



## Warm Welcome from Mark Hughes

A very belated, but sincere, Happy 2012 to you all! I hope the 'new' year brings good health, happiness and success for everyone associated with St. John's.

As always at St. John's, and as reflected in this edition of the College Life, it's been a busy half term and I hope you enjoy reading some of our news.

If you have visited St. John's College over the last 6 months you can't fail to have noticed the major exterior building works that have been ongoing since August! We are very excited that our new reception and front entrance will soon be completed and hope to have this open by the end of February (fingers crossed and weather permitting)!



I am also pleased to welcome Mrs. Liz Auchincloss to the Senior Leadership Team as the interim Director of Education. Liz joins us after 30 + years in special education (clearly started at a very early age.....I hasten to add!!), most recently as a Principal of a specialist residential college, and prior to that, was Deputy Head of a residential special school. Liz looks forward to meeting you all in the coming weeks and months.

As always, please feel free to contact me at any time, my email is [MHughes@st-johns.co.uk](mailto:MHughes@st-johns.co.uk) and if you'd like to see me, then please contact my PA, Nicola on [PA@st-johns.co.uk](mailto:PA@st-johns.co.uk).

Have a very good half term and stay warm!

Very Best Wishes.



### Ambitious about Autism

The Finished at School campaign [http://www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk/page/get\\_involved/finished\\_school/index.cfm](http://www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk/page/get_involved/finished_school/index.cfm)

is a national campaign which aims to secure more and better educational options for all young people with autism aged 16 - 25 to enable them to develop skills, gain employment, live more independently and ultimately to live the life they choose. Natspec has signed up to support the campaign, and there is further information on their website.

## Work-Related Learning - Community Food Project

Community Food Project sessions take place every Wednesday morning at Whitehawk Hill allotments. We walk there and back from college, and practice road safety skills. We've never missed a session, whatever the weather; sun, rain, mist or snow! Learners from St. John's College have now



been going to sessions there for nine years!

We arrive and go straight to the shed to find out what jobs

we'll do. In the winter we keep warm in there; there is a sofa and a wood-burning stove.

Every week we begin by feeding the chickens – we take vegetable scraps from St. John's canteen. We also collect the eggs. Other jobs we do in the winter are sorting seeds, putting them into packets and labelling them, snapping and sawing fire wood, learning about fire safety, picking and preparing vegetables, and using them to make a soup over the fire.

Each week we take some vegetables and herbs back to college, to use in cooking sessions in the afternoon. Richard likes to take things home to cook them in his evening meal, like chillies for his fajitas.

In the spring and summertime we have picked and tasted fruit, sown seeds, made apple juice and cordials, done digging, raking and weeding, done the watering and enjoyed the sunshine!

We always have a drink break.

Learners sometimes work alone but mostly work as part of a team. Marie from Speech and Language Therapy comes with us every week, to sup-

## WHITEHAWK COMMUNITY FOOD PROJECT

port learners with communication. At the end of the sessions we tick off the jobs we have achieved.

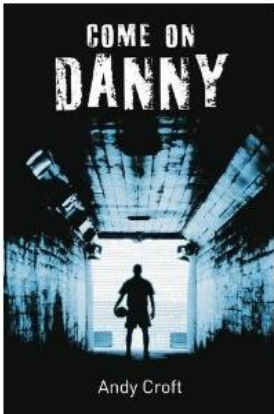
All of the learners are working towards two OCR accreditations: World of Work and Horticulture.

Vicky Hickson and Alexandra Harris



## Brighton Festival - Adopt An Author Project

We are delighted to have been chosen by the Brighton Festival to participate in the Adopt an Author scheme to take place this spring. The project will culminate in May 2012 at the Dome as part of the Brighton Festival where the learners will get to meet with the author they have been working with on the project. This is a very exciting opportunity for our learners to be working in collaboration with the local community as well as the author, Andy Croft, who comes from Middlesbrough.



This is the first time a specialist college has been chosen as a participating member of the project and we are one of just four chosen for this year's project.

The book we have chosen to work on is called 'Come on Danny' by Andy Croft. It is a story about a teenager called Danny whose father is in prison. Home is hell. His teachers hate him. Is football the only way forward?

The project will last for 8 weeks, during which time the learners will make contact with Andy Croft, establish a weekly email relationship with him, write letters or maintain contact in other ways. They can use this time to ask him questions about how the book came to be, what it's like to write books (Andy has written 32 books as well as poetry) and tell him about what they are doing in relation to his book. The learners will be involved in reading the book, discussing their thoughts and ideas and then deciding how they would like to work with the book. This could include cross-curricular involvement as well as creative ideas – drama, artwork, cartoons, computer generated presentations, poetry, a visit to Lewes Prison, stories/letters to 'Dad' in prison etc. We have total freedom to explore ideas.

This is an opportunity for our learners to explore different ways of communicating within the college, between themselves, within the community, with the chosen book and with the author.

We will be visited twice by Hannah Osmond from The Dome Brighton Festival Team to support our plan, see how the learners are getting on and prepare them for the meeting in May at the Dome. Andy has a lot of experience working with reluctant readers and special needs young people. One of his quotes is:

*"Books themselves are not enough to inspire reluctant readers to read. They won't become readers until they have become writers... they won't write if they think writing belongs to someone else. They won't respect, or be curious about, or be passionate about, or be critical of, other people's writing until they begin to be some of those things about their own writing. Books won't belong in their lives until their lives belong in books". (Andy Croft)*

The learners who will be working on the project are in the process of being identified and will be confirmed nearer the start date in March. We would ask for support during the 8 weeks the learners will be involved.

**Helen Aguirre**

Speech & Language Therapist -St. John's College



## Day in the Office

Emma Wolstencroft (St. John's Learner) wanted office work experience so the Transition Co-ordinators, were able to offer her jobs with them. Emma has been filing, updating Databases, sending emails and photocopying. They were also able to arrange for Emma to work in the front office helping Jo and Katie with the shredding. It was felt that Emma would benefit from an external placement – so it was arranged that she would go to Impetus.



Impetus is a Brighton and Hove based charity which provides direct support services to local people experiencing disability and/or disadvantage. They also provide infrastructure support to organisations within the voluntary sector. Emma goes on a Friday for 1 hour; she was told the Health and Safety rules and when tested on these rules a few weeks later, she had remembered what needed to be done. Emma now helps Impetus sort the post, franking, shredding, answering the door, stuffing and labelling envelopes for mail shots, and of course, most importantly, making tea and coffee. Thanks to the staff at Impetus, especially Ian her trainer for making us welcome and, of course, well done to Emma.

Kay Roache

### Karaoke at the Crypt

#### Starting from Saturday 11th February

We are planning a Karaoke Night for all St. John's learners and friends at the Cafe in the Crypt hopefully once a month on Saturdays between 7pm-9pm (except May). The first event will be a Valentine's Karaoke on Saturday 11th February 2012.

Kemp Town Crypt Community Centre  
St. Georges Church  
Brighton  
East Sussex  
BN2 1ED

Facebook page : [www.facebook.com/crypt.karaoke](http://www.facebook.com/crypt.karaoke)  
Email: [crypt.karaoke@gmail.com](mailto:crypt.karaoke@gmail.com)

Admission cost will be £4.00 including a light supper (parents and carers go free!) There will also be drinks and snacks available during the evening.

Hope to see you there!



### To get your copy of College Life.

The College Life newsletter is available on our website. If you would like us to email each edition to you please email Katie or Jo at [reception@st-johns.co.uk](mailto:reception@st-johns.co.uk) and you will be included in our email circulation.

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