

SUMMER 2022

WELCOME FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Dear Parent/Carer

Welcome to the latest edition of our Parent & Carer newsletter which showcases just a few of our many highlights from the last few months.

As you'll see from the stories that follow, we've had an exciting few months, from launching our brand new Newstart Theatre, making handmade benches for the brand-new Coffee Shop, to holding various Jubilee Celebrations in honour of our Patron, Her Majesty the Queen.

Our learners, citizens and staff continue to inspire us every day through their fabulous achievements and it was wonderful to be able to recognise many of these successes in our annual Awards Day earlier this month.

Our brand-new Coffee Shop is open to public, serving lots of tasty treats including the soon-to-be famous, homemade Portland Sausage Rolls, so be sure to come and try them for yourselves.

As we approach the Summer holidays we can be really proud of another successful year and we're very thankful to the whole Portland community for helping us to make a real difference to the lives of our young people.

Thank you for your continued support.

Mark Dale
Principal and CEO



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YOU CAN'T STOP THE BEAT IN NEWSTART THEATRE

A celebration event took place in our brand-new state-of-the-art theatre on 1st April featuring performances from West End star and Olivier Award winner, Leanne Jones and Portland's learners and citizens.

Our vision was to transform our Newstart Hall from a tired 1950's recreation hall into the region's Centre of Excellence for Health and Well-being for people with disabilities. The innovative project was made possible following a huge fundraising campaign which generated £1.2million in donations and grants, matched by £500,000 investment from the College.

The celebration event was a great way to thank our very generous supporters and for them to see the new theatre in action.

The event included performances from our Performing Arts learners, ex-college learner Jess Fisher representing Inspire Youth Arts' Able Orchestra, and Independent Living resident Ryan McDade duetted with musical theatre star Leanne Jones, whose role as Tracy Turnblad in Hairspray on the West End inspired Ryan to pursue his passion for performing arts.

Ryan invited his friend Leanne to perform at the event and the pair were interviewed by former East Midlands Today news presenter, Quentin Rayner. The interview highlighted the need and importance for accessible theatre spaces such as the Newstart Theatre.

Mark Dale commented, "The Newstart Theatre Celebration Event was the perfect way to thank our many generous supporters and showcase our vision for the new Theatre. We were privileged to be able to welcome Leanne Jones and Quentin Rayner to the stage and are very proud of our young people who delivered inspirational performances at the event. A wonderful time was had by all involved."

Newstart Theatre is now a hive of activities, events and education programmes for not only our own learners, but local groups and our wider communities. Available for hire, the space can transform quickly from an accessible, ultra-modern theatre into a contemporary sports hall with retractable seating and LED floor lighting, enabling users to choose different sport layouts at the click of a button.



JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS

In honour of our Patron, Her Majesty the Queen, we have enjoyed several Jubilee Celebration events over the last couple of months:

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY SHOW

Portland was invited to exhibit in the county's Jubilee Exhibition at Newark Showground in May.

After months of planning, over 70 staff, learners, residents and volunteers attended the event to showcase all the wonderful things we do at Portland and to provide some fabulous performances on the main stage.

Our interactive exhibition (which was mostly externally funded) also included some key partners, including ATTFE, Inspire Youth Arts, Able Orchestra and Smile Homes, who all share our vision of a Lifetime of Opportunity for People with Disabilities.

The event usually attracts around 50,000 visitors, and we expect that at least 30% of attendees visited the Jubilee Exhibition space where we were based. Throughout the day, thousands of people passed through our exhibition, interacting with different Portland departments.



JUBILEE PARTIES ON CAMPUS

DAY SERVICE

On Wednesday 1st June, the citizens and staff in the day service held a celebration day for the Platinum Jubilee.

A range of activities took place during the morning. This included Jubilee Games on the MUGA and a treasure hunt around the campus where teams of citizens had to track down pictures of 8 members of the Royal Family. Citizens also took part in a prize competition by designing a new stamp and coin that featured Queen Elizabeth II.

After lunch everyone enjoyed a disco and party in Limes. Towards the afternoon the rain cleared and the sun came out so the party could carry on outside!

A special jubilee photograph area was set up in the Day Centre as well with a variety of flags and masks so citizens could have a keepsake photograph.

The Expressive Arts Hub that day did not miss out and hosted their own party from their community venue in Mansfield.

It was a really fantastic day that everyone enjoyed!



INDEPENDENT LIVING

On Sunday 5th June, our Independent Living citizens enjoyed a fabulous Jubilee party thanks to an amazing grant from Arts Council England and their Let's Create Jubilee Fund!

An afternoon tea and a fantastic party with live band and some very patriotic t-shirts helped our citizens to celebrate our Patron's 70 years on the throne.

One citizen said that the party "Was amazing, loved the band and songs they were singing, being with other people was brill!"



JUBILEE GAMES

On 16th June, we hosted a Jubilee Games competition in our brand-new, wheelchair accessible Newstart Sports Hall and outdoor multi-use games area.

