



Prince Harry says a big “thank you” to ‘the band’

Autism4Heroes found their most famous fan when they met with Prince Harry at Help for Heroes Tedworth House Recovery Centre, in Wiltshire in May.

The 22 youngsters all from ESPA College, aged 18 to 21, were asked to provide the entertainment at the opening of the National Recovery Centre, where the Duke of Cambridge, Prince William and Prince Harry were VIP guests.

Assistant College Co-ordinator Jak Dixon, said the event had been inspiring.

“The performance was an amazingly emotional affair and Autism4Heroes

were stunned to hear the co-founder of Help for Heroes, Bryn Parry, describing the band as being an inspiration for their charity.

Autism4Heroes is part of the new Specialist Traineeship Scheme run from ESPA College which combines practical learning sessions with real work activities.

Jak added: “The young people involved will be able to continue their fund-raising touring activities whilst learning essential employment related skills, in what promises to be a truly unique opportunity.”



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Message from the Chief Executive

I can't believe another year is nearly over. I am pleased to be able to say that despite the challenges of the on-going funding issues brought about by the governments spending review, ESPA has had another very busy, exiting and productive year.

We continue to work in creative and innovative ways to ensure that we meet the ever changing needs and expectations of everyone we support.

We have worked hard to align some of our new work to the autism strategy 'Rewarding and Fulfilling Lives'. This has not only created new opportunities for all of us but will hopefully make a positive difference to the lives

and experiences of many other people on the autism spectrum.

I hope you enjoy reading about some of this year's many achievements and new developments.

I would also like to say a special thank you to our excellent staff that do an outstanding job in enabling each person to live a life they enjoy and to achieve their personal goals and ambitions. Their knowledge, passion and commitment is constantly recognised and commended, especially by families.

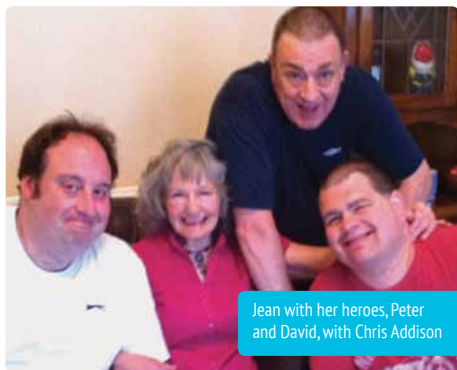
Can I wish you all a very Happy Christmas and I look forward to sharing more stories with you next year.



Lesley Lane, Chief Executive

When only heroes will do....

Peter Corbucci and David Robson show us all what it takes



Jean with her heroes, Peter and David, with Chris Addison

It was a summer's afternoon in late June and there was a knock on the front door of Lorne Terrace. At the door was a frail and distressed 82 year old lady—it was Jean one of the neighbours. Peter, on realizing how upset she was, asked her what was wrong. Jean explained that a male youth had snatched her handbag and ran away with it. Dave, on hearing this, exclaimed 'poor soul, poor soul'.

Jean was invited into Lorne, she was still in shock David asked her to sit on the sofa and Peter asked her if she would like a cup of tea. The police were contacted and the situation explained to them.

Peter and David suggested that Jean should stay at Lorne until her family arrived to look after her following such a terrible incident. Both of them stayed close and gave reassuring words and comforting 'pats' on

Jean's arm until her family arrived. Chris Widdowson was also on hand to provide additional back up.

After Jean left, Peter and David showed great disgust at the awful actions of that youth and wondered how someone could do that to an 82-year-old lady.

Jean later sent a card expressing her gratitude for the tender loving care she received from the residents and staff. She said they were 'simply the best' and she would never forget such kindness.

Peter and David certainly deserve recognition for how much empathy and care they showed that day, heroes indeed!



I WOULD LIKE TO EXPRESS
MY GRATITUDE FOR THE
TENDER LOVING CARE I
RECEIVED ON FRIDAY JUNE 28TH
AT 4:45 PM FROM STAFF AND
RESIDENTS. AFTER MY BAG-
SNATCH.
'YOU ARE SIMPLY
THE BEST' I WILL NEVER
FORGET YOU
XX JEAN HARRISON
110 5 ROSE RD.

Croft Centre recognised for its high quality of support



Croft Centre Manager, Dawn Toner receives the award from Neil Revely, Executive Director of Health, Housing and Adult Services for Sunderland City Council, on behalf of her staff team

Staff and volunteers from health, social care and voluntary services were presented with Caring for Carers Awards and certificates at the Carers Week Presentation Ceremony on Monday 10th June at the Stadium of Light. The aim of the awards is to give unpaid carers the opportunity to nominate and thank staff who have supported them in their caring roles and made a real difference to their lives.

