INVESTING IN THE FUTURE
News about our new facilities

PLUS
Adapted toys available all year round
The benefits of accessible holidays

On the road to independence
How your support is helping people with disabilities to live life to the full

Autumn/Winter 2017

Happening
Achieving goals for life

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Dear supporter,

I AM PROUD TO INTRODUCE MYSELF as the CEO of QEF. This role is a huge responsibility, but taking it on comes with the promise that I will continue to champion my predecessors’ and colleagues’ passion for enabling people of all ages with a disability to live independent and fulfilling lives. My whole career has been in healthcare, and knowing that I can make a difference bringing QEF’s values to life is incredible. These services are focused on empowering people with disabilities in every aspect of their lives, so that everyone can achieve their individual goals. Even after just a few months as CEO, it is clear that everyone involved with QEF – our staff, our volunteers, and our supporters, are passionate about making life better for people with disabilities. This makes QEF a unique and extraordinary organisation to work for, and I am committed to successfully delivering our vision for growth.

I would also like to share some very good news. QEF's Neuro Rehabilitation Service was recently inspected by the Care Quality Commission and received a rating of 'Good'. This matches an inspection for our Independent Living Service, which also received a rating of ‘Good’ earlier this year. Thank you to all our staff who work so hard to provide such care and support.

Our services rely on people like you, who help us provide life transforming support to the people who need it most. We would like to be able to count on you as part of this changing force, so I hope you enjoy this update on the difference you are helping to make.

Thank you for the vital part you play in helping to improve the lives of disabled children and adults.

Karen Deacon
CEO

“Our staff, our volunteers, our trustees and our supporters, are passionate about making life better for people with disabilities.”

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At QEF we work together to deliver caring and creative solutions for people with disabilities of all ages, enabling them to live life to the full.

QEF Happening
All aboard our accessible canal boat

Linda Dowdswell explains how the QEF Jubilee helps disabled people

Thanks to your support, the QEF Jubilee, a canal boat that’s modified to be as accessible as possible, is going to have some essential maintenance and refurbishment, to ensure it keeps on providing great holidays.

There’s no greater testimony to the benefits that a holiday on the canals in an accessible boat can bring, than the words of Linda Dowdeswell, who has enjoyed holidays on the QEF Jubilee with her family, the most recent in August this year.

Linda told us: “I need a hoist to transfer from my wheelchair. It’s difficult to find accommodation with a suitable hoist. We found out about the QEF canal boat by searching online and a ‘hoist-equipped boat’ popped up. I was slightly sceptical, but we got in touch to find out more, and it sounded good, so we gave it a go.”

Telling us about her condition, she said: “37 years ago I had tumours on my spine, which had to be removed in several operations. I now have to use a large, six wheeled chair, which gives me my independence. I walk the dog every day in it – and she comes with us on the canal boat holidays too! She loves it!”

Describing the QEF Jubilee’s special features, Linda explained: “The lifts are great, the ramps aren’t too steep, getting on and off the boat is not a problem. The bathroom is a bit tight, because I have a big wheelchair, but on boats you expect everything to be more compact. We get asked a lot of questions about the boat. People see me up on deck in my wheelchair and it speaks for itself that that’s what it’s for. “I look forward to these trips as I know that I’m safe there. Some types of accommodation don’t have the equipment we need, but the QEF boat works in every aspect!”

Linda’s enthusiasm for the world of canals is fuelled by one particular aspect: “We’re pub people” she said, “It’s so good to be able to just moor up and have an afternoon or evening in a lovely waterside pub!”

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Investing in the future for people with disabilities

A new home for MERU and QEF Mobility Services

The creation of a new specialist centre for acquired brain injury, the Care and Rehabilitation Centre (CRC) is very much at the heart of our plans for the future. We also plan to create a new campus, integrating our services for people with disabilities from across Surrey and south-west London.

Mobility Services will be based on the site, offering assessments for driving, wheelchairs and children’s mobility equipment. MERU’s workshop, currently in Epsom, which designs and makes specialist equipment will also join us on the site. We hope that the new campus will be a hub for people seeking expert advice and specialist therapies associated with their disability. We plan to fully complete the project in early 2019.

We see this development as fulfilling QEF’s goals to offer services for people with disabilities which support them in securing greater independence and real freedom to live their lives, use their abilities and fulfil their dreams. We have been working with board members, senior management, staff, volunteers and people with disabilities on forming a new strategy to bring about this significant change in the life of the charity.

“This is a milestone moment as there has never been any development on this scale before at QEF.”

