

Information and news for disabled and older people and family carers

Independent Living News



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Edition 148 – March 2023

SIL: The Best Place to Work in Health & Social Care - Award Winner 2022

Inside this edition



- 2 A Message from the Chief Executive
Goodbye Snail Mail
- 3 Echo – Our 2023 Charity of the Year
- 4&5 Winter with our Service Users
- 6 CoStar Community Events
Safe Haven
- 7 Mills Mobility Aids
Any One for Badminton?
- 8 Herefordshire Walking Festival
Birthday Gift for Ukrainian
Families



If you would like a regular copy of the SIL newsletter, please forward your email address to shelagh.callaghan@s4il.co.uk
Deadline for article contributions in the September newsletter is Friday, 18th August 2023
Email to shelagh.callaghan@s4il.co.uk or post to the address on the back of this newsletter.
Don't forget the prize for every star letter/article printed is £25.



Welcome to the latest and what will be the last printed version of the SIL Newsletter.

The time has come to stop production of the newsletter in paper form, due to increasing costs, desire to reduce our environmental impact and the fact that the vast majority of people now access information electronically.

The publication will now be produced twice a year and be made available via email and online, so please make sure you sign up to get your copy! If you have specific access requirements or cannot access the newsletter electronically, please let us know and we will do our best to accommodate your needs.

Please continue to send us your stories or ideas for the newsletter, we are always looking for interesting content.

On another subject it does now seem like we are heading into spring, with the first spring flowers making an appearance and the weather getting slightly warmer and drier. Is it just me or does it feel like it has been a long winter this year? Anyway, enjoy the longer daylight hours, try and get outside where possible and enjoy the fresh air Herefordshire has to offer.

'Your mind is a garden. Your thoughts are seeds. You can grow flowers or you can grow weeds.' - Anon

Caveat: Please note we print articles provided by third party organisations in good faith. SIL takes no responsibility for the accuracy of the information or content. Dates and times of events and activities are correct at the time of going to print.



Goodbye Snail Mail

As you will have read in Euan's introduction, this is the final edition of our printed newsletter that we will be posting out.

However, we will be working on a new email version, which will be produced twice a year, in September and March. If you currently receive a newsletter by snail mail, and have an email address, please let us know so that we can add your details to our emailing list to ensure you don't miss out on future editions.

To keep up to date with all our stories, events and news throughout the year you can follow us on Facebook: @s4ilcharity and Instagram: s4il.co.uk

You can also enjoy looking back at what we got up to in 2022 in our latest Yearbook, which will be available shortly. Please contact marketing@s4il.co.uk or call 01568 616653, to ask for a copy of the Yearbook 2022. Back copies for previous years are also available on request.

We hope you've enjoyed reading about SIL in our quarterly newsletters, and look forward to welcoming you onboard later in the year for the email version.

Echo - Our 2023 Charity of the Year



Friends and supporters of SIL will know that each year the staff and trustees choose who they would like to support as their Charity of the Year. In recent years SIL has supported Megan Baker House, Yeleni Therapy & Support and Guide Dogs UK. This year we have chosen Echo, an independent, Herefordshire-based charity with 230 members and over 150 volunteers. Their main office is in Leominster, but they run projects in community based venues across the county.



Echo has been making a difference to the lives of people with moderate or severe learning disabilities for over 30 years. However, they will also try to support anyone with mental health difficulties and physical or sensory impairments, who wish to take part in their activities.

SIL chose Echo, because many of SIL's service users take part in activities run by them, and it is a charity that shares the same core values as SIL and a similar vision. Echo's vision is for "A society where all people with disabilities are heard, valued, respected and supported to make choices and flourish." We at SIL couldn't agree more.

SIL raises money for its chosen charity by holding raffles and events throughout the year, so please help us to raise money for Echo by coming along to our events, taking part in our Christmas on-line bingo, buying raffle tickets, or donating prizes.

