

# Community Learning Activities



## Are activities supported by Community Learning making a difference?

### Community Learning is providing funding for training to support learners to gain employment



**Room for Work** is providing training to support older skilled workers to use social media in order to promote their profiles and job search more effectively. It aims to better equip and motivate people in their search for work, and to help them with employment interviews.

Over 40 participants have already benefitted from this training and the opportunity for others to be equipped to re-enter employment is being offered in the spring and summer.

Margaret Thomas attended the pilot course and is now delivering a Performing Arts activity for over 55's. This course is also supported by Community Learning.

#### Comments from learners:

**Nicola** – *'Room for work is a must with valuable information for today's job searchers! I feel I have updated myself with the world'*

**Catherine** – *'Room for Work has radically changed my knowledge and confidence about job searching. I have tools to apply for employment. This is an excellent course which is well presented. The group setting is much better than going it alone'*

**The Ethnic Minority Advocacy Group** engaged James Clarke as a tutor to deliver a flower arranging course. James was mentored by the famous Italian fashion designer Gianni Versace, and is highly experienced in teaching the art of fashion design, floristry and business skills. This course aimed to provide an opportunity for hard to reach socially isolated BME learners whose first language is not English, to learn a new skill and increase their employment opportunities. The course also provided opportunities to gain employment by working for local florists or celebration facilitators, and also will help learners start their own businesses.

James is now working with the group to support them to complete their CV's, blogs and personal profiles on Facebook. He is also providing guidance on how to find work experience placements, employment opportunities in floristry, and helping to prepare them for real job interviews.



#### Learner's comments

**Ashi** – *'Learning to make tea cup cakes was wonderful. I will use it at parties and look forward to teaching my grandchildren'*

**Kanchan** – *'James is brilliant he explains things so well. I will definitely use what I have learnt.'*

Margaret Prain working in partnership with **SPEAR** has tailored a programme to meet the needs of their users to obtain computer and employment skills. The lessons provide the opportunity for participants to learn or enhance their basic computer skills knowledge. Support is given to create CVs, research job opportunities and to learn employability skills. **SPEAR** has also provided a translator to help its learners overcome any barriers to learning.

Robert has a good knowledge and understanding of English and communicates well. He is an engineer by profession, but currently works part-time as a cleaner. He really wants to increase the hours he works and would like to be employed in his field of expertise. Margaret and Sylwia have supported Robert to complete his CV which identified his skills and experience and helped him to apply for employment opportunities in engineering.

### Comments

*Robert – It is very, very useful. I'm learning how to write documents and use my email.*

*Sylwia - (Roberts translator) – while translating during the IT class I can see that my client improved not only his IT skills but also his English.*

*SPEAR - Margaret has built a rapport with clients. Going forward we would like to further increase awareness, emphasise the importance of IT especially as unemployment benefit and job search will require clients to have at least basic IT skills. Also during the assessment phase of a client joining the service we will look at their IT skills and if lacking they will be directed to access the course.*



**The Vineyard Community Centre** is being supported to teach barista café assistant skills. Already 10 participants have been trained up and are seeking employment or volunteering their services. As a result of the success and interest in the programme a further 3 courses are being supported by Community Learning.

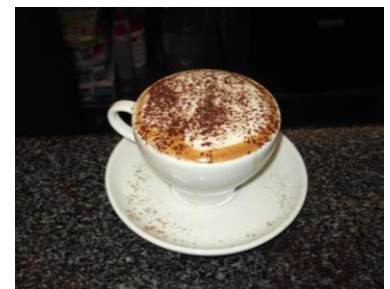


### Learner comments

*Linda – Katie has been a very good teacher. She is very patient, clear and gives precise explanations at just the right pace so we can absorb and take in all the information. My experience working on the till as a volunteer was very good as I gained experience working in a café environment. I was complimented by one of the staff who thought I did very well on my first day, serving customers and using the till.*

*Jana – I wanted to volunteer at the Vineyard Community Centre and I am delighted to have this opportunity of receiving hospitality and Barista training. This will enable me to provide support and help the community in the café in the afternoons.*

*Nada – I am learning English and computer skills at Richmond Adult Community College but think this course will provide me with the skills to get a job.*



## Community Learning is supporting people to learn traditional skills

Community Learning has supported 150 learners and is continuing to provide support for a range of traditional crafting skills, including how to use sewing machine, knitting, crocheting, felting, making or mending clothing, and creating soft furnishings.