Help us raise funds to equip the new Care and Rehabilitation Centre with the latest specialist equipment. Your support will enable us to develop new techniques to help people with complex needs as a result of a brain injury, maximising independence for every individual. Just visit www.qef.org.uk/buyabrick
A Royal visit
to Dorincourt

Her Royal Highness, the Princess Royal, came to QEF to see how we’re continuing the work her grandmother, the Queen Mother, began.

QEF Independent Living Services at Dorincourt, where young people with disabilities move towards increased independence, recently had a very special visitor when Her Royal Highness the Princess Royal dropped by.

The Princess Royal came to visit volunteer students on work placement and open a new technology centre called the ‘Infozone’, funded by our amazing supporters including the Spring Ladies Lunch Committee and the Ian Karten Charitable Trust.

She officially opened the new tech centre and surprised Dorincourt residents and staff with her knowledge of accessible equipment and technology.

This new high-tech centre will be a huge benefit to all our residents, who have a range of complex disabilities and needs. As everyone at Dorincourt is different, and has different preferences, they need a range of different ways to control and interact with computers and other technology. The new equipment at the Infozone means that we’re able to give them even more opportunities for learning, work, and fun.

This new technology includes an advanced system that tracks eye movements, so that someone who could not use their hands to type or control a mouse can now use the computer just by looking and moving their eyes around the screen. There is also a wide range of other accessible controllers, keyboards and touch screen monitors which will enable residents to get more from the technology.

The Princess Royal also took time to revisit some of QEF’s royal links by looking though the charity’s visitor’s book, which she had signed when she last visited in 1983.

“I was nervous to start with but I got better quickly. I communicated with her using my Mobi and she was interested in how it worked”

“Princess Anne asked me about technical things to do with the computer. She was very interested in all the different things that we do and she took time to understand me”
Frankie is at QEF’s Neuro Rehabilitation Services (NRS) in Banstead and being helped in her recovery from the effects of a serious illness that damaged her nervous system.

Thanks to the expertise of the NRS team and the equipment that your donations have helped to fund, she has improved substantially and will soon be moving into a flat and going back to college.

A lively 21 year old with keen interests in art, fashion, swimming and heavy metal music, Frankie contracted acute axonal Guillain–Barré syndrome, an auto-immune disorder with no known cause.

Her illness came on quickly with only stomach upsets as warning, but one Friday morning she woke up to excruciating pains in her feet. By Sunday she could barely walk, and couldn’t use her hands to pick anything up. Three days later she had lost the use of her arms and legs and couldn’t even sit up. She completely lost control of all muscles below her neck, and her voice became hoarse.

After stabilising, Frankie was left with a total paralysis from the neck down. Her prognosis was unknown, but recovery of most of the nerves was anticipated over the next 18 months. Doctors at East Surrey Hospital advised that Frankie should come to QEF Neuro Rehabilitation Services to progress her recovery.

Talking about her therapies and recovery programme Frankie said: “I enjoy the physio sessions, the staff are always friendly and work with me at my own speed. It’s good to have structure in the sessions. The art sessions are one of my favourite things. Ruth, the art teacher, gives me freedom to express myself.

Wonderful staff

“What’s helped me most is the time to explore things with people, and the encouragement I get from everyone. The staff are always wonderful and wanting to help everyone get better. They’ve supported me all the way. I really appreciate the night staff. Worries can be worse at night but there’s always someone ready to talk and help out.”

Frankie can now use her hands and arms, can stand, and with the help of the physios and specialist custom-made splints, is learning to walk again. Talking about what’s next, Frankie told us: “My health has really improved. I’m planning on moving into a flat, and relearning the cello and studying art. I’m looking forward to returning to swimming regularly as well.”

Frankie’s mum, Lesley added: “We are forever thankful and grateful to all the staff at QEF, they have been supportive, professional and very caring towards our whole family, and especially Frankie. This has been a very difficult journey for all of us, and without QEF we would be in a very different place. I don’t believe that Frankie would have been able to make the progress she has without you guys!”
“A personally courageous soldier who won the respect and admiration of his colleagues.”

Jon Beck spent ten years in the British Army, including a tour of duty in Afghanistan. It was while training as a tree surgeon under an army remit, that he fell and sustained serious head injuries. After several operations to relieve pressure on his brain, Jon came to QEF to begin his neuro rehabilitation with a tailored programme.

When Jon first arrived at NRS, he struggled to communicate, but he has put lots of hard work and effort into his therapy sessions and has made great progress in this area. He’s also using other communication methods, including an app on his iPad.

