

Winter 2017 Edition

•henshaws

beyond expectations

•your henshaws

Welcome back to your henshaws; giving you a glimpse of the amazing stories that you have made possible over the last 12 months

Included in this issue...

Read Amy and Ben's story, shared by mum Lorraine on how talking to families in similar situations helped them feel less alone.

Discover how learning new skills through our 'Living with Sight Loss' course has helped Arthur to regain his independence.

Find out about Tom, a student from our Specialist College who raised money for new equipment for his classmates.

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

The Henshaws Team.

Amy and Ben's story



Amy and Ben Wright have benefitted from the Children & Families Services that your kind donations fund since Ben was a toddler, attending courses such as I Can Do It (funded by BBC Children in Need); a course which aims to teach visually impaired children aged 8 – 18 social and independence skills and build their confidence. While these courses provide a place for Amy and Ben to make new friends, Henshaws also helped their mum Lorraine understand what their eye conditions mean for the future:

Lorraine, Amy and Ben's mum, writes:

“Amy and Ben were born with Leber congenital amaurosis (LCA); an inherited condition which affects sight and sensitivity to light. We were first referred to Henshaws by the Patient Support Officer at Manchester Royal Eye Hospital.

Henshaws toddler group was great for Ben and Amy, as they got to play in the sensory room and we could meet other families going through the same journey as us. You can feel a bit alone, because when other families talk about milestones, they're different from your ones. There are so few children who have visual impairments, which was why it was so

valuable to get to discuss similar things with other families. When your child has a visual impairment, it might take them a bit longer to get to grips with the world around them.

I was worried about what school Ben and Amy would go to but another parent came in to Henshaws to talk about their experience of mainstream schools. That was really useful, and it helped give me confidence for Ben and Amy to go to a mainstream school, which they love.”

Amy and Ben both left glowing reviews for the 'I Can Do It' course:

- Amy: **“Going to Henshaws is good, they always help you if you need anything”**
- Ben: **“My favourite bit has been making pizza with 'I Can Do It'. I've had lots of Henshaws pizza over the years!”**

Amy loves reading and writing her own stories, and read a fantastic story at the Henshaws Carols by Candlelight Concert last month.

Everyone at Henshaws would like to say a massive thank you to those who came and supported the event!



Arthur's story

Arthur shares how courses, funded by supporters like you, have helped him regain his independence:

“Life nine years ago seemed pretty straight forward. My two beautiful daughters had both left home with families of their own and my wife and I were looking forward to spending a happy retirement together. I'd even taken up golf!

Then my world was turned upside down. I was diagnosed with prostate cancer and suffered damage to the optic nerves in both my eyes, which resulted in me losing my sight apart from some light perception. All my plans that I had around retirement with my wife went out of the window.

We agreed to move up to Manchester to be nearer my daughters and it was at this point that I made contact with Henshaws. Since my first call to Jan in the Henshaws First Step team the support has been fantastic. It was so refreshing to speak to one organisation that could provide me with a range of support and were proactive about telling me what I could do rather than having to discover what was available myself.

I enrolled in the ‘Living with Sight Loss’ course which was absolutely invaluable for me. It provided direction and help to learn new skills plus the opportunity to check what I thought I knew. It also allowed me to share my thoughts and speak to other people in a similar situation to me and learn from them.”

James, Seb & Scott's story



Everyone remembers the feeling of moving into their own home for the first time; the excitement, the nerves, but mostly, the overall feeling of independence. This year, your support, and that of charitable trusts, allowed mates James, Seb and Scott to experience just that!

In 2016, we shared the story of James moving into his new house in Harrogate, and we're pleased to say that almost a year on, James and his two housemates Seb and Scott are continuing to thrive in their new home.

James previously required two-to-one support, but has now moved on leaps and bounds; his support needs have reduced, and his independence skills continue to grow. Initially Seb had a lot of anxiety around moving into a new environment, particularly as he is autistic and very sensitive to noise, but since the move he is growing in confidence and now, for the first time, travels independently every day. Scott is also settling into his new home better than anyone expected, with his living skills increasing each day!

Baz, their support worker, describes the change he's seen in all three boys:

“Every day we see them becoming more confident and comfortable; they are all learning new skills to help them live independently. It's great to see them hanging out in the lounge sharing their love of Dad's Army!”

We would love to give more people the chance to have their own place and live independently, which is why we are currently adapting more specialist housing near our college in Harrogate.

Tom's double challenge triumph

We are proud that our community of fundraisers is made up of a broad group of people of all ages and abilities, all wanting to support those with disabilities to live the life they choose. Tom, one of the students attending our Specialist College, went above and beyond for his fellow students in 2016.

When Tom learnt that the complex needs of some of his fellow classmates meant they couldn't enjoy sports the same way he can, he wanted to make a difference. So he challenged himself to complete the Melmerby 10k run to raise funds for a MOTomed movement trainer; a specialist piece of equipment to help students improve their mobility.

Tom has Bardet Biedl Syndrome, a genetic disorder which can affect sight and cause other physical difficulties such as kidney problems, but it didn't hold Tom back from completing the race in an amazing 1hr 28m; a new personal best. Tom raised almost £2,000 which, alongside a generous donation from a local trust, has purchased the MOTomed for the College's gym!



Could you take up a challenge just like Tom? Henshaws is always looking for fantastic volunteers and fundraisers to help us raise money and change the lives of people living with sight loss and other disabilities. If you would like to fundraise for Henshaws, please see the enclosed event calendar and get in touch with Rachael in fundraising on 0161 786 3656.

Thank you

Thanks to everyone who sent back their responses to the September newsletter and told us how they first got involved in Henshaws. It was great to hear all your stories and we particularly liked the one from a supporter from Salford who said, 'As a child, myself and several friends had a jumble sale for Henshaws and raised a princely sum of £1! A lot in the 1960's!'

This year we are celebrating our 180th anniversary, so if you have any stories or pictures about your involvement in Henshaws, please get in touch with Stewart Graham in fundraising on **0161 786 3640**.

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

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

Our award winning services

Last year, our Pathway to Independence model trained 607 people, supported 935 new people and provided on average 402 people new friendship opportunities every month. We are excited to announce that this has been recognised with our model winning 'Best Example of Service Delivery' at the Visionary Conference 2016; an event that aims to improve the quality of service provided to people with sight loss across the UK.

If you'd like to know what our pathway could offer you or to find out more about our bespoke package of support, activities and training, call **0161 872 1234** or check out our website.

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