

July 2009

ARE YOU AN OUTSTANDING CENTRE?

For the first time, the Network Board have decided to acknowledge the outstanding work done in Karten Centres by presenting some awards. Now is the time to stop being modest, and celebrate your success and the success of your clients. There are three categories:

- The Centre with most innovative practice
- The Centre with most success in moving their clients to employment or more independent living
- The most outstanding client

More details of how to apply on page 8—make sure you don't miss the deadline

NEW CENTRES AGREED

It is always good to welcome new members to the Karten Network. Recently, the Trustees have agreed :

- Enterprise Printing Solutions at Treloar College, Hampshire, providing experience of a work environment for learners with learning disabilities
- A model office for David Lewis College, Cheshire, in a community venture
- IT training facilities for SWANS (Sometimes We All Need Support) in Maldon, Essex
- Treloar Direct, a mobile training and assessment vehicle
- IT training facilities for Elizabeth Fitzroy Support in Petersfield, Hampshire

More details in the next newsletter!



Jayne O'Neill at Beaumont College—see page 3

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CONFERENCE 2009: October 13th Edgbaston Cricket Club

The Conference this year is changing it's format: it is going to be bigger and better! Sadly this means that we have had to leave Queen Alexandra College, who have looked after us so well, but we need more space. But we're not moving far—just round the corner in Edgbaston. Unfortunately the test matches will have finished...

After the last conference you told us you wanted more opportunity to find out what other centres are doing, and time to network and visit the exhibition. So that is what we have done.

We will have a separate exhibition hall, where there will be at least 20 exhibitors of a wide range of equipment: assistive technology, furniture, sensory room equipment, support services, printing solutions, software suppliers. You should be able to get lots of ideas and discuss how to implement them. If there are any specific suppliers you would like to see there, please let me know and I'll do my best.

In the lecture theatre we will have workshops running. The topics are not yet finalised, but the sort of topics you mention to me when I visit include:

- policies for safe internet access, specifically with social networking
- creating sustainable social enterprises
- accessible qualifications and how to get funding

Again, let me know if there is a subject you would like including.

In the reception area we have lots of space. So I would like to invite you all to bring to the exhibition an A3 poster describing what your centre does (or send it to me in advance and I'll get it printed). Another opportunity to celebrate all the excellent work that goes on.

So the day will be much more flexible, and give you the choice of whether to spend more time at the exhibition or the workshops.

As usual, the conference is free to Karten Centres and people from your host organisations. Please invite anyone who you think would benefit: your clients who might like to look at all the equipment, OTs and Speech Therapists, Senior Managers: we will have space. Also please extend the invitation to anyone outside your organisation who might be interested: the cost to them is £25.

So **please let me know by email** the names of the people attending—before you go off on your holiday if possible, and make a start on that poster.

Get 13th October in your diary right now: the Karten Conference 09 will be here before we know it!