In the meantime, Echo has a very special event taking place on Saturday, 27th May. The "Alien" Colour Fest, will be its second paint run, raising funds for the charity and celebrating some of the history and culture of Leominster.

This approx. 5K run will incorporate shorter and accessible routes so as many people as possible can take part. The run is preceded by a warm-up session from a stage, with keep fit professionals, plus DJ and music. VIPs will fire off paint canons on the crowd before they set off. All participants will be given sunglasses to protect their eyes, and merchandise items and paint sachets will be available to buy. Entry to the event costs £10 for an adult, £5 for a child and £25 for a family of four.



Winter with our Service Users

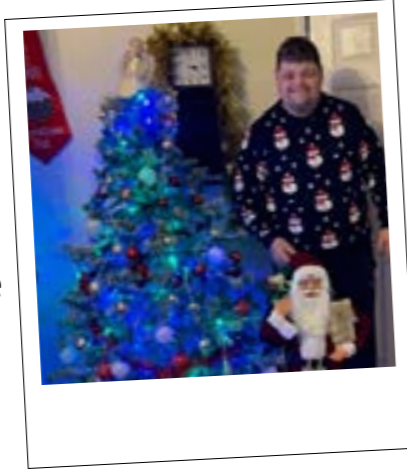


Many of our service users enjoyed the winter and of course the festive holiday. We are very grateful to them for allowing us to share their stories, and thank our hardworking support workers and team leaders for taking the snaps and sending them in.

Here is SIL service user Michelle enjoying carols and festive songs with Father Christmas. She loved being an elf for the day!



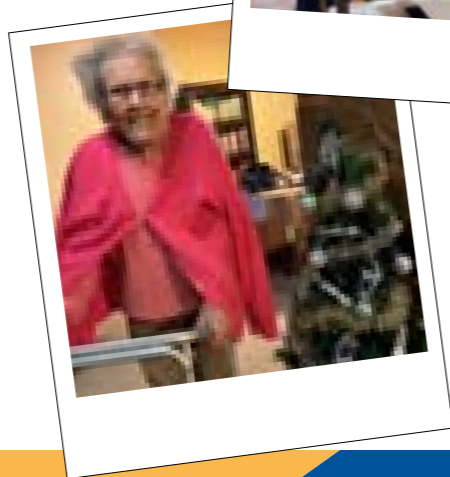
Santa visited SIL service user Ian too who, together with SIL team leader Donna, had decorated his house in the first week of December to be ready for the special day.



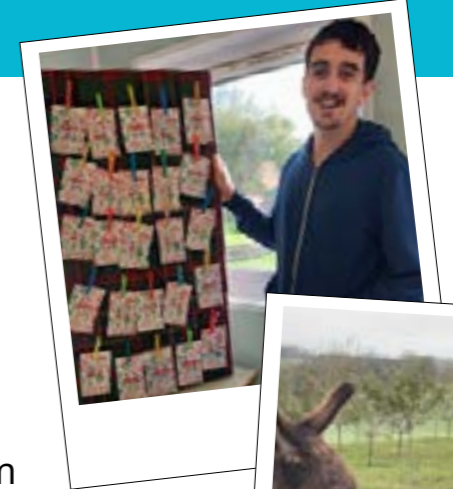
It wasn't only Christmas that SIL service user Ted was celebrating in December. He also marked his 95th birthday the week before Christmas.



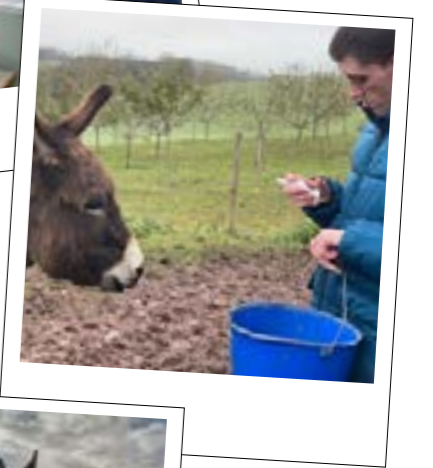
SIL service user Sheila was delighted with her new tree and decorations kindly donated and decked out by her support worker Chloe.



