

Spotlight

h a l o w p r o j e c t ' s m a g a z i n e



"Everything I do
with halow is
memorable."

Alex's halow journey



nurturing independence

supporting people with
learning disabilities and autism

WELCOME

DIRECTOR'S FOREWORD

Sharing incredible journeys



NEIL
WHEELER

I am delighted to bring you the latest edition of our Spotlight magazine, where we share stories of hope, progress, and inspiration from the adults we support.

It would be remiss of me not to mention Graham O'Connor, who left us in May, and his invaluable work over the last seven

years at **halow**. Graham built up Building Futures to the solid foundations to where it currently sits and will continue to grow and thrive today and in the future. As Director, Graham led **halow** through the challenges of Covid, supporting the team to adapt the way we provide our services to meet our communities needs during the difficult circumstances.

In this edition, we will showcase the incredible journeys of our **halow** adults and shed light on the impactful programmes and initiatives that have made a difference in their lives. Throughout these pages, you will read heartwarming accounts highlighting the resilience and determination exhibited by the extraordinary people we serve. We will introduce you to individuals who have overcome significant challenges, defying stereotypes and embracing their unique abilities. Their stories are testaments to the power of compassion, support, and the transformative impact of our work together.

We are grateful for your unwavering commitment, support and generosity, which enable us to continue providing vital services to those who need it most. Together, we are creating a brighter future.

As you delve into the pages of this magazine, I invite you to reflect on the profound impact we can collectively make on the lives of our **halow** community. Your continued support, whether through donations, volunteering, or spreading awareness, plays an integral role in shaping their futures.

Thank you for continuing to support us on this incredible journey.

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WHO ARE HALOW?

It all began with Harriet, Amber, Laura, Oliver and William. They each have a learning disability and together were the inspiration for our charity. Their initials together spell **halow**.

Their families were concerned about their prospects and that of people like them. In 2006, their parents got together and formed **halow**, with the aim to ensure every person with a learning disability and autism has the same life choices and chances as anyone. The people we work with want the opportunity to:

- Build relationships
- Become part of the community
- Find meaningful employment
- Have a home of their own



WE SUPPORT

235

people on their
journey to independence

ALEX'S HALOW JOURNEY

Alex has been supported by **halow** since he was 18. It has been wonderful to see him grow in confidence and support others. Alex is a very caring and friendly member of the **halow** community. He is always happy to help people.

Initially, Alex heard about **halow** through a friend at school. He decided to start participating in the bowling Social Activity which he really enjoyed. Bowling is still his favourite activity as it's a good way to meet up with old friends and make new ones. He also has lots of fun at the Aggie Discos – **"Aggie Disco was awesome."**

To continue developing his independence skills, Alex completed three years at Building Futures. He learnt how to work in a team and did travel training. This means Alex can confidently take the bus by himself. He also likes taking his dog Buddy for walks.

Cook and Grow has been a great place for Alex to continue developing skills and share them with others. He attended the programme for three years, building up his knowledge and self-assurance. He particularly enjoys the process of seeds transforming to a full-grown plant through nurture and care. **"After I finished Cook and Grow, I wanted to help other people who started halow and use my experiences. I wanted to volunteer for this reason. Helping everyone is something I enjoy doing."** Our A Reason To Get Up Co-ordinator saw how good Alex was at helping others, so thought volunteering on the project would be a fantastic opportunity for him. Alex has helped lots of people develop their cooking and gardening skills. He also enjoys working with the other volunteers.

Spending time with his girlfriend Laura is important to Alex. They met at sixth form but are both supported by **halow**. They have an excellent time going bowling and dancing at the Aggie Disco together. Recently, they had lots of fun at a trip to the theatre to see 'Kinky Boots'. He also cheered her across the finish line at the 2023 **Halow250** when she cycled the last mile – always wanting to show his support. Alex has previously cycled the last mile himself too, enjoying getting involved with **halow** events and fundraising.