**Cornelia Costeanu** runs the **Make do and Mend course**. She was Community Learning's first crafting tutor. She has delivered courses in Twickenham Library and continues to deliver courses at Ham Library and also The Vineyard Community Centre. As a result of delivering training at Ham Library Cornelia now organises Craft Fairs at the library providing the opportunity for participants and local residents to sell what they have made.



### Comments by learners

*'Through coming to the group I have learnt lots of new skills. Cornelia gives you confidence to ask questions, no question is too much of a problem. I now make cushions, curtains etc for friends as well as for myself. I now have a hobby and have made new friends. This hobby saves me money. Cornelia is a great teacher' – Sarah*

*'Having the class has improved my quality of life. Having a friendly regular place to go as a mother, often isolated, this is fantastic. I am learning a skill which I can use to give back to the community eventually. – Alida*



Linda Harrington was a volunteer providing support for Cornelia Costeanu.

She was encouraged and supported by Cornelia to apply for funding and is now delivering **'Mend, make and craft'** sessions at Whitton Library and the Cambrian Centre.

Support is given to ensure all learners have the opportunity to learn the techniques needed to complete their projects, and to develop new skills. Where necessary the tutor provides guidance on how to overcome difficulties. Olive found it difficult to crochet. The problem was that she no longer had the strength in her hands to retain the tension in the yarn. Linda worked with Olive and they explored ways of overcoming this problem which was eventually resolved by placing the ball of wool under Olive's foot to help the tension be more controlled.

**Comment made by Olive – 'Finally at the age of 88 I have learnt to crochet, and crocheting is also providing the opportunity of the mobility of my hands to be improved'.**



## Community Learning is supporting residents to learn about their local environment



**Friends of River Crane Environment** in partnership with **The Conservation Volunteers** are being supported to encourage local residents to understanding the ecology of Crane Park. There has already been an autumn fungi walk, and future education walks and talks will include tree identification, water voles and their habitats, and birds and their songs.

Andy Overall a leading expert in the world of Fungi led a group of 16 participants on a guided walk on the Crane Park Island, and then into a forestry area within the park itself.

As they walked Andy provided guidance of where and when fungi can be found, and identified several species. Participants were amazed and discovered 37 different varieties of fungi ranging from clearly visible fungi to minute specimens down on the ground, or growing on organic materials.



### Comments by learners

**Janet – Andy is a real expert. Whatever we found he was able to describe to say what place that fungus had in the ecological system of the woods. Wonderful!**

**Alison: It's going to change the way we walk through the woods. Excellent!**

**Alan: A very interesting exercise and I will be taking more notice of fungi in the future.**

**Laurie: Interesting and informative. I will be spending hours on the net later investigating further.**

**London Wildlife Trust** was funded to run **Wildlife and Art Safari course** for families in the summer holidays. The 3 taster sessions enabled families to learn about the environment and wildlife on their door step, and to develop their creative skills. The first session was pond dipping which enabled families to discover what wildlife was living in the Crane River, and also provided them with the opportunity to draw the creatures they found. The second session allowed families to explore what plants were growing in Crane Park and make prints from them. During the final session families foraged for natural materials and identified what they were before making 2 and 3 dimensional pictures and sculptures.



### Comments from the parents participating included:

**It was hands on, kids exploring and finding out for themselves. Great to take kids back to nature – Hannah**

**Great opportunity to create something entirely from natural materials. So inspiring and the material are free, wonderful – Helen**

**Brilliant, brilliant, brilliant. I have learnt to stop and look around you not need to go to the shops' - Michelle**



In response to the interest and positive feedback a series of 10 additional courses is being funded for local families to engage with their local green spaces, and to gain a better understanding of the wildlife it contains. Activities include: butterfly safaris, looking for creepy crawlies, tree identification and also wild stories.

## Community Learning is supporting people to learn overcome barriers to learning



**Central and Cecil Housing Trust** were supported to run Art Projects, **'The Person Within'** delivered at Cecil Court in Kew and Homestead, in Teddington. Both are residential homes for people suffering with dementia. The courses were delivered by specialist tutors from Orleans House Gallery.

Participants created 'Memory Boxes' which contained prints, drawings and ceramic objects relating to their lives, and precious memories and stories. When the boxes are opened they activate a sound file which plays a clip of the person talking about themselves or the project.



