

# Sahara Care News

Winter 2023

## 2023 The Year in Review

- Our charitable work
- Updates from our services
- Birthday celebrations
- Holiday time

# Welcome

Welcome to Sahara Care's revamped newsletter, bringing you information on events, activities and developments from our assisted and supported living services in east London.

In this edition, we will feature residents from our Parkside and Sahara House services and give an update on the creative projects that our Sahara Lodge and Gardens have been working on. We also look back at 2023, as we reflect on all the achievements of our teams throughout the past 12 months.

## A welcome note from Alan Betts, Director and Nominated Individual

As always, it has been an exciting year with the organisation seeing significant changes in the way that we operate our services. The introduction of the Log My Care tool has provided an opportunity to record service user's daily notes in real time, meaning that we have live data in terms of incidents and day-to-day activities. This means that we are much more responsive in terms of operational oversight. This together with the implementation of Coolcare and the Grey Matters e-learning platform, has provided the organisation with sound foundations in terms of our digital recording systems as we move into the new year.

The organisation has undertaken a significant investment in its environments, with new double glazing installed in the whole of Sahara House plus a new kitchen. Both Sahara Parkside and Sahara Lodge and Gardens have seen replacement boilers installed with Sahara Parkside seeing further improvements across individual apartments and Sahara Lodge and Gardens seeing Phase 1 of its new kitchen.

Next year we will be looking to enhance Sahara Lodge in terms of the kitchen area as we get Phase 2 of the refurbishment underway and further works are planned at Sahara Parkside (watch this space).

Sahara Care continues to grow, and we have welcomed a number of new service users to the Sahara family over the last 12 months. Sadly, we have also said goodbye to a few of our residents, some that had been with us since the start of our journey.

Next year we will see our Supported Living offer expand with admissions into our Shrewsbury Road site, the utilisation of our properties in Newham and we are currently awaiting the outcome of our tender submissions to secure places on the LB Newham and LB Barking and Dagenham Supported Living Frameworks. Both these will enable the organisation to develop additional supported living schemes in these locations.

Finally, I would like to end by saying a massive thank you to each and every staff member who plays a part in the success of Sahara Care.

The organisation wouldn't be where we are without the dedication, commitment, and resilience of our team and on behalf of the Sahara Care Board, I would like to extend our sincere thanks for everything that they do to ensure the people we support receive an excellent service.

It is important to remember that, at this time of year more than any other time, we are here because we care about people. Not just the people we are supporting but each other too.

Let's make this Christmas a time to celebrate and look forward to the year that is to come.

On behalf of the Sahara Care Board, I wish you a Merry Christmas and our sincere best wishes for 2024.



# Support for charitable causes

During 2023, we continued our support for Ambition, Aspire, Achieve (AAA)



Sahara Care has been a long-standing supporter of the local charity AAA, whose key principle is that a young person's background should not determine their future. AAA supports young people and their communities in Newham with fully inclusive experiences and opportunities to flourish so they can create the future they deserve.

Our Chairman, Terence Brown, is seen here with AAA Chief Executive, Jonny Boux presenting a cheque in

support of AAA's Kevin Jenkins OBE Newham Christmas Toy Appeal 2023, supported by the Newham Recorder.

Terry commented, "We are delighted to support this amazing appeal. With over 50% of local children in Newham growing up in poverty, this appeal aims to provide a Christmas stocking of new gifts to open on Christmas morning to the most vulnerable children."

## Mayor of Redbridge's fundraising event

Our team enjoyed a night of entertainment at the Mayor of Redbridge's Charity Gala Event



Managing Director, Sharon Kaur and her management team supported the Mayor of Redbridge, Councillor Jyotsna Islam, at her charity evening.

Funds raised will support the Mayor's two chosen charities:

The London Air Ambulance Service and ELHAP (Every Life Has A Purpose) that facilitates adventure and nature play opportunities for children and young people with disabilities and complex care needs.

## Latino Fiesta to support BHRUT

We enjoyed a brilliant Latino themed evening organised by the official charity for Barking, Havering and Redbridge University Hospitals NHS Trust, which supports two local hospitals: King George Hospital in Ilford and Queen's Hospital in Romford.

Those who attended enjoyed a delicious meal followed by a fabulous evening of entertainment.

Terence Brown, our Chairman and Honorary Life President of West Ham United donated some prizes

for the auction and our Group Financial Controller, Mihaela was delighted with her winning bids!





# Spotlight on Anna

Anna is a service user at our state-of-the-art Sahara Parkside service in Barking

Manager of Sahara Parkside, Lesley Wickens details here Anna's journey in 2023.

Anna has been a resident at Parkside since leaving care over three years ago. Anna loves living at Parkside and has had a busy year. 2023 was an important year as Anna turned 21 and she started the year by setting some big goals for herself.



Her first achievement was to pluck up the courage to change her looks and she took the brave decision to cut her hair and change her hair colour to purple. We are sure you agree that she looks amazing!