Alex has done so many activities with **halow**, he said, **"Everything I do with halow is memorable."** His next goal is to move into supported living so he can live independently. He is looking forward to living with friends and doing his own chores and cooking. Alex already helps lots at home so we are sure he will be great at keeping on top of household tasks. We look forward to assisting Alex in this next step in his independence journey.



NEW WAYS TO MAKE FRIENDS

Social Activities offers meaningful activities which enable people to enjoy an active social life, make new friends, and become part of their community.

Meet and Greet

Social Activities has started a new regular activity to build social skills and create space for new friendships to develop.

The first **'Meet and Greet'** session started with an ice breaker game of **'Would You Rather'** and encouraged everyone to move towards their choice. This got everyone mixing with different people and seeing who has similar likes to themselves.

Everyone then got into two groups for a team challenge – **'Flip the Sheet'**. They all had to stand on a sheet and without stepping off it, flip it over so they were all standing on the other side. This provoked a lot of laughter but, more importantly, conversation between everyone.

The third activity was **'Fabulous Flags'**. Each person had to design a flag that highlights what is important to them. The group shared some to find out what people had in common with each other.

The final activity was another team challenge – to build a tall structure using only uncooked spaghetti and marshmallows. Each group enjoyed chatting about how the structures should look, what would strengthen them, and how they could work together.

Charlie said it was enjoyable and Matthew liked the venue. Alice enjoyed meeting new people.



Easter Activities

Social Activities had a great Easter break. They saw the fabulous Kinky Boots at South Hill Park in Bracknell and met the lovely cast after the show.

They also had an exciting day at the British Wildlife Centre. They saw lots of local wildlife and learnt about the animals living in Britain.

Both activities were a fantastic way to meet people with similar interests, enjoy new experiences, and most importantly, have lots of fun!



If you would like to learn more about Social Activities, please email activitybookings@halowproject.org.uk

WILL'S GROWING INDEPENDENCE

Will is a Cook and Grow graduate who is using the skills he learnt on the course at home. Will already had an interest in growing his own produce and cooking, so the A Reason To Get Up project, Cook and Grow, was a great way for him to learn to do this independently. After attending the programme for four and a half years, he felt confident enough to start growing his own fruit and vegetables at home.

Cook and Grow helped Will learn lots of skills. These include the best time of year to grow certain plants, food safety and hygiene, and ways to use different vegetables in cooking. With funding sourced by [halow](#), he was able to get his own raised trough to grow plants at his supported living house. It is really rewarding for him to be able to use these skills independently at home.

Will plans to grow lots with the help of his support worker Jill. Currently, he is growing onions, rocket, lettuce, courgettes, and peas, which are all coming on well. He hopes to use some of them to make a delicious meal for his dad's birthday. Will is a very keen chef and has come up with his own recipe for a tasty meal to cook, which we are sure his dad and family will really enjoy! Healthy eating is very important to Will, and everything he grows will help him to cook nutritious meals at home.

Jill has been a fantastic guide to Will and his gardening knowledge. They sometimes go to Wisley together to get inspiration for what to grow. The staff are helpful and always happy to answer Will's questions and give advice. Will particularly likes the new Hilltop area which has lots of different fruits and vegetables growing.

Next up, Will would like to share what he has grown with [halow](#) staff and his friends in other supported living houses. He thinks it would be a great idea to share his produce and teach them some tasty and nutritious meals they can cook. Will would also like to sell some of his vegetables and kindly donate the money to a charity. It has been great to see Will's confidence grow in the garden and kitchen, and we look forward to seeing his harvest.

A Reason To Get Up provides a whole programme of opportunities to make the most of people's interests. It supports them in learning new important life skills that can help them find a satisfying vocation.

halow is excited to offer a new 47-week life skills programme starting in the autumn. These weekly 2-3 hour sessions will focus around relevant life skills like: health; home skills; community involvement; relationships; safety; IT; organisation; and budgeting.



If you would like to find out more, please email referrals@halowproject.org.uk

#PERFECT10

The 10th and final Halow250 has raised monies and pledges totalling £200,295, plus Gift Aid of £22,280. This will provide vital funding for **halow** to continue providing exceptional person-centred care to people 16+ with learning disabilities and autism.