The Croft Centre team was nominated by Mary Carr, whose son we support. She wrote "I always know I can ring the staff anytime for their advice and support. My son enjoys the different activities they offer. I cannot pick out one particular staff member; they all do a caring role for me and my son."

The Croft Centre and everyone at ESPA would like to thank Mrs. Carr for her nomination and kind words.

Amazing effort!!

ESPA would like to say a huge THANK YOU to Ruth Kirby for raising £605.25 on behalf of ESPA by successfully completing the Robin Hood Half Marathon in Nottingham on the 29th September.



Ruth Kirby

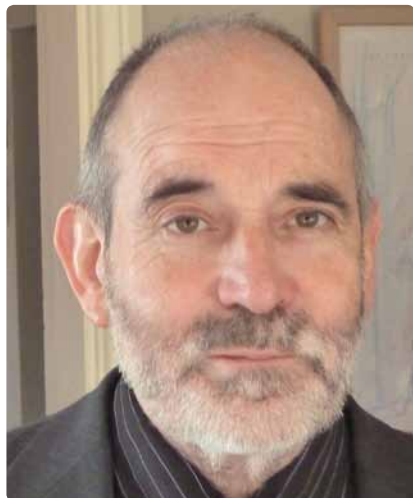


With an amazing time of 1hr 51mins and wearing a special ESPA t-shirt, Ruth did us all proud.

Ruth's sister lives in one of our homes in Seaham, and has been supported by ESPA for over 20 years. Ruth wanted to show her appreciation of the dedication and support ESPA have shown her sister and the family as a whole over the years and chose the organisation as her charity for which to raise money. We must also say thank you so much to all Ruth's sponsors too.

A fantastic effort and an amazing amount raised... well done Ruth!!!

Changing roles



Dr Tom Berney is changing his role in ESPA. After 25 years as our Consultant Psychiatrist he has taken the decision to retire from clinical practice. Dr Lisa Ripon and Dr Clare Dover have now welcomed Dr Adi Sharma onto their team. Dr Adi Sharma is a Psychiatrist of some clinical and academic standing who is in the NHS in Newcastle.

We are now honoured that he has accepted a position on the Board of Directors.

Everyone at ESPA wants to say a huge thank you to Dr Berney for all the support he has given to the

charity over the years. He has from the beginning not only been a Psychiatrist for people with autism but he has also been our adviser, mentor and good friend to ESPA and everyone we have supported.

Although he has stepped down from his clinical role we are now honoured that he has accepted a position on the Board of Directors. In his new role we can still benefit greatly from his vast knowledge, wisdom, skills and experience. We can now look forward to working with him in his new capacity where he will continue to support and shape the on-going development of the Charity.

Paul Shattock, Chairman and Co-Founder of ESPA says 'Dr Berney is an incredibly important member of our team. Without him we would not be here today. He is extremely well liked by families, people with autism and professionals alike.'

Thank you Dr Berney from all of us.

Degrees of success

ESPA now offers support to University students

Many students at ESPA College attend General Further Education Colleges to achieve specific qualifications including A-Levels, GNVQ, GCSEs and Diplomas. We already have an excellent reputation of providing the autism specific support they need to succeed in these environments. Some of our students have gone on to study at university where they have been able to fulfil their academic potential, grow in confidence and self-esteem and prepare themselves for work.



To someone on the autism spectrum going to University can be a daunting prospect. Having the right support from experienced and knowledgeable staff that have an in-depth understanding of ASC can make a huge difference to people succeeding academically and socially.

Our University Mentoring Service can provide discrete, specialised autism specific support to students inside and outside of the classroom. This service is tailored to the individual student and can include mentoring, guidance and note-taking (where appropriate). Support packages delivered by ESPA can range from just an hour per week (guidance and support) up to 25-30 hours per week, where students have had a mentor with them throughout their University timetable. We can also provide more intensive support at specific times such as Fresher's Week. ESPA's Domiciliary Agency can also provide social support to people in higher education which may include supporting them in their Halls of Residence. This can be funded through Direct Payments or Personal Budgets.

We are currently working with eight students across Sunderland, Newcastle and Teesside Universities. We have now successfully supported 3 students who have graduated. Between them they have achieved a 2:2 BSC Hons Degree in Biomedical Sciences, a 2:1 BA Hons Degree in Art & Design and a 1st class Hons Degree in Media and Journalism. With our support many other ex-ESPA College students are also currently achieving well.

If you are interested in ESPA's mentoring and support whilst at University, you should speak to the Student Support Service at your chosen University. To receive our support you will need to be assessed as eligible for the DSA (Disabled Students Allowance). The University will establish the level of support you require.



