

# OUR COMMUNITY

NEWS

## Our 1st 'Making a Difference' award goes to...

...Phill Brown for taking the initiative to teach practical maintenance skills to Sol at Kingsdown Lodge. Sol has been helping out with maintenance jobs for some time now. This means that he's much more engaged during the day, helping him to sleep at night – a particular problem for him at times.

Phill commented: "Sol is keen to help out and shows some promising skills, particularly when it comes to painting." We're hoping that Sol will be motivated to do more by attending one of our future induction training sessions at Manston to talk about his experience.

Our new 'Making a Difference' competition was launched in the last edition of the staff newsletter. It is open to all staff on a quarterly basis and comes with £100 prize money to the winning staff member.



Phill accepting his 'cheque' from CEO Eddie Coombes

### TO ENTER

Simply tell us in no more than 50 words how you've made a difference in your job role recently – this can be with reference to how you've made a difference to another team member, the individuals we support or their carers and loved ones. You can also be nominated by another member of staff, the families of the people we support or their carers.

Email your entry to [Suzanne@optimacare.co.uk](mailto:Suzanne@optimacare.co.uk) by 31st March. The winner will be notified by 8th April and will appear in the next issue of the newsletter.

## Spring Art Competition & Exhibition



Spring is in the air! And we're on the lookout for budding artists amongst all of the people that we support. Anything goes - drawings, paintings, collages, fabric oddments or tissue paper pictures... the list goes on.



We'd like to exhibit as much of the artwork as possible at Manston – and use for any open days - plus include a selection on our website and Facebook page. In addition, there will be Easter themed prizes for the top three pictures as voted on by staff and the people we support. So get your thinking caps on and your easels out and get cracking...

Please send all entries to Steph at Manston via the black boxes by Friday 18th March.

## News in brief

### Promoting a healthy workforce

We've opened a consultation with a view to implementing a non-smoking policy by 1st April 2016, in line with other organisations in health and care. The consultation outlines the support we will provide to those staff hoping to quit.

### Refer a friend

We've introduced a refer a friend incentive of £200, which will be paid to the referring staff member once their friend is successfully recruited and has completed their probation and care certificate.

### New role for Denise

Denise Banks (previously Clinical Services Manager at The Chilterns) is now taking overall responsibility for community living, working with registered managers at Eastry House, Seahaven, Heron House, Spenser Road and The Chilterns. Amongst other things, Denise will be working with managers and also Christina, our Training Lead, to ensure that once mandatory training is complete, staff will benefit from tailored personal development programmes.

### Supported Living

We've partnered with an independent housing charity Future Housing Solutions, who will help us source accommodation for individuals according to needs. Herne Bay Supported Living is now almost full and we've had some great feedback from staff and families of the people we support there. "I have been meeting the families of those we're transitioning into the service. They're very happy and excited about their loved ones gaining an independent life. For me this is total job satisfaction," says Graeme Britton, who recently moved from residential services to work in supported living.

### Personalising homes

Personalising the home is key for individuals moving into supported living but, as we all know, that can prove expensive. Optima Care is working with a great charity to help people kit out their homes for very little money. They're always looking for good quality furniture donations too. For more information, go to [www.necessaryfurniture.org.uk](http://www.necessaryfurniture.org.uk)

### Police trainees

As part of our community collaboration initiatives, we're now offering placements in our services to local police officer trainees. Our first trainee, PC Tristan Foster, on placement at The Chilterns, commented: "My perceptions around both mental ill health and offenders have been challenged by my experiences at The Chilterns. I feel that I have really benefitted from my placement..." And of the staff: "I was impressed by the knowledge and compassion displayed." The next trainee will start at Herne Bay Supported Living in March.

National Care Home Open Day is on 17th June 2016. Want to get involved? Go to [www.carehomeopenday.org.uk/about-open-day](http://www.carehomeopenday.org.uk/about-open-day)

Also, email [Suzanne@optimacare.co.uk](mailto:Suzanne@optimacare.co.uk) for any help and advice.