### Provider's comments

"The art projects at Cecil Court and Homestead have been particularly beneficial to the homes for many reasons. It was lovely to have a regular activity which gave participants, many of whom have dementia, the chance to be creative and try new things. The fact that the majority of people stay for the duration of the session, rather than wandering off, showed that their attention and interest had really been captured. The quality of the artwork produced is really impressive. During the sessions they were really doing something and achieving something and they love it." - Alison Teader



**Orleans House Gallery** have been awarded funding to deliver an **Imagine course** in 4 settings for the elderly and people living with dementia. The first course has already been delivered at Greville House, and future learning opportunities will be made available at Orleans House Gallery, Teddington Memorial Hospital and Homelink. The programme offered the opportunity for residents to develop or learn artistic skills. Learners were supported to develop skills using textiles and oil pastels focussing on creating bird and leaf drawings.

### Learner comment - Connie

"I am no good at drawing but this is looking good. I like this activity it is lovely."

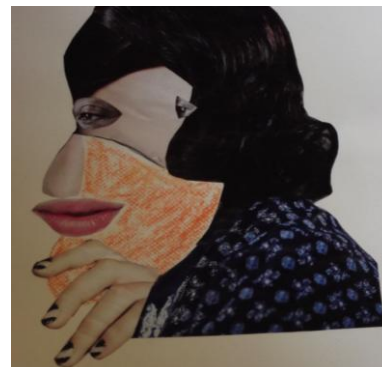
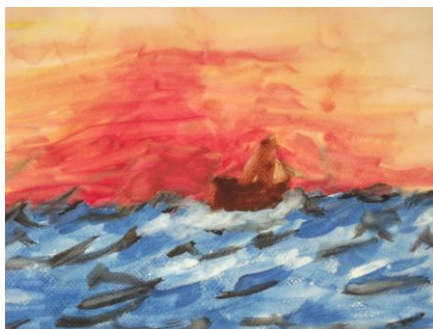
Comment from Connie's daughter Lillian who dropped in to see her.

"I called in this morning and I am amazed by my Mother who is 100. I have never ever in 80 years seen her enjoy something so much. I didn't know that she is that talented. She enjoys the company, the atmosphere and the drawing."



**The Integrated Neurological Service** has now delivered the first of 2 art programmes enabling participants to learn a range of art using various materials and techniques. Learners have been taught about the artists including Charles Mackintosh, Pablo Picasso, Joseph Turner, Georgia O'Keefe and a range of Mexican artists.

The learners are looking forward to an exhibition of their work which will be displayed at The **Integrated Neurological Centre**. Funding has been secured from the Victoria Foundation and to mount and frame their work.



#### Learners' comments:

**David** – This course is really interesting but I am not so sure if my artistic skills are improving. I am really enjoying learning about the different artists. I particularly like Mackintosh as I prefer the style of the old masters.

**John** - I am enjoying learning new skills especially working with water colours.

**Peggy** – I liked learning about new artists. I was familiar with Turner and Picasso but I have learnt and gained a greater understanding of their work.

**Ron** – I have learnt to be patient and let the water colours dry. I am enjoying copying the pictures which is giving me the opportunity to learn new skills and techniques.

**Graham** – I like the energy and structure of the Mackintosh building I am copying. There is a broad range of material available that we can use and we are given clear tips and instructions.

**Orleans House Gallery** is delivering a series of taster sessions and workshops designed for adults with learning disabilities. The course is designed for learners who are making the transition to independent living, or who may be suffering social isolation. It has enabled them to gain skills and supports them to work with digital technology and produce creative outcomes.

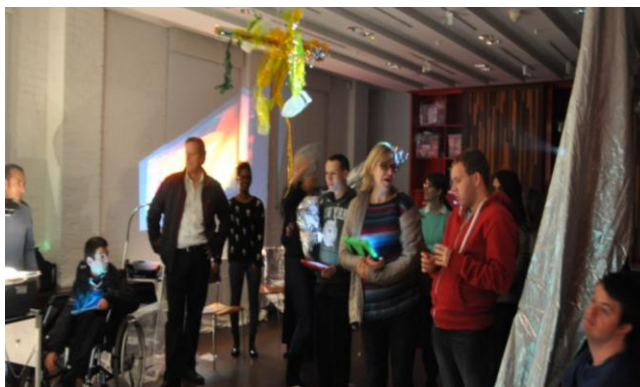
Learners invited their friends and family members to see a performance which also provided the opportunity to view the artwork they had created.

#### Comments by members of the audience

**Andrew** - Ben's father "This has brought out the creativity in Ben. We have inspiring art work created by Ben displayed on our walls at home."

**Trishya** - Michael's mum "Michael has increased his confidence since doing Art. He has benefitted from the social aspect as well as having a way to express himself, definitely well worthwhile."

**Chuchu** – (Lana's carer) "Everyone is so helpful and Lana laughs when she is here."



After the performance everyone cheered and celebrated the success of the occasion!