Our Domiciliary Agency continues to grow

Over the past two years ESPA's domiciliary, Independent Supported Living and community enablement services have continued to grow especially across the North East. We now provide a diverse range of services to people living in their own tenancies, family home, University halls of Residence and community.

The Agency now has two registered premises in Middlesbrough and Hylton Park, Sunderland

Referrals and enquiries have come through a number of sources such as care managers, parents, NHS mental health services, and mini-tenders. This year we have been successful in gaining a place on the

Framework agreement with Durham, North Tyneside and Newcastle. We can now tender for services in these areas. Individuals and families who have a Direct Payment or Personal Budget can talk to us directly about how we can arrange support to meet their needs and expectations.

Comments from parents:

"Thanks to all those staff who are sensitive to my son and understand him well, who 'walk with him' as he develops and encourage him to enjoy his life and learn."

"I am amazed at how well James is doing and feel so relieved that he is happy and so well; we all feel that this wouldn't have been possible without ESPA's excellent service."



"He has developed into a confident, happy young man who looks well and clearly enjoys every aspect of his life."

"Having chosen ESPA to support my son in adapting to independent living we felt

that their excellent support was a great relief. ESPA developed a package of care for him which was tailored around his needs. An excellent team of staff, which were carefully chosen to match James needs, was developed and continue to support him."

Learning from History

ESPA College has been awarded a grant of £25,440 by The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for an exciting and innovative project in Sunderland.

The project, "An interpretation and educational project in Sunderland's Old Parish Church (1719)" will focus on the history of Holy Trinity Church (known as Sunderland's Old Parish Church). Students working with other community volunteers will develop and create new audio/video interpretations of Holy Trinity Church, as well as new educational

resources for school children and lots of opportunities to collect and record people's experiences of this Church, as it was once the heart of a thriving community.

ESPA will be working on the project with Living History (North East) and The Canny Space which aims to be completed by summer 2014. All of the work produced will be made accessible to the public at a celebration event.

The project will enable students to develop new skills and create new and exciting ways to encourage visitors to this Grade I listed site in Sunderland's East End. The church



dates from 1718-19 and boasts some unique architectural features and interiors. It is regarded with great affection by the local community.

There will be opportunities for people to volunteer from the community and take part in various heritage workshops, visit archives and become part of this exciting project.

Explaining the importance of the HLF support, the Head of the HLF in the North East, Ivor Crowther, said: "This is an excellent project for the young people of the North East. As well as the vast collection of skills they will develop,



this in-depth look at their own dialect heritage will help give them a greater sense of identity."

Students have decorated acetate sheets depicting scenes, characters and stories from the local area. These will be used to create a stained glass effect on the church windows. They have taken the opportunity to capture photographic images of the church and interview Living History (North East) volunteers and local residents.

A website blog of the project can be found at: www.livinghistoryne.wordpress.com

Push for Action



ESPA was pleased to host the National Autistic Societies 'Push for Action' campaign in partnership with Autism in Mind, a local organisation supporting families living with autism.

On the 22nd November the NAS arrived at The Croft Centre with their big red button that has been fondly named 'Jenson'.

Sunderland is just one of the locations across the country that was invited to host an event.

The garden at The Croft Centre was full of people that ESPA supports, family members from Autism in Mind and staff. Paul Shattock our Chairman and President of The World Autism Organisation was

'Jenson' proved to be very popular

the button but during the afternoon many people had their opportunity to have their photograph taken with Jenson.

The Autism Strategy 'Rewarding and Fulfilling Lives' is presently undergoing a review and the campaign aims to raise awareness of what has been achieved so far and what more still needs to be done.

Keeping people safe

Keeping people safe and well is central to everything we do as a charity. We consistently receive outstanding feedback from the CQC and safeguarding has been graded as outstanding by OFSTED. This is also something families are consistently telling us that we are doing well. However to support the work we do and to constantly drive up our standards we are delighted to have recently secured the expertise of Celia Harbottle as an Independent Consultant. www.celiaharbottle.co.uk



Celia Harbottle

Celia's background is rooted in practice in the NHS and Social Services. She was a Senior Lecturer at both the Universities of Sunderland and Teesside before deciding to go freelance as a trainer and consultant in 2004. She was made a Fellow of the Royal Society for the Arts in 2003 in recognition of creativity in teaching in social care and health. She is a registered social worker with the HCPC and acts as a designated decision maker for an independent foster care organisation which specialises in fostering children on the autism spectrum

Celia says she is delighted to be associated with ESPA as an organisation committed to continuous improvement in safeguarding practice to ensure positive outcomes for the people it supports. She will be providing specialist training to our Safeguarding Managers and management teams, conducting independent audits as well as supporting us to embed best practices in safeguarding in our everyday culture.