Initially, Jon could not swallow easily and could not eat normal food, but he is now able to eat regular meals at the centre and in his occupational therapy sessions he is working on preparing basic meals.

He has developed excellent driving skills using his new powered wheelchair, giving him further independence. Staff accompany him to visit local shops and cafés, and he is rather fond of a Guinness at the local pub. Jon also loves rugby and catches up regularly with his old army mates.

At QEF, we are very proud to be supporting Jon in his recovery and are happy to celebrate his successes with him.

QEF inspections

Recent Care Quality Commission inspections at both QEF’s Neuro Rehabilitation Service and Independent Living Services (ILS) have rated both as “Good” in every single area inspected.

The CQC ensures that health and social care services provide safe, effective, compassionate, high-quality care and they regularly inspect services such as ours. ILS at Dorincourt was rated as ‘Good’ in all areas in January, and the new inspection means that NRS follow this excellent trend too.

Comments in the new CQC report on NRS said:

“Staff and managers were passionate about their work.”

“Staff supported people in a caring and friendly way.”

“People were well cared for and positive relationships had been established between people and staff.”
Mobility Services volunteer and champion horsewoman

Linda spoke to us about her work as a QEF volunteer and her involvement with disability sports as a carriage driver.

“Any help with mobility really increases independence for disabled people, and a lot of people can now drive because of QEF!”

It involves doctors’ reports and recording information about the assessment outcomes.

Talking about her career as a champion horsewoman, Linda told us: “I first started riding in 1981 at the Diamond Centre just down the road from QEF, where they support disabled people to ride horses. I competed at the Horse of the Year Show where we performed to music. Sadly I had to stop riding as it became too painful, but instead took up carriage driving. This was championed as a sport for disabled people by Prince Philip and he was right, as I was soon able to compete in events and won the ‘private driving’ category at the Royal Windsor Horse Show, with a lovely horse, Maisie, who is a rare breed Suffolk Punch.”

Linda is a great supporter of QEF’s mobility work and added: “QEF does wonderful work. The Bugzi wheelchairs for children that MERU make are amazing too. They take to them so quickly and it’s wonderful to see. Any help with mobility really increases independence for disabled people, and a lot of people can now drive because of QEF!”
Part of the QEF family of charities, MERU specialise in working with children and adults with disabilities, to create bespoke items when nothing else exists to meet their specific needs. Your donations help fund their research and the development of these essential items.

They also offer innovative, ready-made products that provide solutions to common issues. Could one of these help you?

The Flexzi is an adjustable support system for gadgets like iPads and other tablets. You can find these and other highly useful products at www.meru.org.uk/shop.

Adapted Toys now on sale!
Toys with switches that are adapted for children with disabilities can be a great way to encourage interactive play. As there was such a huge demand for adapted toys last Christmas, we've decided to keep some adapted toys in stock all year round.

We've got some great toys on offer, including a singing Elsa from Frozen and the fun Fisher Price Beatbo! We're still able to adapt other toys too, so if you can think of something that a child you know would like, get in touch with us.

The toys we have on sale are adapted for use with a switch, but children will have different needs, so please contact us to discuss the most appropriate switch for the child you are buying for.

Bugzi news – Archie’s Ventilator

Thanks to your amazing support we’ve been able to build more Bugzi powered wheelchairs for children and thanks to your donations the engineers at MERU are able to modify them in amazing ways too.

Graham Race, project lead for the Bugzi Loan Scheme tells us: “I first met Archie when he was receiving intensive therapy after contracting a virus. He acquired significant disabilities including paralysis and now requires a ventilator to assist with breathing. Archie’s doctors and family wanted him to become more independently mobile, but given the equipment he uses and his age the options were limited. However, we were able to adapt a Bugzi to help. Tim, the Bugzi engineer, and I met with Archie, his family and the medical team and set about designing a solution for a Bugzi to safely hold his ventilator.

“We recently delivered Archie’s Bugzi and as he got to grips with it, thrilling his Mum and Dad, it was one of those moments where I felt incredibly proud to be part of the MERU team.”

To find out more about MERU products, adapted toys, or the Bugzi Loan Scheme, call 01372 725203 or visit www.meru.org.uk
Leaving a Legacy

The difference your will could make

Colin Langley, a longtime QEF supporter, talks about his decision to mention our charity in his will

Colin Langley has lived in Fetcham, near Leatherhead where QEF is based, for nearly 50 years. He is a strong supporter of our work to help people with disabilities achieve their goals for life and as a result chose to remember QEF in his will when he and his wife updated it recently.