## Community Learning is supporting people to learn how to cook healthy food on a budget

The **Richmond Nutrition Service** are being supported to deliver courses at **SPEAR** and **The Vineyard Community Centre** enabling learners who are moving towards independent living to understand what is healthy eating, and to provide them with the skills and knowledge to plan and prepare food on a budget.

There are a variety of meals prepared in every lesson, and opportunities for participants to become familiar with ingredients, spices and herbs, and to share their knowledge of cooking with others.

### Comments from SPEAR residents

**Sarah** – “This is good for me as I have always lived on my own and this is a social event with positive people. Today I learnt how to cook beef stew from scratch. Mary the tutor is easy to understand and has a way of being patient but firm.”

**Anthony** – “We have learnt a lot about nutrition stuff. I could not cook to save my life and had no idea about healthy eating. I am not now scared to try new things. It’s a great improvement from egg and frozen chips. I am now cooking for my self every other day and make enough food for the 2 days.”

**Cyrus** – “I have learnt how to cook sauces and am a lot more adventurous with ingredient.”



### Comments from The Vineyard Community Centre participants



**Linda** – “Mary has helped us to cook a couple of dishes I felt before was too difficult for me to attempt. She made cooking these dishes very simple and took away the mystery of lasagne and apple crumble.”

**Declan** – “The course has really helped me to cook healthier meals at a low cost it’s been really interested and easy.”

**Deanne** – “It been great learning to cook such a variety of recipes and I love to cook and feed people. I will share with others what I have learnt.”

**Healthy cooking courses for one, designed for the over 50's**, have also been delivered at **Castelnau Community Centre**. The lessons focussed on tips for planning a meal, budgeting, freezing, sorting and nutrition information. Consideration was given to individual needs providing nutritional guidance and options for participant's medical conditions or allergies. Learners have also been signposted to useful websites providing them with information on diets, nutritional research and recipes.

#### Comments from learners included:

**Derek – “I have never cooked before until my wife died. I have now mastered cooking a roast which I found a lot easier than I thought and how to cook several new recipes.”**

**Elaine – “I have learnt all sorts of things. I live by myself and now am becoming more adventurous and increasing my range of ingredients and recipes.”**

**Sarah – “I am being reminded how to cook from scratch and enjoying the experience.”**



**Mortlake Community Association** is being supported to deliver healthy cooking on a budget course at The Old Bakery in Mortlake.

Learners on the course have included vegetarians and people with specific medical conditions, and those looking to reduce weight. Advice and guidance on individual diets is being given.

#### Comments from learners

**Graham – “Lots of new ideas and techniques. Good food and good company.”**

**Robert – “Very enjoyable. The recipes are simple and easy to follow. It's good to try new things and the food is all so healthy.”**

**Anne – “I am learning new ways with herbs, vegetables and meat.” “Very enjoyable!”**

**Joyce – “A very informative course and so enjoyable.”**



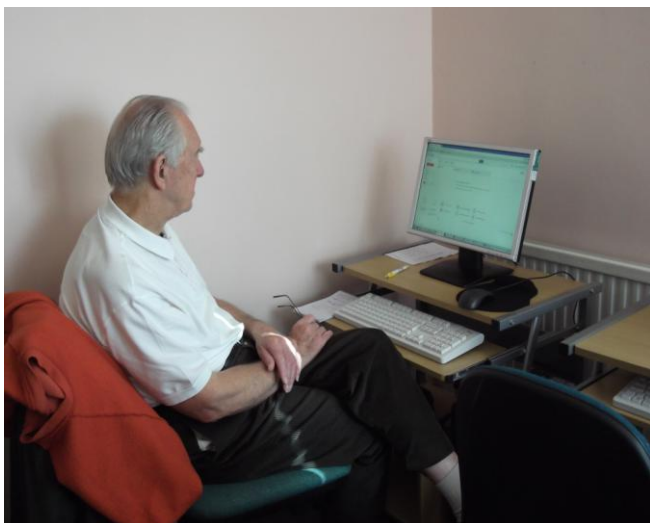
These healthy eating programmes are being delivered by **Mary Kemsley**. Mary is an experienced qualified tutor who has a BSc in Public Health Nutrition and Health. She has been delivering courses in Richmond for many years specialising in supporting people seeking independence, and teaching parents how to meet the needs of their families on low budget. She is also provides support to isolated single people, mature learners and provides information for those who have dietary requirements and problems with their weight.

Mary ensures all learners receive recognition for their achievements, and are given additional support if they find any activity challenging.