The Halow250 is an annual fundraising charity bike ride in aid of our charity. Organised by 2Boats Events, more than 125 riders cycled an impressive 250 miles from London to France and then back to Godalming. This year's event took place from Friday 28 to Sunday 30 April, ending in a finale celebration at Clock Barn Hall in Godalming. Welcomed by friends, family, and people supported by **halow**, cyclists enjoyed a glass of bubbly and delicious BBQ to celebrate. All the money raised goes to **halow**, with costs of the event met by a combination of rider fees and the generosity of the event sponsors.

Some of the people **halow** supports also got involved. A few cycled the final mile to cross the finish line with the other cyclists. Laura even joined her father Martin across the three days on a tandem bike! Building Futures and A Reason To Get Up took on their very own cycling challenge with the support of Wheels For All. The groups got together at Woking Sports Box with the aim of cycling 250 laps of the full-size track. They fantastically surpassed this goal and completed 537 laps! This is a total of 133.5 miles - over half the full Halow250 distance. So far, they have raised over £805!

Rachelle Barnett, **halow's** Head of Fundraising and Communications, said: "**Everyone at halow project is in awe of the determination of all the cyclists to cover the distance – in many cases year-on-year - and to raise these wonderful funds for our charity. We'd like to thank 2Boats Events for their immense contribution in time and energy over ten years to make this possible for halow. We feel so lucky to have been chosen and supported in this way by everyone involved, including the sponsors, the crew and everyone behind the scenes. Hats off also to the four cyclists who completed every one of the ten years, including our trustee Martin.**"



halow project is so grateful for the years of support provided by everyone taking part in the Halow250, the event organisers, and the sponsors. The epic cycling challenge has raised more than £1million for our charity over 10 years – a spectacular total which has and will continue to help so many people with learning disabilities and autism fulfil their independence goals. However, all good things must come to an end, and it is time to welcome a new fundraising cycle event. Keep an eye on **halow project's** website and social media for exciting announcements on how you can get involved in our next fundraising challenge.





CAITLIN'S TIME WITH BUILDING FUTURES



Building Futures is a full-time community-based learning programme. Our aim is to support our service users to build their own futures by nurturing their independence, continuing education, and providing social/work experience.

Building Futures focus on each individual person's goals and development as they grow through the programme. Sessions have an emphasis on developing shared short-term and long-term goals. Our encouragement of a person-centred approach to learning means they can pick topics each person wants to explore.



Caitlin, who has graduated from Year C this year, has shared what she gained from her time with Building Futures:

"Making friends in my area and progressing further into getting a job

were my initial reasons to join Building Futures. Over time I gained confidence from attending Building Futures Years B and C. I gained the desire to want to work towards living independently in my own place. This is a massive goal that is still a little daunting to think about, but I think I am up for the challenge.

Before I joined Building Futures, I didn't have many friends who lived locally. The start of Year A was odd, having to use Zoom to keep ourselves safe during lockdown. Once things settled down, I met the group face to face. It was strange wearing facemasks, but I was 100% fine with social distancing. We did fitness with Rupert, Person Centred Planning (PCP), work experience and more.

Over the next couple years, the two groups were mixed. This gave me the chance to interact with new people, though we often got to see the other group every other week for a joint session. I was a little concerned that the swapping of people within the two groups would make it difficult to make new friends and keep ones from previous groups. I found that in Year C we became more talkative and therefore it was easier to make friends, sharing our interests and hobbies with one another and furthermore becoming more independent from the halow staff.

In Year C, I feel more confident and ask my group for help, whereas in Year A I would ask the year leader. We ask each other how we are, what we've done at the weekend and some of us arrange to meet up during our days off. I am hoping to continue to meet up with my friends after Year C.

We do more work experience in Year C. This year, both groups helped at the Halow250 event; a celebration for

the riders and what they raised for halow before they were allowed to rest their legs! Before the big event, I was asked to design the logo for this year's Halow250. After that, we helped sort through the mountains of boxes containing the kit for the cyclists. At the 'welcome back' event for the Halow250 cyclists, we handed out medals, beer and champagne, and Anjali, Yeukai and I did a speech, something I never would have volunteered to do back in Year A. I feel as though the speech gave me a confidence boost, even making me think about planning another speech for the presentation evening of summer 2023.

