements Event took place on Tuesday 19th December at the Catshill Social Club and what a lovely afternoon we had. It was great to see so many friends and families able to join our festive event.

Students were awarded with certificates in recognition of the brilliant achievements they have made this term. DJ Matty G then hit the decks, supported by our students, as we danced the afternoon away. Well done to all our fantastic students for a great term!





# Community and Relationships



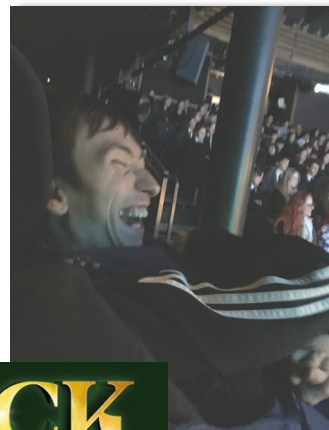
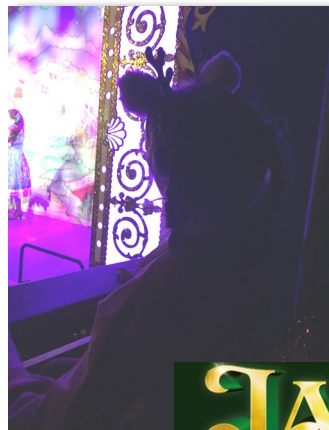
Its Panto Time  
"Oh no it isn't"



On Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> December, Explorer students visited The Core Theatre, at the Artrix (Bromsgrove), to watch 'Jack and the Beanstalk'.

Students were fully engaged in the performance from the start. Holly enjoyed singing, Mason enjoyed the rock songs, Gashow clapped all the way through, Sophie smiled at the whole thing, Fern was very vocal and Dalcie danced non-stop! It was a brilliant, family fun performance with an incredibly talented cast which was thoroughly enjoyed by all

We'd like to thank the Artrix for being so accommodating and for making everyone feel so welcome.



**JACK  
AND THE  
BEANSTALK**





## Disability Awareness Day December 2023



In recognition of Disability Awareness Day students decided they wanted to hold a 'Thank you' afternoon for our community friends and supporters.

Amongst the visitors were Bromsgrove District Council Chairman, Councillor Sam Ammar, Councillor Shirley Webb, Jules Evans from the Bromsgrove Royal British Legion, Town Crier and Court Leet Bellman Kevin Ward, Jo Slade, from the Friends of St John's and Standard Editor Tristan Harris.

Also in attendance were Paul, Gemma and Tasha who run 'Keep on Moving' a local sport and social group for people living with disabilities. Mary Weager, who raised funds running a marathon for her 70<sup>th</sup> birthday, and college supporter Mr Gilbert, who has generously donated to our special projects a number of times were also present.

Students served our guests refreshments which were funded out of their enterprise profits - most notably with funds raised at the Friends of St John's Christmas Market. Guests enjoyed tea, coffee and cake before they were presented with a certificate of thanks and a gift prepared by students.

We are blessed to have so many community contributors who either volunteer time to support, help or celebrate with us, or donate much-needed funds that enrich the college timetable in multiple ways. Students wanted to emphasise just how much the support means to them and to thank community organisations such as Friends of St John's, St Basil's Café, We Love Carers and Bromsgrove Library for offering them work and volunteering opportunities that establish them as a part of the local community.





# Work Related Learning

## Christmas Market



During enterprise lessons, students have been working very hard designing and making items to sell at the annual Bromsgrove Christmas Market.



On Friday 17<sup>th</sup> November, students embarked upon Bromsgrove High Street ready with their range of carefully crafted Christmas gifts to sell on their stall at the 'Friends of St Johns Christmas Market'.

Students raised an incredible **£382.46**. All monies raised goes back into the students' enterprise fund ready to be spent on future projects/events as they wish.

During the afternoon, students drew in the crowds and treated shoppers to a wonderful 'sing and sign' concert to spread the Christmas cheer. We've had some amazing feedback from members of the public commenting on how fabulous the concert was - thank you to everyone who supported us on this day!





## Sing and Sign

Seekers students had the pleasure of visiting Burcot Grange Care Home.

As part of their community and work skills sessions students had chosen and practised Christmas songs to sing and sign to. The residents enjoyed listening to classics such as 'Rocking Around the Christmas Tree', 'Sleigh Ride' and 'Let it Snow'. Students also taught residents the signs to 'White Christmas' that everyone then performed together.

Seekers students showcased a brilliant dance performance to the all time Christmas classic 'All I Want for Christmas is You'. The students did so well remembering the signs and the dance routine.



The residents and staff at Burcot Grange loved the visit and everyone had a fantastic time getting into the Christmas spirit.

Students took with them a present and a card which they had made and presented them to the residents. It was so nice to see the happiness on both the students, staff and residents faces.

This really helped us get in to the festive spirit. Students enjoyed spreading the Christmas cheer to our friends in the community.





# Independent Living Skills

## Oral Care

During the autumn term for Independent Living Skills, students have been working on their personal care. Students have focussed on the importance of oral hygiene including practicing their tooth brushing skills at College and encouraging each other to look after their teeth.

Just look at these wonderful smiles...



## Gifts

Students compiled a list of Christmas gifts they would like to buy for their family and friends. With lists written and some money in their pocket, off they went to the local shops to purchase the gifts on their list.

Back in College students wrapped the gifts and made gift tags - which is a very useful hand function technique for the students.



