

# Family Matters

Autumn 2021



## Welcome

It has been such a busy term with so many brilliant achievements for you to read about in this issue – I hardly know where to begin! It has been a pleasure to meet all our new students who joined us in September and to see them all settling in over the term and building new friendships.

The college has been pleased to be involved in the Association of Colleges (AoC) Sport Inclusion Hub programme this term and to see the impact this has had on the students, starting their own football team and trying out a range of other activities.

We are also excited to be working, as part of an initiative from Natspec and the AoC, on a joint project with Crawley College. Our project aims to identify ways in which mainstream provisions can be supported to enable students with complex medical needs to attend their provision and stay local.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue of Family Matters and hearing about everything that has been happening across the college.

As always I would like to thank you all for your ongoing support and wish you all a restful break and a Merry Christmas.

Kelly Phillips

**Principal**



## Highlights from across the centres

### Sutton region

Students in the Sutton region have had a busy term building new partnerships, starting a weekly Moolookoo dance session and Sports Ability Sessions at the Phoenix Centre, which students can continue after college. In January students will also be starting an independent travel training programme in partnership with London Borough of Sutton, which will support some students to travel independently to work, college or community activities.

Lastly, five students from Sutton went on a night out with Club Soda in Croydon to join an evening festival of arts and music. The students had a fantastic time and are keen to return in the new year!

### Hillingdon region

This term students from Wyvern House had their first training session at Brunel University. The students really enjoyed the opportunity to play on the top quality pitch at Brunel University Sports Park as they worked on their ball skills, teamwork and communication. Students have also built some brilliant new employment opportunities with Savers, Superdrug and a local garage. Lastly, the students are excited about a new partnership with West London University starting in the New Year.

### Southwark region

It has been a busy but great first term for the learners in Southwark. We have started a new partnership with Southwark Playhouse where students are taking part in a vocational drama course and will be putting on performances throughout the year.

Students have continued to develop their horticulture skills at Brockwell Park Community Gardens, as well as being involved in a community project at Dexter's Adventure Playground to revamp and re-design the space including giving the fences a top up of colour.

It has been great to restart our external work placements again this term at Tesco and The Salvation Army and WorkStart students working at Guy's and St Thomas' Hospital and Ebony Stables, Brixton.

### Kingston region

Students from the Kingston region arranged a night out to go bowling and have dinner this term. The evening was a great success and the students are keen to plan their next event, it was a great opportunity to build new friendships and meet outside of college.

Students from across all regions have come together in Worcester Park at Wandgas Football For All to take part in a group training session. The students have enjoyed the opportunity to train on a 3G football pitch along with learning and developing their football skills. Students also attended the opening of a new sensory garden at Wandgas with the Mayor of Epsom and Ewell. The students have been allocated two plots in the garden to develop and grow plants and vegetables.

## Opening of new centres

This term the college has opened two new centres, Robin Hood Lane in Sutton and Addington Valley Centre in Croydon. Students have settled in well to both centres and are building new partnerships in their communities. At Robin Hood Lane our new Supported Internship course has started running in partnership with the London Borough of Sutton; students have been busy developing their employability skills and are now settling into a variety of work placements.

## Duke of Edinburgh's Award

We are so proud that a number of students have received their Bronze and Silver Duke of Edinburgh's Awards this term. Students found a number of ways to combine work for their awards whilst supporting their local communities, including making PPE visors for local care homes, making poppies for the Poppy Appeal for Remembrance Day and writing letters to vulnerable members of the community who were isolating.

As part of the award the students have also taken part in two and three day expeditions to Hartfield at the start of this term. Students were responsible for setting up their tents and cooking area, building a camp fire and making all their own meals. They also took part in a ten mile walk and other activities including football and rounders. The students' perseverance and hard work will be rewarded this term when they receive their awards!

## Love Our Colleges week

The college was thrilled to be announced as a winner of the #ShareTheLoveOurColleges Competition as part of the Association of Colleges' Love Our Colleges week. The students entered a cake design which was announced as one of four winning entries!

Well done to all the students who worked hard to produce such a creative entry, which also tasted great! The students won a £50 voucher and we look forward to them deciding what they will spend it on.

We were pleased to be mentioned in a round up of the competition in FE Week too!



## Opening of student Common Room

The college was thrilled to welcome some special visitors to officially open a new student common room at VPC. We were joined by Alison Weir, a best selling author and public historian and her husband Rankin Weir, whose son John Weir was a committed member of staff who worked at the college for many years. John sadly passed away in March 2020 and in his memory, a donation was made to the college which funded a range of exciting equipment for the students' common room, including a PlayStation and games, sensory equipment, a 3D printer and much more. Students and staff gathered to officially open the common room and shared fond memories of John. A gold plaque is in place outside the room to remember him. Also in attendance was John Brown, one of our college Members, who presented the students with their Bronze and Silver Duke of Edinburgh's Award certificates.



