

# OLOG'S

# HARVEST COLLECTION

*By Elnathan*

For this year's Harvest Festival OLOG have worked exceptionally hard and as a school, we have bought donations for our local Brent charity, Ashford Place. Every small donation makes a big difference and will do a lot to help many people in need. Every year our school community school try to bring supplies, food, and toiletries. We celebrate harvest to give thanks for the crops that have been harvested safely and all the good fruit and vegetable God has provided. All the food that we have donated will go to Ashford Place and help people less fortunate.



## Harvest Festival



### *What is Ashford Place?*

Well, Ashford place is an organisation that has been running since the 1980s. In 1983 a group of local people from St Agnes Church on Cricklewood Lane decided it was unacceptable of homelessness and started an organisation called Cricklewood Homeless Concern (CHC) The Group was given a building on Ashford Road by St Agnes church and people started to volunteer to work by their side. Later in 2003, they became a charity and the next year they bought the centre that is still here today. In September 2021, their Macmillan Wellbeing Hub space outside was developed. This space, which connects to the Side Door Café, is thoroughly enjoyed by locals, it is decorated with artwork from local resident Mitchel Ceney.



# DONATE

## *What does Ashford Place do?*

Ashford Place does many things, to begin with, they have helped 146 homeless people and supported these people to find housing. Also, they helped 90 people with difficult challenges e.g., benefits advice, financial and debt information, and access to NHS services. Additionally, on average up to 60 people received their meals each week in the first 9 months of the pandemic.



They have 145 active members of their Fit + Well programme. 4000 nutritious healthy lunches are served in their Community Café when Covid-19 rules were allowed. This will give them a positive attitude and support their mental health, encourage active lifestyles and learn how to benefit from nutritious food. They will help you to keep your home, a friendly place to eat, meet and chat and help and support when you need it and support when you need it



**Get Together This Winter**



## *What can we do to help?*

You have already helped by bringing your donations and if you could not there always be other opportunities. You may think your donation is small it makes a massive difference and were so lucky we have a community looking out for others. We have had the gold coin collection for Ashford Place too on the 9th of December which allows us to wear our own clothes and to raise money for a good cause! Also, you can donate on their website it is [www.ashfordplace.org.uk](http://www.ashfordplace.org.uk). Do not forget to be thankful for all the many things you have.





# HARVEST COLLECTION



We have also been lucky enough to be able to interview Renee Gallagher who accepted the donations from our Harvest Collection on behalf of Ashford Place. She is the finance and community service director. We asked her three questions! Read her answers below.

## *Why do you think donating at Ashford Place is so important?*

Ashford Place is a charity, and therefore like many charities we are dependent on the goodwill of the community to help us to deliver the variety of services we provide. Our daily café is supported by food donations and this ensures that many vulnerable people get a healthy meal every day. Donations of essential products such as office supplies and cleaning products are always welcome as this allows more of our budget to be spent on the assistance and advice services we can offer.

The smooth running of Ashford Place also benefits enormously from the team of volunteers who donate their time to help with fundraising, helping to run clubs, supporting and befriending vulnerable people, helping to serve meals in the café and generally always being available to socialise, chat, laugh and lend an ear to anyone who may be lonely, in crisis or in need of a friend.

## *Do you think people at Ashford Place support one another? How do they do this?*

The team at Ashford Place forms a very tight-knit community that works together to provide a very efficient and varied service to the local community. Our team of advisors liaise with each other to provide the best advice to clients whether it be with housing, applying for social benefits, mental health support or helping people to upgrade their skills. The staff meet every morning for 'prayers' where the day's agenda is discussed and advice can be shared on projects being worked upon. The Dementia Peer Support group and the Dementia café is a good examples of this support where people living with dementia and their carers meet every Tuesday for support, advice, friendship and encouragement.

One thing that brings us great pleasure is observing the many friendships that our service users have made through engaging in support and activities at Ashford Place.

## *Why have you chosen to work at Ashford Place?*

Job satisfaction is probably the foremost reason for my working at Ashford Place. Helping people to overcome the barriers they face to live to a decent life is of paramount importance to me. My job allows me to organise the team which provides the vulnerable with the support and advice which can enable them to improve their lives. Every day I realise I made the right choice in coming to work at Ashford Place as I can immediately see the impact of all we do in helping the local community.

