

## Sight loss shouldn't stop you doing the things you love:



### Alan's story

To celebrate World Sight Day, a global awareness day for sight loss on 13th October, we're sharing some of the wonderful stories we hear every day at Henshaws.

Football has become an invaluable part of Alan Montgomery's life, after being reintroduced to sports by Newcastle Community Service Development Officer Philippa. Alan was registered partially sighted in 1987 due to optic nerve damage and, like many others,

after receiving his diagnosis he was stuck at home with little support or awareness of what was available for him. Since 2010 however, Alan's life has turned around – having joined Henshaws' football team, as well as helping teach junior football. He shares his story:

**“Before Henshaws I was at a loose end. When I was first diagnosed I wasn't in contact with anybody, I went into depression because I wasn't coping with it. You just think ‘well, what do I do?’ Henshaws supporting me with sport has helped dramatically. It's given me a lot more confidence. I was a person that always said ‘I can't do that’, and it was Philippa who said ‘you can do anything’. Now I'll always try new things – if I can't do it, then I can't do it, but I'll give everything a go!”**

**Alan and the Henshaws FA League team won the George Best Cup in Belfast in July, adding to two other trophies they've already won in local tournaments this year. Fantastic work! If you'd like to read more stories celebrating World Sight Day, please visit [henshaws.org.uk](http://henshaws.org.uk).**

## It's already beginning to feel a lot like Christmas!



This year, we're giving you the chance to win up to £1,500 in our Christmas raffle and support those with disabilities in your local area. Tickets cost only £1 and, with the draw taking place on Wednesday 21st December, you'll have a great chance to make your Christmas extra special and make a difference to those we support.

**If you'd like to make sure you get your tickets or some extra ones to sell to your friends and family, please get in touch with the fundraising team on 0161 786 3656.**

### Get in touch

Our fundraising team are always happy to help with any queries or if you'd like any more information. Give us a call on **0161 786 3656** or email us at [fundraising@henshaws.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@henshaws.org.uk)

To find out more about the fantastic work that your support has helped to achieve and to sign-up for our regular emails, visit our website at [henshaws.org.uk](http://henshaws.org.uk)

## Introducing: Henshaws Life Hacks

Every day, with your support, the people we work with are going beyond their expectations, starting with the day-to-day stuff we can take for granted. Our aim is that visual impairment doesn't mean the end of an independent, fulfilling life, and that's why we've launched our new digital project, 'Henshaws Life Hacks'; all the best tips, tricks and tech that we've found over the years.

**Henshaws Life Hacks are available in short videos, as well as a handy e-book available to download for free, so that people all around the world can be empowered in their daily life. You can learn about these tips and share with your friends and family at [henshaws.org.uk/lifehacks](http://henshaws.org.uk/lifehacks)**

**henshaws**  
*beyond expectations*

Autumn 2016 Edition

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# your henshaws

Welcome to our autumn issue of **your henshaws**; giving you a glimpse of the amazing stories that your support has made happen.



## Included in this issue...

### Find out how

the Arts & Crafts Centre garden has been the perfect setting for Sam and Jack's friendship to blossom.

### Learn about how,

after being diagnosed with sight loss, football has been life-changing for Alan from Newcastle.

### Read about our

new digital project Henshaws Life Hacks and how your support could be reaching people around the world.

We hope you enjoy reading this issue of **your henshaws** as we capture just some of the fantastic journeys that happen every day at Henshaws. None of these stories would be possible without you, and we thank you for your support. *The Henshaws Team.*

# The difference you help to make



## Sam and Jack's story

Sam Taylor has been coming to Henshaws Arts & Crafts Centre for the past ten years, and particularly loves taking part in the Horticulture Workshop. Sam is registered blind, and has mild learning disabilities. Jack Fridlington is 77 and from Harrogate, and volunteers at the centre. Every week the two friends walk round the garden to explore the unique space, and Sam shares why she loves her weekly trips with Jack:

**“When I’m in the gardens I feel relaxed and at ease. I can always find a bit of quiet here when I need to switch off. Jack and I share all the different smells and noises we like in the garden. As I don’t have any sight, Jack describes the plants and sculptures to me, and because the garden always changes, our walks are**

**different each time. I feel like part of my local community here. If I wasn’t here, I would be stuck at home.”**

Jack volunteers twice a week at the centre, and shares why he loves guiding Sam around the garden:

**“I enjoy talking to Sam because she takes a real interest and likes to find out about things. I’ve learnt a lot from helping Sam and working together. We definitely have a connection; sometimes one of us is thinking something and the other one will say it! The Arts & Crafts Centre is a fantastic place as it enables disabled people to feel safe and secure, to do something meaningful and to learn new skills. These are all things that everyone deserves to have in their life.”**

Henshaws garden is a therapeutic, multi-sensory space for both our Art Makers and the local community, but over time parts of the garden have become increasingly rundown and inaccessible for local nature lovers like Sam. This is why we have ambitious plans to redevelop this unique garden, to ensure that everybody has the chance to enjoy this beautiful and tranquil space. If you’d like to support our appeal so that we can secure the community garden for years to come, please visit [henshaws.org.uk/gardenappeal](http://henshaws.org.uk/gardenappeal).



## Fun & friendship for our Children & Families

It’s been a hectic summer of activities for Henshaws Children & Families, thanks to your generous support! Our specialist team carefully plan each trip to meet each child’s needs – such as an audio described showing of the Gruffalo’s Child at the Lowry, with a touch tour of the set after the show. One highlight was an action-packed weekend at the Children’s Adventure Farm in Altrincham, including arts and crafts, collecting chicken eggs, and even feeding alpacas. Fiona McMullen, Community Services Team Leader says:

**“One of the most heart-warming things was how much the children looked out for and helped each other. We had three completely blind children and one wheelchair user, and to see all the children stepping up and helping to support, guide, explain and describe things was amazing to see. Some real and lovely friendships formed this year and to have been able to facilitate that feels very rewarding.”**

Hana, aged 10, particularly loved this summer’s events and sent in a wonderful thank you card,

**“My sister and I would like to say a huge thank you for all the exciting events you arranged for us in the school holidays. I liked the adventure farm so much. My favourite thing was decorating the mugs. Now thanks to you I am going to be a CBBC radio reporter for the Gruffalo’s Child.”**

## Alex's story



When 22 year old Alex from Leeds first started at Henshaws College, he had difficulty working in a team and listening to others, but over the past three years his progress has been amazing. With specialist support from the staff, Alex’s eye contact, ability to initiate conversation and body language have all improved, giving him more confidence in his daily communication.

Alex enjoys art and model building, so he joined our Young Enterprise team as a graphic designer, where he created beautiful artwork for the team’s mug production business, Mugzy. He also began a weekly work placement at Hobbycraft, where after 2 weeks of support from College staff, he began to attend independently; an amazing achievement!

By learning to develop his social and technical skills through work experience, Alex feels ready to access the world of work and is excited for a positive future, including learning how to drive, an ambition of his from the past year. He says,

**“I’m learning to get in the right gears and how not to stall. It’s good but I still need to work on slowing down when I’m turning corners! When I have a license I might be able to go somewhere by myself so it will give me more independence.”**

**Congratulations to Alex and all our 2016 graduates. We wish you the best of luck for your journeys ahead, and look forward to hearing about your future achievements.**