## Community Learning is supporting mature learners

There is a growing necessity for people of all ages to learn and be comfortable when using new technology. For mature learners the realisation of how having access to technology can make their lives easier have been recognised. Technology is a tool to support every day life whether if be communicating with friends and loved ones, paying bills, booking a doctors appointment or holiday, purchasing things on line, or seeing what is on locally. **Age UK Richmond** is being funded to deliver 4 courses specifically designed for mature learners who have little knowledge of using a computer. The 6 week course covers: learning how to use the mouse/touchpad, introduction to the keyboard, what is email, working through email, what is the internet, and how to search the internet.



Comments from learners who participated in the first course included:

“The course is very helpful; I have learnt a lot from Margaret she is very helpful.” – Gill

“I am now able to look at the News on line.” – Sumytra

“Good course, good environment, good pace and very important content.” – John

“I find this course very good and would like to thank you for providing it.” - Joyce

“An excellent course to enable the ill informed to master the difficulties in relation to e-mailing.” – Geoffrey

**Margaret Thomas** discovered Community Learning whilst attending a return to work programme which was piloted in May 2014 for mature learners called ‘**Room for Work**’. Margaret has since moved on to deliver **Socially Mediated Performing Arts courses** for **Age UK Richmond**. A pilot session was held in the **Twickenham Well Being Centre**, and as a result a further course will be delivered at the **Barnes Green Centre**.



The course provided the opportunity to develop creative writing, speaking and listening skills, voice projection, and the use of body language. Participants now have an understanding of the difference between prose and script, and have explored different stage settings and designs.



**Pamela** had written sonnets which she shared with the group. One had been inspired by her deaf granddaughter, and the other relating to a beggar she had once encountered. Both were very moving and written from the heart. **Mike**, another participant enjoyed performing on the course, and **Margaret** now knows about different types of theatres.

## Community Learning is supporting learners' who's first language is not English

This course is designed for local residents who would not usually engage in formal ESOL learning activities or those wishing to gain support to assist them with ESOL courses have been provided the opportunity of attending EAL Friendship Groups. Weekly term time sessions are offered by Richmond EAL Friendship Group at St Philips and St James Church Hall in Whitton and at St Richards Primary School. The sessions are delivered by Richmond EAL Friendship Group with the emphasis on helping learners to build up their confidence in verbal and written communication.

Participants are encouraged and supported to improve their reading, grammar and written skill and gain an understanding of other cultures. Support and guidance is also provided in completing forms, advice on health and wealth fare and what is happening in the local community.

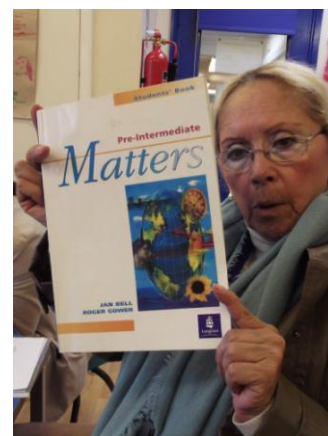
### Comments from learners:

**Jilx - 'I want to learn English and everyone here is so supportive. They are my friends'**

**Madeline - 'Everyone helps each other. Sometimes I have to bring my children and here is support to look after them when I learn' – Madeline**

**Mercedes – The study book is good but I need the teacher to explain it. I also now use a dictionary.**

**Ana – I like the course, because it is helpful for me. I learn to speak, to read. I can help my children with their school homework.**



## Community Learning is supporting people with Cancer

Support is being provided through The Mulberry Centre at West Middlesex Hospital to provide workshops to support cancer patients. The programme of support delivered by clinical therapists offers support and guidance to promote well being. The workshops include: dealing with stress, emotional freedom techniques, make up classes, aroma sticks and nutrition.

### Comments from learners after attending an aroma stick session

**Shirley – It's brilliant. I am so much more relaxed.**

**Shahenaz – It was very informative**

**Louise – Lovely, relaxing and how wonderful for everyone to make a tailor made aromastick**

**Loretta – Excellent course lovely to meet other people an also a way to relax using the oils – brilliant**

**Saeeda – I learnt something really different. It is amazing it has made me feel so much better**

**Jackie – Just brilliant I have learned so much**



**Community Learning would like to thank the providers who have identified and are delivering these opportunities and for the participants who have attended the courses and provided us with their feedback. For more information please do visit our website [www.richmond.gov.uk/community.learning](http://www.richmond.gov.uk/community.learning) or contact us by email: [community-learning@achievingforchildren.org.uk](mailto:community-learning@achievingforchildren.org.uk)**