We hope that, if you end up with one of these gifts on Christmas Day, you like your little present!

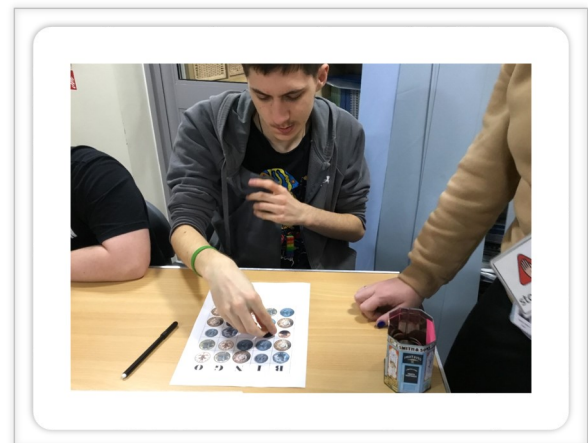
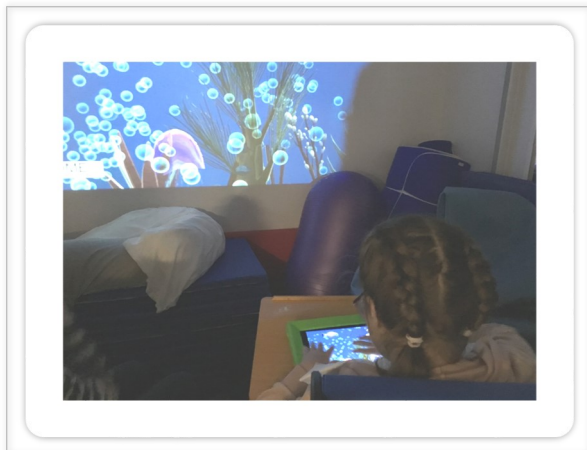
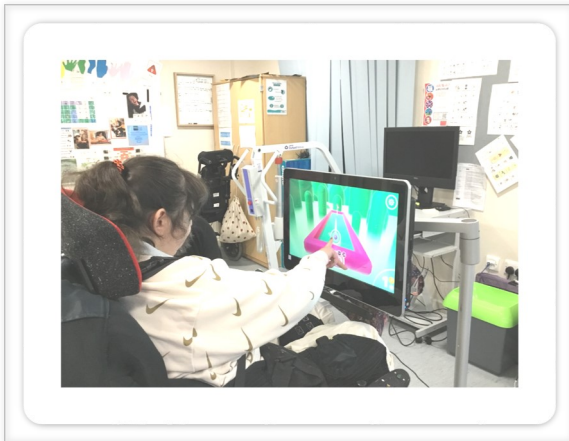
Merry Christmas



# Independent Living Skills

## Maths and Thinking Skills Week 13th—17th November 2023

Both Maths and Thinking Skills are embedded in every session but we had an increased focus on this curriculum area during Maths week in November. Maths week this year coincided with our Christmas market giving us plenty of opportunity to look at money and sales skills, Making choices and decisions and keeping stock topped up. During lunch club numeracy skills were used to add up the student scores and in sensory maths sessions students worked on choice making, exploring ways to spend their leisure time using inclusive technology.





## Generous Gifts

This term we have been humbled by the generous donations received from our supporters and members of the public.

The donations we receive help us to provide additional educational opportunities for our students.

We'd like to say an incredible thank you to those whom have financially supported us this term – it means a lot.

We'd also like to thank Parent Carer/Advocates for your Christmas cards, gifts and wishes. Whilst we absolutely do not expect these, they are very thoughtful and much appreciated.

## Fundraising Focus

Our main fundraising focus this term has been to raise money for a College Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle (WAV).

Being out in the community is an integral part of the bespoke curriculum we provide, it also helps strengthen students' class based learning by allowing them to put their learned skills into practise.

We currently rely on availability of mini-buses from school. These are large vehicles which pose an inconvenience when trying to pop to the local shop/ events as the parking spaces are small. This will also enable staff that do not have D1 on their licence to support students to access the community.

To provide further learning opportunities/experiences, and to increase flexibility to go out and about, we have been busy writing applications to charitable trusts to ask for support with purchasing a WAV.

We are pleased to say that, with the help of Orchard Fundraising, so far we have secured £35,000 from 4 very kind charities - all of which we are incredibly grateful for. We've a little more to raise before students will be able to go shopping and choose a WAV of their choice – watch this space to keep track of our progress!



# Dates for your Diary



22nd December - College closes for half term

8th January 2024 - College re-opens to all staff and students

2nd February 2024 - Student Ambassador Meeting

5th February 2024 - Mental Health Focus Week

7th February 2024 - Enrichment Day - Well-being

7th February 2024, 11.00am—12.00am - Parent Carer Information and Coffee Morning

9th February 2024 - INSET Day, College closed to all students

12th February to 16th February 2024 - HALF TERM, College closed

28th February 2024 - Student Ambassador Meeting

29th February - National Rare Disease Awareness Day—students to wear blue, green, pink or purple

6th March - INSET Day, College closed to all students

14th March 2024 - Enrichment Day - Ramadan

19th March - Parent Carer/Advocate Evening 5pm—7pm

20th March 2024- Student Ambassador Meeting

21st March 2024 - Down Syndrome Awareness Day. Students wear odd socks and yellow & blue clothes

22nd March 2024 - College Closes for half-term



# Happy Holidays!