With Building Futures coming to an end, I can reflect and see how much I have come along. I have successfully got a paid job at SOLD (Surrey Outdoor Learning Development) as a Casual Catering Assistant. Also, I have got the overground and underground trains, and a tram by myself for the first time to Nottingham with little to no support. I am looking into independent living, whether it is to start with supported living or if I could go straight to independent living and see where life takes me from there.

In my experience, the Building Futures programme has helped me not only improve my confidence with speaking to others, but also to push for what I want out of life, tugging the reins from my carers towards my own goals and interests. halow has really helped to give me a boost for my future. If anyone has the slightest thought about joining the programme, I could not recommend it more. Even if you start in Year A and decide it is not for you, Year B will give you more independence and you will only get more independence in Year C."



If you are interested in finding out more about Building Futures, please contact referrals@halowproject.org.uk

SUPPORTING DARREN'S INDEPENDENCE



Darren has been supported by **halow** for several years, actively engaging with Social Activities, A Reason To Get Up, and our Care Services. He is a friendly and welcoming person, described by support worker Ann-Marie as, **"Always jolly and good at seeing the bright side in life."**

Throughout his time with **halow**, Darren has made great improvements in his confidence and several achievements. When Ann-Marie started supporting Darren, his main goal was to start working in a paid role. Darren struggles with timekeeping, so it was important to find a role that offered flexible hours. They researched lots of jobs and prepared for interviews. As part of his preparation, Ann-Marie created flash cards and tried interview scenarios with Darren to help him manage any nervous feelings he may have. This all really helped him to feel more confident when he went to interviews.

Darren was working hard in his interviews, and being proactive in his job search. He even found a cleaning job advertisement by himself. He took the initiative to enquire about the role and it seemed a good fit. From previous knowledge with Cook and Grow, and through support from Ann-Marie, Darren gained some training certificates to prepare for the role, like COSHH training. Darren did very well in the interview and got the job! He has now been working there for three years. He started by having a support worker with him for six months but can now work independently.

halow support workers also help Darren with travel training. They work on planning routes and making sure he catches the train or bus on time. This means Darren can now travel independently to and from work, as well as other activities he may like to attend. He said, **"I like having support getting places."**

halow doesn't just support Darren at work. He often has a very full social calendar and does fun activities like swimming, crazy golf, and going to the cinema. Sometimes, he and Ann-Marie will sit in the coffee area of a nice hotel to research other activities they can attend. Darren likes to help others, so he has been recommending for friends who are interested to look at groups like Love4Life which helps people with learning disabilities and autism find friendship and dating opportunities.

Darren has also been developing his skills with adult education courses at Camberley Centre. He does creative upcycling and performing arts. This is a great way for Darren to explore his interest in the dramatic arts and have opportunities to perform and share his talent!

Darren would like **halow** to continue supporting him in improving his timekeeping. His next goal is to get another job, potentially in a retail shop where it's important he arrives on time. Darren has such a bright outlook on life and approaches everything with a positive attitude, so we are sure he will be able to make progress towards achieving this.

Independent Support Programme

The team at **halow** Care strongly believe that we should consistently provide support that offers opportunities, nurtures independence, and encourages adults to achieve things that give their life meaning, value, and enjoyment.

The Independent Support Programme runs for 10 weeks at a time, with 8 weeks of 'in the community' sessions. Goals for these sessions can include anything that can support independence and encourage the person to feel more confident in themselves and their abilities.



If you are interested in finding out more about The Independent Support Programme, please contact referrals@halowproject.org.uk

GOOD NEWS



The Damon Hill Festival of Karting

Thank you to everyone who joined us for the revamped Damon Hill Festival of Karting! It was a fantastic day, filled with fast-paced action, sporting stars, and inspiring entertainment. Also, a special thank you to the event sponsors, Gallagher and Premier Heating, as well as Silent Pool for providing a gin bar.

