

Connect

Residents' newsletter

December 2018



FEATURING:

Bye David...

World Mental Health Day 2018

Art is My Way Out...

Fulfilling My Dreams

St Martins
PARTNERS IN MENTAL HEALTH RECOVERY

Welcome



Welcome to your winter issue of Connect.

Look out for a Xmas special Connect newsletter which will be out soon. We will keep you up to date with all the activities happening across St Martins.

People celebrate Xmas for different reasons, especially in London as it so diverse. I am not Christian but I love the atmosphere on the high street and Xmas TV (Eastenders & football)! Whatever you are up to, have a nice holiday period.

In this issue we have inspiring stories of service users who have moved on and reached their goals. Take hope from this in your own journey that there is light at the end of the tunnel.

If you would like your story to be published or you have art work, poetry or anything creative, please get in touch with me.

Stay warm and enjoy the festive period. Hopefully I will see you around Xmas, if I get an invite (hint!!!)

Universal Credit Support

There has been so much information thrown around regarding Universal Credit.

St Martins is not in a position to give advice. However, we can point you in the right direction to find out information for yourselves.

- 1.** Universal credit is coming and it would be wise to find out more about it and put a little money aside, because the transition will be bumpy, especially the five weeks plus, between applying and receiving money, when you might not get any benefit at all.
- 2.** We advise people to search on the internet for 'universal credit, advance payments' to help with the above.
- 3.** This is one good source: <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/benefits/universal-credit/claiming/get-advance-payment/>

Best of luck in sorting your benefit situation.

Harpreet



Bye David... We are all jealous of your flat!

Congratulations David. Our football manager David Michael finally landed his dream move, just look at these pictures if you don't believe me! David tells his story...

After all the issues and setbacks with my local authority, I finally moved in to my own flat! On first viewing I knew I had to take it, it was that good. I am getting floating support from a company called 'Princes Lodge'. They helped me to organise what I needed. It is a two bedroom flat, so I have turned one into a study room. I am doing a home study University degree in Computing. The course involves computer programming, engineering robots in car factories and data programming. This is something I really enjoy and it suites me better to work at home. The University informed me I was entitled to DSA (Disability Study Allowance). They have given me all the hard and software I need.

Don't worry. You can't get rid of me that quickly! I will still manage the football team and continue with the weekly newsletter. St Martins are in the process of offering me a work contract. I will also be involved with helping the guys with gardening and jobs around Chalkhill Road. I will use my experience to help other residents. I will be delivering some inspirational talks!

Having your own flat really changes your life and the way you think. I am aware that full independence will be a challenge but I am up for that.

I live in Harrow, it seems like a nice area with good transport links. My family and friends are happy for me.

I had some good times at Chalkhill. Doing the barbeques in the summer, painting the fence!

My message to service users who are reading this is, don't give up, there is light at the end of the tunnel.

David worked hard at Chalkhill, he was the life and soul. We all wish him well and it is not goodbye as we will still see David out and about at our projects.

World Mental Health Day 2018

On the 10th of October, St Martins celebrated World Mental Health Day 2018. This year it was hosted by Bruce Grove (thank you for the hospitality guys).

The theme this year was: 'young people'. The whole country has raised this as a huge concern. We are in an age of great technology. We all have laptops and smart phones. There is Facebook, twitter etc. It is a great way to communicate with people around the world. However, it is having a detrimental effect on young people.

Bullies now have a way to abuse victims outside of school (called cyber bullying)! Young people are also under pressure to get the best grades. They are worried about how they look because their picture may go all over Instagram.



Suicide amongst young people in London is rising.

This year St Martins tried to raise awareness of Young people with mental ill health.

St Martins' CEO John Thompson opened the event this year with a speech. He spoke about all the positive changes that are happening at St Martins. How the company is evolving, for example, the Co-production project. Staff and Service users working side by side. The opening of Bruce Grove.

The opportunity was taken to present certificates to service users who have completed the Employment & Wellbeing courses run by Dawn Burlton. Congratulations to Philip, Richard and Elsdon.

Each project in turn presented a Charter from the Co-production work at their service. Thank you to all project managers who teamed up with a service user rep, true Co-production!

Thank you to Hamza, Ziggy and Harpreet for their inspirational speeches.

Entertainment was provided by Philip, he sang beautifully. Staff member Fraser played some fantastic melodies on his cello.