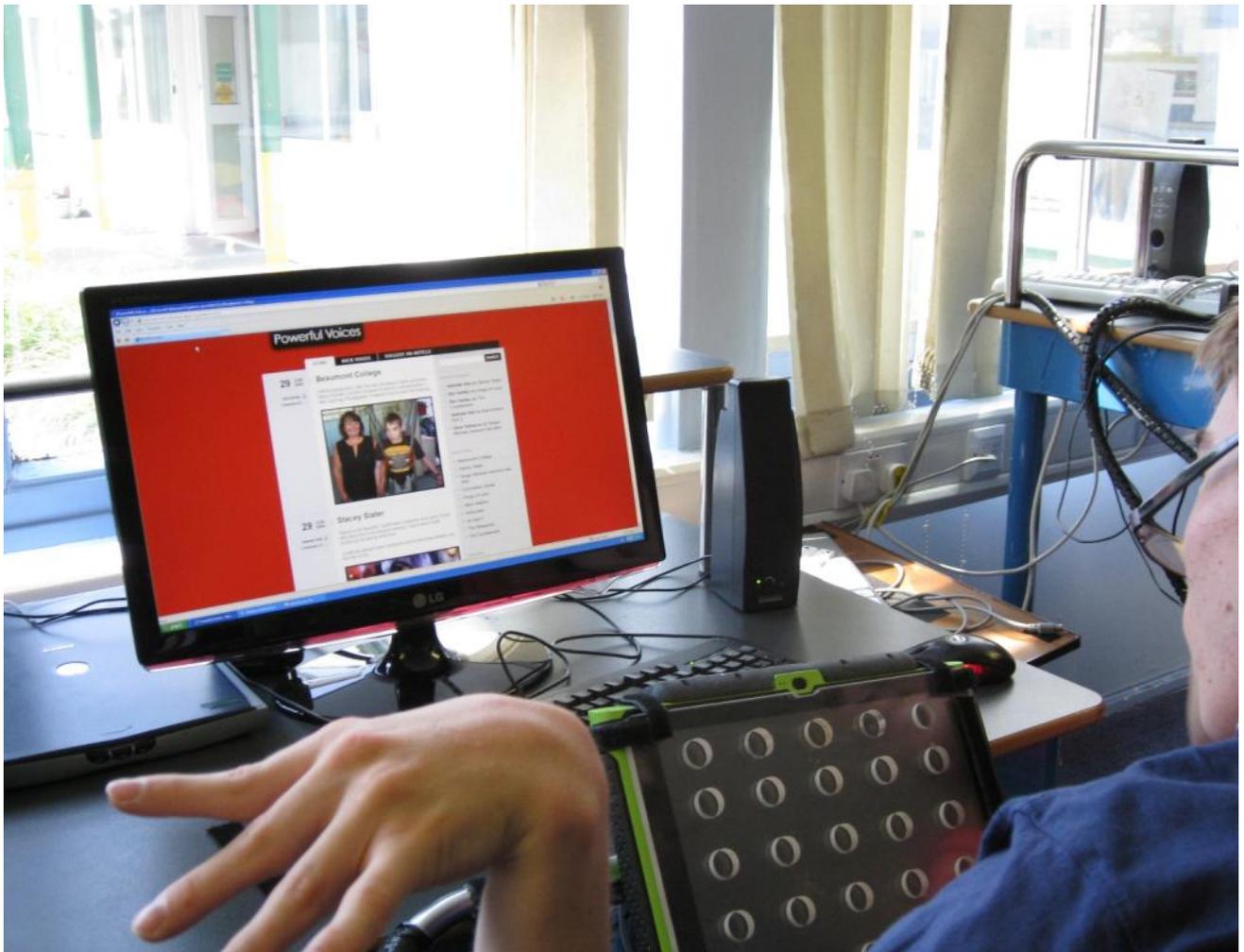
The 'rich web' and 'e-safety' do not have to be mutually exclusive

Beaumont College is a Scope operated Independent Specialist College in Lancaster. We provide LSC funded college placements for young people with Cerebral Palsy and other complex physical and/or learning difficulties and disabilities. Our Karten suite was setup in 2001 and really gave the e-maturity journey of Beaumont College a much needed 'shot in the arm'. The Karten suite has allowed us to develop a number of programs for our learners. One of these - The Powerful Voices group - is the reason I am writing this article for the Karten Network newsletter.

We have been looking at ways of giving our Learners access to what are commonly referred to as 'Web 2.0' technologies for some time. A number of our learners could be classed as being 'vulnerable adults' and as such we have a commensurate duty of care. We want our learners to have (as near as is feasible) the same access to technology as any other person. Part of this is about physical access, and this can in most cases be solved by the appropriate deployment of assistive hardware and software. Another factor, certainly when the internet is involved is e-safety. A great deal has been written about this area in application to mainstream schools. The approach we have taken with this is wholly based in our person centred planning approach.

We will take a request to use a rich web technology or service (such as Facebook) directly from a learner, their family, keyworker or other staff member. A member of the IT team who is experienced in the use of these technologies will then undertake a personalised risk assessment with the learner and their keyworker, tutor or both. We will then come to a consensus as to how the learner can best be supported to use such a service. This can range from independent access to some kind of supported access. In every case this will involve the creation of, or modification of (in the case of the learner having a pre-existing profile on such a service) the account in question so it is as 'tied down' as possible to prevent unwanted or dangerous contacts from strangers.