In its 10th year, the event offered the same adrenaline-packed racing experience, in conjunction with an enhanced track-side experience at Daytona Motorsport Sandown Park.

Racers and guests alike relaxed in the Pitstop Lounge, a trackside marquee where the 2.5 hour Le Mans-style endurance race could be viewed in comfort with delicious refreshments.

Stars and experts from the world of racing were in conversation on the Pitstop Lounge stage throughout the afternoon, including Johnny Herbert, the original 'Stig' Perry McCarthy, and Julien Simon-Chauteemps, former F1 engineer.

In addition, there were some very special vehicles on display, including a BRM P48, a Group C Silk Cut Jaguar, and the Nissan RC90K which took pole position at the 1990's Le Mans race in the expert hands of Mark Blundell.

The day concluded with an auction held by the renowned Bonhams | Cars, featuring lots including a racing suit from 9-times Grand Prix winner Mark Webber's last season, signed by the man himself. It was a great way to end a fun-filled day, and another opportunity to fundraise for **halow**.

Thank you to everyone who supported this exciting day of karting. Through funds raised on the day and the services donated by our event supporters to create a refreshed experience, **halow** has benefitted from £20,000, with further pledged donations incoming!



Taking a leap for halow

Huge congratulations and thank you to our brilliant abseil team for facing the heights of Guildford Cathedral and raising a brilliant £5,707 for **halow project**. It was great to team up with The Meath Epilepsy Charity for this fundraising challenge.

Some shared why they decided to take part:

"I am more than happy to support halow in any way I can - even by hurling myself off a tall building! I am so grateful and a little overwhelmed by all the encouragement (and laughter!) from my friends and family and for their very generous donations." Simonetta, **halow** parent and volunteer

"halow were a major reason for Aimee choosing to set up home in Guildford six years ago. She's taken up many learning opportunities during that time and really enjoys the social activities. She's also a volunteer helping with the Youth Group she used to attend! halow is an incredible charity and fundraising is my way of saying thank you. You make such a difference to their lives." Annette, **halow** parent

Thank you again everyone! If you'd like to take on a challenge for **halow**, please contact our fundraising team by emailing fundraising@halowproject.org.uk.

WHAT'S COMING UP FOR HALOW?



Dates for your diary

Saturday 16 September
Twilight Runway Challenge

Friday 17 November
Fire walk combined with Challengers and Cherry Trees

Thursday 30 November
halow Shines

Sunday 3 December
Winter Wonderwheels

Tuesday 12 December
halow Christmas Carol Concert

To find out more about our upcoming events please visit
halowproject.org.uk/fundraising-events



Damon Hill Golf Challenge

The Damon Hill Golf Challenge returns on Friday 8 September at the RAC Club in Epsom. It's a great team building day which gives you the opportunity to compete against our patron Damon Hill OBE. To register your interest, please contact fundraising@halowproject.org.uk



Build a charity partnership

If you are a business looking to partner with a well-respected charity who will ensure that you are fully involved with us and the people we support from the outset, then we would love to work with you.

halow has a professional and experienced fundraising team that has an in-depth knowledge of how to create a successful and mutually beneficial charity partnership.

A corporate partnership with **halow** can help raise awareness of your business and showcase your products and services whilst demonstrating your commitment to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace. Talk to us today so that we can create a partnership that is bespoke to your business needs and objectives.



If you would like to discover how we could work together, please contact corporatefundraising@halowproject.org.uk

VOLUNTEER FOR HALOW

halow wouldn't be able to do all that we do without the support of our wonderful volunteers. Your time and skills can make a huge difference to the lives of people with learning disabilities and autism.

From corporate volunteering days for businesses, to individual volunteering opportunities at events and activities, there is no shortage of rewarding ways you can help.

"One of the many reasons why I enjoy volunteering for halow is because you feel like you are really making a difference. It's an honour to help support people build up their confidence and independence."



To find out more, please contact
volunteering@halowproject.org.uk



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