Thank you to Caroline (Caledonian) who voluntarily did some beauty therapy for all those in attendance. This was good practice for her career. And thank you Derek and David M who set up the FIFA games console.

Art is My Way Out...

By Hilal

In this issue of Connect I am very happy to say that Hilal has taken time out to share his life story and explain how art has helped him to find a way out and make sense of his life. It was a privilege to conduct this interview in Hilal's studio.

Hi, I'm Hilal. I was born in 1961 that makes me 57 years young! I was brought up in a family environment. I am a Catholic. I have two sisters and two brothers. I also have two daughters. I had problems with drugs when I was younger. I have been clean now for a very long time. People who see my work think that I must be on something!

I have been living here at Wilton Villas for 4 years. Before that I have stayed in hospitals.

I have a good routine here. I shower, cook, clean, go to the bank and evening time is when I do my art.

Originally I started as a poet. I wrote many pieces. I decided to become a painter and I never looked back. I have roughly done 3-4,000 paintings. My first exhibition was in a church in Ealing. My Dad, who is a journalist, advertised the exhibition in the local paper. I have been painting now between 25-30 years!

Painting is what keeps me happy. But I want to move on, preferably somewhere with a lot of space for me to work. My Care Co-ordinator is looking at somewhere in the Marylebone area which is very upmarket.

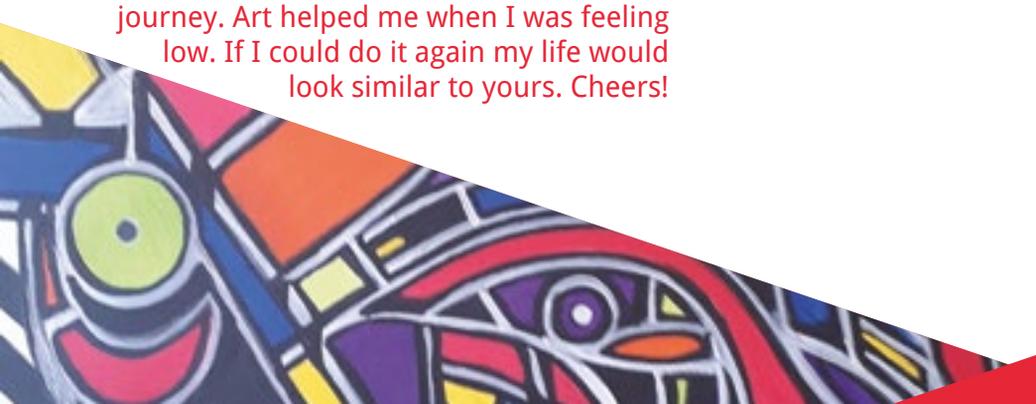
My work is very abstract. I would describe it as: 'Constructivist, progressive, purist and abstract'. Every painting must have no bleed, be cleanly executed.

If you look closely at my work you will see it has a religious element, symbolism.

St Martins have brought 7 of my paintings. My sister and brother are helping me to set up an online gallery for me to sell my work.

You can see more of my work on the online version of this issue of Connect. Cheerio!

Thank you Hilal. I am truly inspired by your journey. Art helped me when I was feeling low. If I could do it again my life would look similar to yours. Cheers!



Fulfilling My Dreams

By Caroline

This story is an example that it is possible to set our goals high and achieve them.

I met Caroline from Caledonian Road. Caroline is a very skilled beauty therapist. She has a boyfriend (and is set to marry soon!). She has a nice flat at Caledonian and will soon have her own place! This was how she described her story...

Hi all. Being in an Expert by Experience (NHS) role and a Beauty Therapy student has given me so much confidence. I am in a long term relationship. I feel blessed to have so much in my life. I have had to work really hard.

I started my Beauty Therapy level 1 in a college in Camden, which I passed! I then went on to study level 2 at City & Islington College in Finsbury Park. I also passed. For my level 3 & 4 Diploma I took a loan. This is equivalent to a university course! I have been committed to my study. I have maintained 100% attendance. I am so on top, I find it easy! As a part of my learning I visit many beauty exhibitions. My favourite part of the course was the Laser (anti-ageing machine) treatment on Level 4. I passed level 3 and am now on my final year. I have started to look for work and have interviews lined up.

I have also had the privilege to meet fashion designer Lisa Maffia. Lisa was also in the 'So Solid Crew'.

In addition to my studies I have a job at Chase Farm Hospital as an Expert by Experience. They have offered me a part time contract. There was a time when I was considering being a nurse, however I knew it would be too much.