## Christmas in the Community

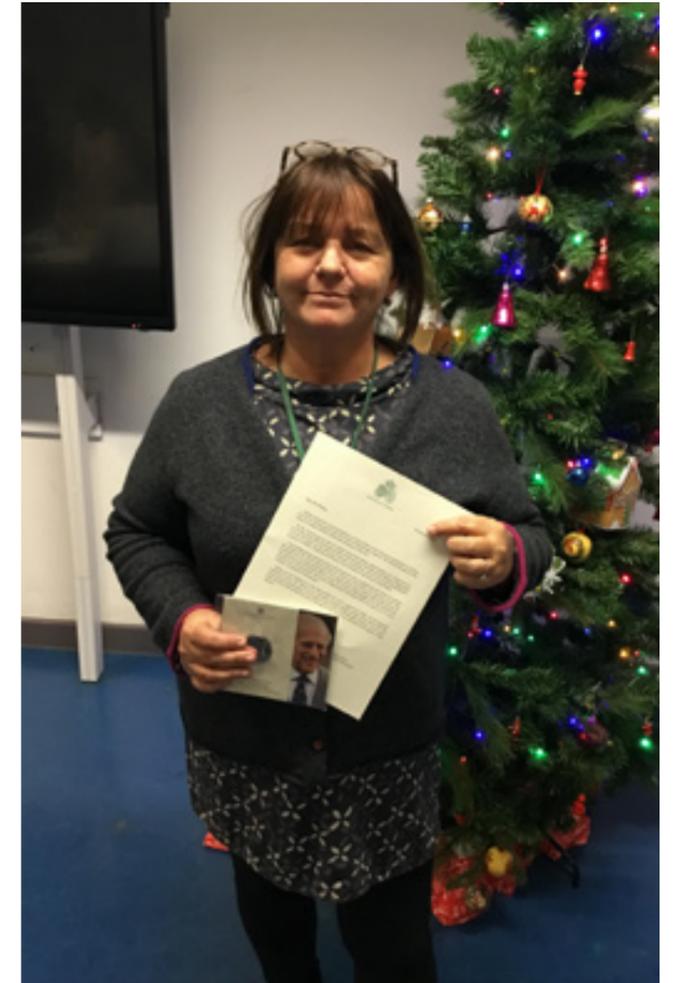
We've had a wonderful time celebrating with students across our centres at this year's Christmas in the Community events. We kicked off the celebrations in Sutton where students took to the high street, spreading Christmas cheer with their festive carol singing! Following on from this, students from Wyvern House set up a Christmas craft stall in the town centre selling handmade gifts. Students from the Kingston region joined the brilliant Kingston Christmas Market where students performed on the stage, singing a number of festive songs, alongside pupils from Dysart School. Finally, the week of celebrations was rounded off at Southwark Playhouse where students from the Southwark region performed some festive Christmas scenes.



## The Royal Mint Commemorative coin

To celebrate the life and legacy of HRH The Duke of Edinburgh, The Royal Mint has released an official commemorative coin. 100 commemorative coins, accompanied by a letter of thanks from HRH The Earl of Wessex and Forfar, will be given to inspirational volunteers around the world.

We are so proud that a member of the college team has been recognised for her efforts towards The Duke of Edinburgh's Award and has been awarded one of the commemorative coins. Only 50 volunteers from across the UK will be awarded with a coin – an outstanding achievement to be nominated. Congratulations and special thanks to Frances McKay who has been key in ensuring the students could continue to progress towards their awards over the last year, creating interesting and impactful volunteering opportunities.



## Christmas card competition 2021

A huge number of students took part in our annual competition to design the official 2021 Orchard Hill College digital Christmas card.

With so many entries received, it is clear we have so many talented and creative students!

The designs filled us with festive cheer, so much so that we have adorned the OHC&AT reception area with the festive drawings and collages to create a beautiful montage.

Local artist, Doug Shaw, judged the designs and after a great deal of deliberation, he declared the winner as Westfield from our Sutton region.

Westfield will receive an Amazon voucher, a framed certificate and a set of Christmas cards printed with his festive design.



## Transition events

The college hosted three Transition Events in Southwark, Sutton and Kingston during November. The events were a chance for our students, their parents, carers and local schools to have the opportunity to gather information on services and organisations in the area who support young people with SEND.

The events were a brilliant success with over 200 people attending over the three days and a total of 30 stall holders.



## See you next term

We wish all our students a wonderful festive break, and look forward to welcoming everyone back in January.

Keep up to date with news stories across the college on our website at [www.orchardhill.ac.uk](http://www.orchardhill.ac.uk) and follow us on Twitter @O\_H\_College

If you have any feedback on Family Matters please contact us at: [marketing@ohcat.org](mailto:marketing@ohcat.org)