A big thank you to Craig Byatt

ESPA Research relies purely on donations to fund its work.

We recently had a visit from a gentleman called Craig Byatt whose mother contacted us to tell us of the activities Craig had done to raise money for research into autism.

Craig is 42 years old and has autism. He also suffers from depression and anxiety but despite all this he has raised £570 for ESPA Research by cleaning cars, doing a 16 mile walk and having a coffee morning.

Craig has 24 hour supported living. His parents are originally from the North East where Craig was born but he now lives in Burnley.

He visited us on 18th June with his Care Worker Jackie to present a cheque. He was very interesting to talk to. A big Dr Who fan ensured a lively discussion on the best Dr Who.

Craig is hoping to continue with his fund raising activities and would like to visit us again next year.

Well done and thank you Craig.



Left to right - Paul Shattock, Craig Byatt and Paul Whitely.

Sharing our knowledge and expertise

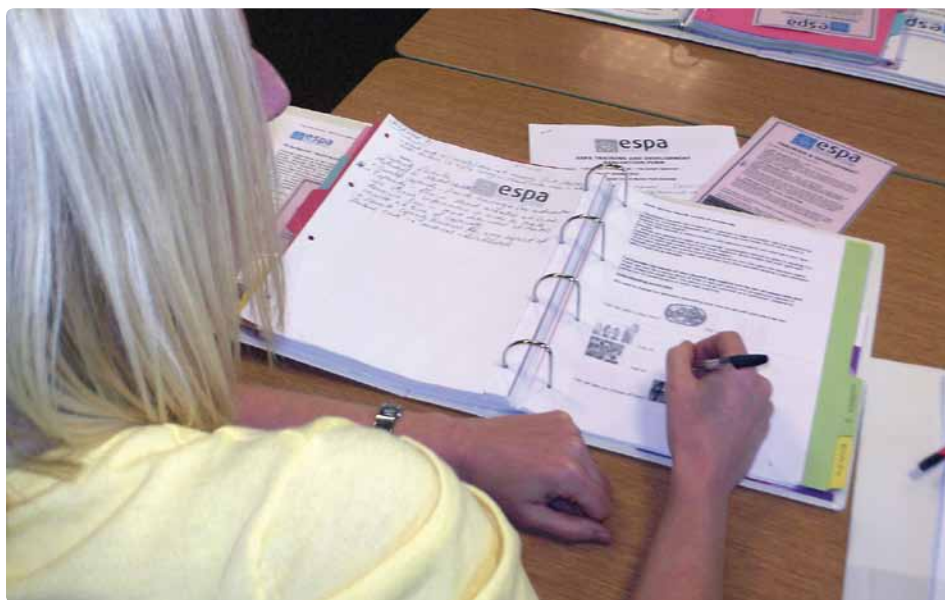
ESPA invests heavily in training its staff to ensure they consistently provide the people we support with outstanding autism specific and person centred support. We made a decision 3 years ago to share this training with others so we can make a positive difference to the lives of many other people on the autism spectrum and their families. ESPA's Professional Training Service has now delivered a wide range of specialist autism training to well over a 1000 professionals.

We are now very pleased to announce that we secured some funding earlier this year from the Strategic Health Authority (SHA) to deliver further specialist training to the Probation Service across the North East. In addition we were also awarded funding to deliver a series of Post Diagnostic Workshops for newly diagnosed adults in Sunderland and Gateshead.

These workshops have been specifically designed to help people to understand their condition and how it affects their life and to learning strategies to overcome some of their personal barriers or difficulties. Feedback was excellent and our vision is that these become part of the diagnostic pathways for all adults in the future. One series of 3 workshops has already been delivered in Sunderland and a further 2 are planned to cover both Sunderland and Gateshead in early 2014.

ESPA has also delivered specialist training to almost 40 final year GP Registrars on Durham and Tees Valley's Vocational Training Scheme. We called this 'An Autism Friendly Practice'. They said that the session was the best they had received throughout their training. It gave them the knowledge they needed to be more confident in recognising the condition and provide appropriate support

and signposting. GPs are the absolute 'front-line' for most individuals and their families affected by ASC and we hope that through our work people will benefit from more informed and understanding local doctors. This session is now set to be an annual training event reaching many more newly qualified GPs in the region.



Our new website is under construction

We are aware of how old and tired the current ESPA website has become and are seeking to correct that. At present discussions are underway with a designer to develop a new, more modern-feeling site to be online and ready for use by the end of this year.

It will have the same URL (website address) at www.espa.org.uk but it will be easier and more friendly for everyone to use.



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