Anna has been studying at a local college and at the start of the summer celebrated the end of the academic year by attending her Prom. Anna

looked glamorous in her long red gown but decided against wearing heels. She commented, "The music was brilliant and I danced all night. My feet did not hurt at all as I wore my sensible trainers!"

Anna had wanted to celebrate her 21<sup>st</sup> birthday in Greece, but unfortunately it coincided with the wildfires. Not to be daunted, Anna came up with some alternatives to mark her special occasion. She spoke to a staff member, who creates spectacular celebration looks in her spare time. Anna's room was decorated in a stylish manner to mark this special occasion.



Anna also started a new course at college studying Maths and English. Anna does a work placement in gardening and has told us, "I love my placement. I always come home very dirty after gardening!"



We have been supporting Anna to become more independent and she now goes to the supermarket and does her own food shopping. Anna enjoys this task as she gets to choose what she wants and likes. Deputy Manager, Anne Smith tells us that sometimes she makes naughty choices like cake and ice-cream but also makes good choices such as fruit and vegetables – Anna knows it is all about balance!

As we come to the close of 2023, Anna is now making plans for 2024. Her ambition is to make it to Greece but not when there are any fires or floods! She also wants to get a part-time job as a dog walker.



Anna used to have her own dog, Charlie, that she walked every day. She misses Charlie, but recently walked Coco, the cute dog that belongs to Lesley. Lesley commented, "Anna's face lit up when she saw Coco for the first time. Anna enjoyed walking her in the local park and did a great job of holding on tightly to her lead so she did not run after the squirrels. I am sure she will make an excellent dog walker as she is passionate about dogs."



# Sahara House welcomes new residents

We have the pleasure of introducing Shelton and Marvin to Sahara House

Sahara House has recently welcomed brothers Shelton and Marvin to the family.

Judy, sister to Shelton and Marvin, gave us an insight into the background of their move.

"With my Mum being ill and in hospital, Sahara House was able to accommodate my two brothers on what I thought would be on a temporary respite basis. The staff have been amazing from day one, taking the time to get to know my brothers and their individual quirks. By taking on the priority needs for Shelton and Marvin, they allowed me the time I needed to spend with my Mum.



Shelton pictured with Sophie Coster, Manager and Nileshe Soni, Deputy Manager, Sahara House.

With the shock of my Mum passing away suddenly, Sahara House has been absolutely wonderful and the care they have given to my brothers has helped me in my time of grief as I am secure in the knowledge that they are well looked after.

I am now going through the process of making Sahara House a permanent home for my brothers and have been overwhelmed with the support that both my brothers and myself have received from the staff."

Manager of Sahara House, Sophie Coster tells us, "We are delighted to support Shelton and Marvin at Sahara House. They are both an absolute pleasure to have with us and we are so excited to provide support to both brothers on their new journey. They have both fitted in so well with our other incredible service users and feel part of the Sahara House family already. We very much look forward to helping them build greater independence and skills to enhance their quality of life. Welcome Shelton and Marvin!"



Marvin enjoyed events at our Christmas party, pictured with Sophie.

# Sahara Lodge and Gardens enjoy theatre trip

Residents enjoyed a recent trip to the Applecourt Theatre show

Residents from Sahara Lodge and Gardens recently enjoyed a performance of Concrete Youth's new multi-sensory theatre production, *The Whispering Jungle*. The team at Concrete Youth brought together sensory play and sensory puppets in an immersive production aimed at those with multiple learning difficulties. The *Whispering Jungle* was developed off the back of Concrete Youth's pioneering ASMR Project. This is an international research project that brought together UK, US and Singapore academics, artists and professionals to explore the impact of autonomous sensory meridian response (ASMR) on people labelled with profound and multiple learning disabilities for the very first time.



Patricia Allen, Deputy Manager of Sahara Lodge and Gardens commented, "The interaction with the audience was fantastic, which made the experience even more special for our service users. The production from this theatre company is ideal for our residents who require a high level of sensory interaction."

Janette Neal, Manager of Sahara Lodge and Gardens has told us that the Applecourt Theatre is a new local resource and she looks forward to our residents making full use of the events in the future.



# Holiday magic!

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Throughout 2023, our service users enjoyed a variety of trips and holidays.

## Sahara House enjoy outdoor pursuits!

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Our residents enjoyed an adventure packed trip with lots of outdoor activities



## Sahara Lodge and Gardens have a holiday to Cromer and a mini spa break!

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# 2023 was the year of some big birthdays!

Several of our residents celebrated milestone birthdays this year

We love a celebration at Sahara Care and have enjoyed marking three milestone birthdays this year.

Anna enjoyed her big day surrounded by pink balloons. She decided to redecorate her bedroom as a treat to celebrate becoming 21!



Sahara Lodge and Gardens have also enjoyed helping two residents celebrate their big days.

Elaine enjoyed spending time with friends and family to celebrate her 60<sup>th</sup> birthday...



... whilst Siddika loved the personalised decorations for her 40<sup>th</sup>.



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