I have loads of family and friends. We all go to the church.

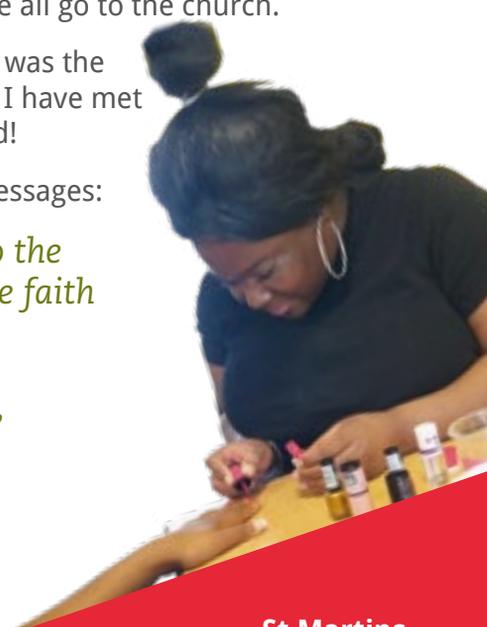
I met my boyfriend 9 years ago (that was the year Michael Jackson died), in a pub. I have met his family and we are getting married!

To anyone reading this I have two messages:

'Stay positive, set firm goals, do the best you can, put God first, have faith and believe.'

'If you want pampering, eyes, nails, I will give you a bargain!'

Thank you Caroline for your story. Can you do my eyebrows?!



St Martins

318-320 St Paul's Road,
London N1 2LF

T 020 7704 3820 F 020 7704 3832

www.stmartinoftours.org.uk

My Flat – My Story

After so many years, prison, hospital, St Martins, Maison Moti, It feels like I have finally reached my destination. I know most of my peers want a flat as well. However, I did not jump straight from hospital into a flat. I have been through a process of gaining independence step by step. Which now stands me in good stead to cope with independent living. My advice would be don't be in a rush and use the support around you. So far, I have realised that having a flat is a big responsibility. For example, making sure your bills are paid (good budgeting).

I now live in South Harrow. There is a company called Reliant Care who offered me this flat along with floating support from the staff. It is helpful to have some support, especially when you are making such a big move.

The flat actually feels like a house. It is a house, I live downstairs and somebody upstairs, it is called a maisonette.

Initially it did feel very weird (we can all become a bit institutionalised). The silence of living on your own in a way was a blessing! However, you do miss seeing people who live in the same place.

What are the best bits? THE DOUBLE BED!!! The bedroom is very nice. I have a lounge and the garden is also mine!

It is a pleasure coming home to your own place.



News desk

Co-Production at St Martins – UPDATE

Our November Co-production meeting at Head Office was a landmark. You only had to look around the table and see the skill mix of service users and staff. The dedication of all members spoke loudly of the importance of Co-production at St Martins. We have both current and ex residents of St Martins on the team. This can only mean a very bright future for St Martins as a service. A huge thank you to Vimala who has pioneered this project, placing control into our hands. Some people who were not sure which pathway they were on, now have an extra purpose to get up in the morning, to do something meaningful.

The team are currently working on delivering 'inspirational talks'. We are making links with various health care services. It is these services where our service users come from. So it is a good idea for us to tell them what to expect from St Martins and life in general in the community. This is our message:

"Take a chance on life in the community. We will help you cope with life in the community and if we can do it, so can you. It may seem like a dark tunnel but there is light at the end."

Training for this work will be offered to all members of the Co-production team who have expressed interest.

We are also working alongside Luke on welcoming techniques. The group identified a need for a better welcome to new residents. One thing that was discussed was a good welcome pack. Another idea was to appoint service users as buddies, to support residents on the initial transitional period.

Mini (project) Co-production: UPDATE

Co-production around the services has now entered its second stage. Project Charters were completed. We have all the ideas, now we need to plan how to put these ideas into action. Please, we need your continued support and dedication. These are exciting times at St Martins.

19th November 2018: International Men's Day



Thank you to Dawn Burlton, Dexter and Julian for displaying a wonderful stall for International Men's Day 2018. Am I alone in not knowing this existed?! We concentrated on Men's health issues, in particular 'prostate cancer', the rates were alarming. This event really increased our awareness on health issues.

Congratulations to Dexter and Julian. They both completed the Wellbeing course taught by Dawn Burlton. Well done guys!