The event was an incredible day, with young people from around the region competing in a range of inclusive sports.

Five teams from visiting specialist schools and colleges from Nottinghamshire and South Yorkshire joined teams from Portland College and Portland Day Service in a football and boccia competition. They were two very closely fought competitions, but in the end the Portland Day Service team came away with the boccia trophy, and the Portland College Purple team won the football tournament!

Communication Specialist College Doncaster was one of the teams that attended the Jubilee Games; "It is a brilliant experience to get the students out here and involved, meeting other students from other colleges and just having the opportunity to take part in some competitive sports."

Nottinghamshire Badminton Association, Badminton England and Notts County Cricket Super 1's supported the event through skills challenges and have a go activities.

Mark Dale, Portland Principal and CEO commented "The Jubilee Games was a real celebration of sport and inclusivity, it was wonderful to see so many smiling, happy faces enjoying the sport and the sunshine!

The day was the perfect platform to raise the profile of Disability Sports which was helped with coverage on BBC East Midlands Today. We're hoping to make this event an annual occurrence as sport and physical activity are crucial to improving the health and well-being for all."



BESPOKE HANDMADE BENCHES FOR THE COFFEE SHOP!

Back in the Spring Term, the Coffee Shop team tasked the Trades group of learners to make some benches and tables for the outdoor area of the Coffee Shop. Some ideas were provided for the kind of design they were looking for.

The group of learners took a trip to a nearby cafe that was recommended to have the type of benches that were required. Whilst enjoying a lovely breakfast, the learners measured the benches and tables and began planning the design in order to get a cost for the Coffee Shop.

Once the cost was agreed, timber was ordered and the group starting to build the benches and tables!

Timber was pre-cut and learners pre-drilled the holes, and a template was created to ensure all of the legs were the same as we don't want wonky tables!!

At the beginning of June, the trades learners visited their amazing handmade benches in the Coffee Shop and were thanked by the Coffee Shop staff with a tray of drinks and delicious treats!



CHATSWORTH HOUSE WORK EXPERIENCE

Learners Caine and Alister have been undertaking an external work experience placement, supporting Radical Horizons: Art of Burning Man at Chatsworth over the last couple of months.

Staff from Chatsworth very kindly approached the College to say that they had an opportunity for learners to engage with the event and we met with them to discuss this in more detail. Caine and Alister were put forward for the placement after they had undertaken a successful internal placement at College.

After taking part in a training session, they joined the team as Visitor Liaison Personnel, helping to showcase the event and sculptures at the festival. From this valuable experience Caine and Alister have gained more knowledge about the festival, the sculptures and the estate which has helped them to be able to engage with visitors.

Both learners have expressed how this opportunity has given them a chance to develop skills and they felt rewarded by being part of the team and helping visitors.

Marie Wood from Chatsworth said: "Caine and Alister began their training with enthusiasm and confidence in understanding the Art of Burning Man. They are a fabulous addition to our team - they think 'out of the box' and comprehend the need to work in a unique style which suits the installations and visitors here in the park.

They have worked with our volunteer crew looking at all aspects of the volunteer role. The tasks they have looked at are focussed on how to interact with visitors - how to communicate and help people to interpret and connect with the art in their own way. They have been keen to continue after their placement ends and that will be a great delight for us.

The whole team enjoys them being here and I hope that the placement will be of use to them in their journey towards finding the work that they enjoy."



MEDIA LEARNERS TAKE A TRIP!

In April, a group of Media learners took a trip up to Doncaster to visit Yorkshire Wildlife Park!

Learners took the opportunity to practice their photography skills, using the wonderful animal subjects who were very willing!! The group also explored the different employment opportunities in their area at the wildlife park, and also took some time to themselves to connect with their surroundings.

Following their trip to Yorkshire Wildlife Park, the group were visited by a guest tutor, Kris Hayden. Kris is the Course Leader for Television Production Technology at Confetti Studios, he also teaches at Nottingham Trent University.

Kris was able to bring his extensive experience and knowledge to teach the group about how to set up a multi-camera interview which the learners used to interview each other about their trip to Yorkshire Wildlife Park. They used all new equipment and used communication and team-work skills, as well as following instructions.

Each learner had the chance to; use the vision-mixing station where they swap between cameras, be the camera operator and adjust the frame on the camera, be in the audience, and have a microphone to reflect on their experience via an interview.



DUKE OF EDINBURGH EXPEDITIONS

Over the last few weeks of term our Duke of Edinburgh Bronze and Silver participants have taken part in their qualifying expeditions, as Curriculum Manager, Dave Winter reports:

First up, it was the Bronze group who took part in an expedition along the Tissington trail and the Monsall trail in the Peak District. The expedition took place during the two hottest days of the year so this made walking conditions very tough! But all participants worked together to ensure they drank plenty of fluids, had sun cream on and kept themselves protected from the sun as much as possible. The group were assessed on their camp craft skills and all passed their expedition section of their awards.