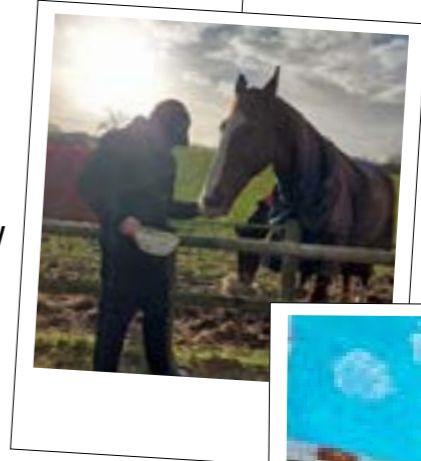
At the end of November SIL service user Josh made this lovely advent calendar filling each "day" with a gift.



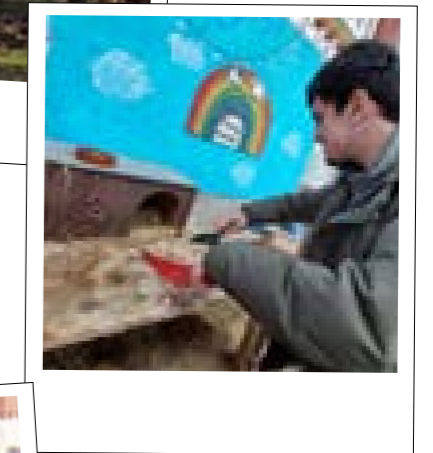
There's never a holiday on a working farm and SIL service user Kyle helped keep the animals happy by feeding the donkeys at the Houghton Project.



Meanwhile SIL service users lent a hand at the Avenbury Farm too. Here's Andrew feeding one of the horses.



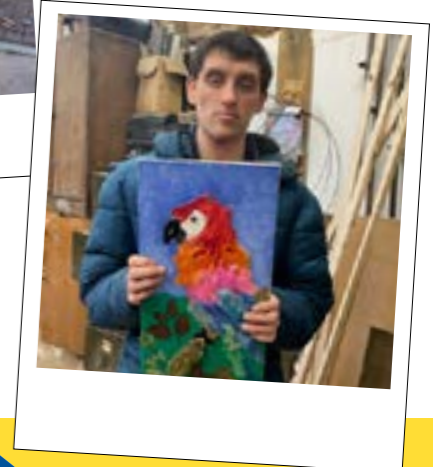
Small animals need attention too, so SIL service user Josh got busy cleaning out the animal hutches at Avenbury Farm.



SIL service user Sheila C was able to deliver gifts and cards in style when her new Motability car arrived just before Christmas - made the three year delay worth waiting for!



And if it's too cold outdoors, take a leaf out of Kyle's book and get creative! Here's Kyle showing off the amazing collage he made at the Houghton Project.



CoStar Community Events



If you live near to the Threepenny Bit, Deerbrook, Greenmeadow, Cwmbran, NP44 4SX, then you're very lucky as the CoStar Community centre, is playing host to a wonderful programme of events throughout the coming year. The first event is a special Easter Lunch on Wednesday 5th April (booking essential), followed by a once-in-a-lifetime event, the Coronation Party on Friday 5th May at 11.30am. An opportunity to meet the team behind the work is taking place on Saturday 9th September, when CoStar hosts an Open Day, while later in the month the team invites you to join them for the MacMillan Coffee Morning on Friday 29th September. Finally, the year is rounded off on Saturday 25th November with their Christmas Craft Fayre.