Talking about this decision, Colin said: “I’m proud to be involved in lots of community projects. There are so many charities doing amazing work in the Leatherhead area. When my wife and I drew up our wills, we took the opportunity to think about how we would look after our loved ones in the event of our death, but also how we could use a small part of our assets to support others in need. The funding for many things that used to exist just isn’t there anymore, so we wanted to consider how we could put more into the community, so other people could benefit, and how we could do something to really help.”

Community passion

Colin has been closely involved in the local community for a long time and has a particular passion for the theatre, serving on the board of directors of Leatherhead’s theatre. Perhaps unexpectedly, it was a career working in marketing for Ford’s van and truck department that gave Colin a love of theatricality, as it often involved new vehicle launches taking place in the West End with superstars like Dame Shirley Bassey.

However, he tells us that his compassion for people with disabilities was heavily influenced by his mother’s work as a mental health service nurse. Colin recalls patients that she was working with occasionally visiting the family home to join them for meals and also helping out around the house and garden, as part of their supported transition back into the community. He said “this early experience very much stimulated my interest in helping people with disabilities.”

“The funding for many things that used to exist just isn’t there anymore, so we wanted to consider how we could put more into the community”

Colin added: “We knew that, yes, we needed to provide for our children, and we will be leaving a significant proportion to them, but we had the realisation that we were fortunate, and that after our children were provided for, we could help others too.”

If you would like to find out more about leaving a gift to QEF in your will please contact Hanne Widmer on 01372 841131 or email legacy@qef.org.uk

Thank you, Colin!
A relationship of trust

We understand the trust you have demonstrated by sharing your personal information with QEF. We respect your privacy and are committed to protecting it.

Your support is precious to us so we can continue to deliver caring and creative services and solutions to disabled children and adults. Developing a better understanding of our supporters allows us to make more appropriate requests for support. It ensures that the communications we have with you are targeted and timely, which in turn allows us to use our resources in the most cost-effective way. Ultimately, this helps us to reach our goal of supporting disabled people to live life to the full.

How do we use your information?
QEF may use your information to:

• mail, call or email you with updates and news related to our services, products or campaigns and what you’re helping us to achieve.
• contact you in the event of a necessary communication, either requested by you or initiated by QEF (for example, to confirm or check any details asked for).
• invite you to our events or communicate our campaigns, membership, fundraising and other activities.
• further our charitable aims.
• use in aggregate form (in a way that’s not personally identifiable) for analysis to help us improve our services and products.

We keep your details safe and we’ll never pass them to any third party for marketing purposes. To talk to us more about this or to change your preferences at any time please call us on 01372 841132 or email appeals@qef.org.uk with your name, address and details of your request.

A relationship of trust

Please help QEF achieve more goals

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Please keep me updated via email at: ____________________________

Please contact me by phone on: ____________________________

You can give by phone 01372 841132
e-mail appeals@qef.org.uk or online at www.qef.org.uk /donate
BIG THANKS TO YOU!

Every one of our supporters is important to us, as you all enable QEF to be there for the people who need our services. Here is just a small selection of the fantastic things our supporters have been up to. Your gifts of both time and money are very much appreciated – thank you!

St Christopher’s School and Martin Barrett from Totem Care Ltd

who jointly raised an incredible £11,123.92 to fund two new Bugzi’s and the refurbishment of a third, benefitting young children with disabilities. They were supported on the day by Chris Grayling, Secretary of State for Transport.

Prudential RideLondon 100

Well done to all our Prudential RideLondon -Surrey 100 participants, for completing the gruelling 100 mile route and raising vital funds in the process! Well done Team QEF!

Ladies Lunch

Dame Tanni Grey-Thompson was a fantastic speaker at our Spring Ladies Lunch. Thank you to everyone that supports our Ladies Lunch events.

Open gardens

Bevill Granville, a QEF Vice President, supported by others including Rod and Bindy Kent, organised an Open Garden event at Prosperous House in Hungerford raising a magnificent £31k towards our new Care and Rehabilitation Centre and Bugzi wheelchairs.

Guinness and Oyster luncheon 2017

A big thank you to Diageo, Nex and Oracle for committing to sponsor our ‘Guinness and Oyster’ event on 23 November 2017. For tickets please email Hayley.Mackin@qef.org.uk or call 01372 841130.

If you’d like to help support us, would like some ideas on how to fundraise for us, or would like to attend an event that we’re holding to support QEF, email sue.pressey@qef.org.uk, phone 01372 841223, or visit fundraising.qef.org.uk. Thank you to you all!

Call: 01372 841100 Visit: www.qef.org.uk