Then, it was the turn of the Silver award participants with an expedition that was three days and two nights away.

Day 1 took many twists and turns meaning that the day's planned walk started 2 hours later than originally planned but, by mid-afternoon all learners were on the trail. They completed the day's walk before then going to set up base camp which would be home for the next two nights. All learners were involved and showed some excellent camp craft skills but the skill most in evident throughout was teamwork and working with others.

Once we arrived back at the camp site for a much-deserved rest and to start to prepare our evening meal the heavens opened and we then received 12 hours' worth of rain, even resulting in us evacuating some tents around midnight! The mood was low, everyone and everything was wet! Thankfully the rain stopped just before we got up on Friday morning to allow the group to take part in a sailability session and on arrival at Carsington the mood had slightly lifted. By the end of the session the participants were different again, all had an amazing time on the boats and were all ready to complete their expedition with a short walk.

A great effort by all learners that has stretched and challenged them, has pushed them close to their limits, taken them way out of their comfort zones, there has been tears and laughter, new skills learnt and friendships made that will last a lifetime!



FUNDRAISE WHILST SHOPPING!

Are you an Amazon shopper?

You could raise money for Portland whilst shopping on Amazon at NO EXTRA COST to yourself!

Simply visit smile.amazon.co.uk and choose Portland College as your chosen charity and AmazonSmile will automatically donate a small percentage of your purchase directly to us!

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PORTLAND COFFEE SHOP

Portland College's brand-new Coffee Shop received a glowing report and 5-star Food Hygiene rating following its first Environmental Health Inspection in June.

The Coffee Shop opened earlier this year as part of the Newstart Theatre and Sports Hall development on campus and has already become a busy social hub for our local communities, learners and staff.

There is a tasty menu of hot and cold food, snacks and drinks, including a wide selection of barista style coffees using hand-roasted beans from 200 Degrees, as well as delicious Afternoon Teas on Mondays and Thursdays which need to be pre-booked in advance.

The Coffee Shop is open to everyone during term times on Mondays to Thursdays between 10.30am and 1.30pm where it is managed by our learners, and on Fridays and Saturdays between 9.30am and 4pm, managed by our Enterprises Team.

Over the Summer Holidays, in the learners' absence, the Enterprises team will be opening Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays, 9:30am – 3:30pm.

There is free parking on site and customers can enjoy the contemporary indoor café area or our outside decked seating area which has lovely views over Sherwood Forest. Dogs are welcome in the outside seating area and dog treats and fresh water is available.

Booking is not necessary but is recommended for tables of more than four or for special events. To find out more, contact the Coffee Shop on **01623 499133** or follow us on Facebook at **@theportlandcoffeeshop**



AWARDS CELEBRATIONS!

Early July saw our annual Awards Ceremony which honoured achievements by our learners and citizens over the last academic year.

Finalists were shortlisted and invited to the ceremony where the winners were announced by our guest of honour, Councillor Roger Jackson, Chairman of Nottinghamshire County Council in our Newstart Theatre,

As always, the ceremony was a joyous celebration of the achievements of our learners and citizens!



DID YOU KNOW...

The college is a registered charity and we have a dedicated team of staff who work tirelessly to raise funds for the college?

The Fundraising team have a number of events coming up over the summer that they really need tombola prizes for, and so are opening the doors to any suitable prizes that you would like to donate.

Any unwanted new items that you may have hanging around in the back of your cupboards, toiletry gift sets, confectionery, decorative household items, including scented candles, diffusers etc. We will also take wine, beer and spirits, if they are surplus to requirements of course!

Call **01623 499111** ext **206** or **360** to arrange the donation of prizes.

SPRING FAIR

Portland's Spring Fair took place on campus back in May and raised an amazing over £3,000 for the college!

A huge thank you to everyone who attended the event, its a great opportunity to see our wonderful Portland community!



OLIVER! PERFORMANCE AT DAY SERVICES 'EXPRESSIVE ARTS' HUB

Back in April, the Day Service Expressive Arts group put on their fantastic performance of the musical Oliver! Which is based on the Charles Dickens novel Oliver Twist.

So much hard work went into the performance, including, rehearsing song and dance numbers, costume making, set design, making props and evening creating a programme.

The show was performed to an audience of parents and carers and other citizens that attend the Day Service. During the Oom-Pah-Pah finale, members of the audience were invited up to join the cast for a song and dance.

The performance is now available to watch on Portland's YouTube channel!

As always, the group are looking to the future and their next performance. Staff member Donna says, "It was an incredible experience and obviously lots of fun, and putting on the show also allowed us as a group to explore some important themes such as, safeguarding and protecting one another, bullying, grooming and domestic violence".

Group citizen Lou Lou says, "It was brilliant! Everyone got on well and we supported each other".



The Day Service currently has a number of hubs within our community as well on the main college campus.

If you are interested and would like further information please contact the Day Service Team on **01623 499100 ext 291**
dayservicecoordinators@portland.ac.uk