As well as organising these special celebratory events, the regular clubs and support given at both the Threepenny Bit and the Hwb, Fairwater Shops, are still continuing, including the Crafty Chatters which meet every Wednesday between 2pm – 3.30pm; the lunch club on Wednesdays and Thursdays; the Food Bag Scheme; and access to the Citizens Advice Bureau.

For more information about any of these events or the range of services provided by CoStar, call 01633 357244 or 01633 869227

Safe Haven



The Safe Haven Team at Heffernan House, Widemarsh Street, Hereford, is warm and welcoming, providing empathy, support, and safety to anyone experiencing high emotional distress and/or suicidal thoughts. As well as offering support, they will be able to refer and direct you to further services if you need them. Please call 01432 372407, or email: safehaven@herefordshire-mind.org.uk



on the day you are looking for help and they can arrange to support you when you arrive. Alternatively call in, although if they are busy, there may be a little delay before they can see you. They are open daily 5pm – 10pm, last admission 9pm.

Mills Mobility Aids



Many readers will recall that several years ago SIL worked with Mills Mobility Aids to ensure the continuation of a scooter hire service in Hereford. Six years later we are delighted to announce that Mills Mobility Aids is now a Motability Dealership, able to support people with disabilities to achieve greater independence, by giving them access to affordable, worry-free mobility. They are now able to supply mobility scooters and power wheelchairs in exchange for an individual's mobility allowance.



Not only this, but the scooter hire service is thriving, and Mills Mobility Aids offers scooters and power chairs for hire every day of the week from 9am – 4.45pm, a 24 hour hire service, as well as weekly and monthly hire schemes. Scooter hire starts from £5 per day and there is no need to become a member, simply ring up and book a scooter or power chair for the day/s it is required. All costs include full insurance.

The company also hires out beds, free standing hoists, commodes, ceiling track hoists and straight stairlifts.

For more information about Motability or to book a mobility scooter or other equipment, call: 01432 277000, email office@millsmobilityaids.co.uk or visit their showroom at Mills Mobility Aids Ltd, 8A Harrow Road, Hereford, HR4 0EH.

Any One for Badminton?



A new badminton group has been set up by SIL support worker Kieran, for anyone who would like to play badminton weekly. The group meets each Monday from 11am-12pm at Halo Leisure on Holmer Road, Hereford. It costs £2.50 a session which will be invoiced monthly. For more information call Kieran on 07376 727488.



Although the group isn't currently accessible to wheelchair users, Kieran is looking into how the group can be made fully accessible.

Herefordshire Walking Festival



Walks with the 2023 Herefordshire Walking Festival are now available to book online and this year, those wanting to join in can experience all corners of the



county. This year's long-distance trail celebrates one of Herefordshire's newest routes, the Golden Valley Pilgrim Way. There is a huge variety of other walks including: Duchy farmland, Orchards, Cider, Hops, Wildlife, River walks, Suffragettes, Slow Ways, History, City walks, Church visits, WW1 Memorial Walks, WW2 Secret crash site walks, and 20+ mile Challenges.

The Festival, which takes place between Saturday 17th – Sunday 25th June, includes a number of accessible routes and details of these and all other routes are available on the Festival website: www.herefordshirewalkingfestival.co.uk

Tickets can also be bought on this site. For further information please contact Liz Hill, on 01432 370514 or email: info@herefordshirewalkingfestival.co.uk

Birthday Gift for Ukrainian Families



The Black Hill Ukraine Group benefitted from two birthday presents earlier this year, when Dave Hughes, a service user and SIL trustee, and his dad held a party for their joint January birthdays. But thanks to their generosity this was a party with a difference.

Dave and his dad asked that guests, instead of bringing a gift, gave a donation to help the Ukrainian people. This unusual request didn't baffle partygoers as they know of the many kindnesses Dave has shown to local and national charities in the past. Instead, they dug deep in their purses and pockets and between them raised an amazing £800.

This was handed over to Sue Robinson from The Black Hill Ukraine group and will support families in the area with accommodation and any extras they may require.



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