Another approach we have taken is to build a 'walled garden' blogging system. This is based on an internally hosted website that has been created using a customised open source blogging engine. The admin interface has been streamlined so that learners are able to blog and post directly so they do not have to go through a staff member. Access to this blog is not controlled within the college computer network, staff and learners can access it



Ben Hartley busy blogging using his Dynavox

freely, however all posts are stamped with the email address of the person who has blogged or commented on a blog post. We have the ability to securely publish this 'walled garden' blog onto in the internet via a Sonicwall SSL-VPN (Secure Sockets Layer - Virtual Private Network) appliance. This gives us the means to allow a Beaumont College learner or staff member to reach the blog from any web browser in the world. It also gives us the ability to allow a learner's family, friends or other stakeholders to have an account setup on our system. By this method we can allow a learner to enjoy the functionality of a rich web service and minimise the risk of inappropriate contacts or any sensitive information about a learner being disclosed to a third party - except where we specifically allow it by creating a secure account that can be used via the SSL-VPN appliance. We feel this is a good solution to this problem, additionally we have control of all the information as it remains in the college. In this way we do not put ourselves at the mercy of a commercial service provider who could (in theory at least), go bust at any time, start charging for a previously 'free' service or divulge our learners information to a third party - either on purpose (such as with advertising) or via an inadvertent security leak or hacking attack. In hosting the service ourselves we are taking responsibility for the service in a way we really can be responsible for.

More importantly our learners really enjoy using this blog. Additionally it has been very useful in embedding 'skills for life' in an activity that is both meaningful from a learning perspective and is genuinely fun.

We hope to continue developing services of this nature, and indeed intend to create an 'online' learner magazine to complement or possibly replace the paper editions of the 'Powerful Voices' magazine. This will be hosted on the college's website at <http://www.beaumontcollege.org>

For more information please contact Rohan Slaughter, Technology Manager, Beaumont College via email: slaughterr@beaumontcollege.org

THE NEW IMPROVED WEBSITE WILL SOON BE LIVE!

No-one is more embarrassed than me about the out of date state of our website. Some of you don't even get a mention, and details are no longer correct. However, all is about to change!

AbilityNet have been commissioned to redevelop the site, and it should go live at the end of July. Enhanced functionality includes a search function, a discussion facility, and a virtual learning environment (VLE). So you will be able to share learning objects, reviews of hardware and software, training materials—whatever you feel is of mutual benefit.

So if you haven't already done so, please respond to my email asking for an update of your details. Let me know if you want me to resend the request.

I'll send an email when we are live, and launch formally at the conference

ABILITY MAGAZINE

Have you seen the Ability Magazine? Members of the Karten Network can get a 10% reduction on subscriptions to Ability, the magazine about IT for disabled people. Ability aims to keep disabled IT users and those who work with them up-to-date on the latest technology, regulatory changes and supplier news. The magazine's features section contains valuable case studies, discussions of technical issues, product reviews and analysis of the latest trends in accessibility. For further information visit

www.abilitymagazine.org.uk (remember to deduct 10%) or contact John Lamb at john.lamb@abilitymagazine.org.uk.

Sailing Without Sight

Keith started a course at the Karten CTEC Centre at Cromford (part of the University of Derby) in September 2006; he wanted to update his skills not only on IT but also with the use of JAWS relating to Windows XP and Office 2003. Since that day he has completed a full New CLAIT Diploma.

Keith finds that the use of a computer allows him independence, allows him to compose articles, letters and read information. Keith is a very keen walker and also a keen sailor using Access 2.3 dinghies at the Swarkestone SC Sailability.

'The 14th June 2008 was a very big day for me, as when I rose in the morning I did not know that by the late afternoon, in the sailing world, I would become Sailability's Northern champion. Every one who was helped in to a boat was a winner on the day, but some one has to carry the trophy's, and do the polishing of the shield for twelve months, so that it returns in good shape for the next person to win.

Since that day, it has put my sailing in a different perspective, as I want to better myself, and because of this, I am taking more notice of the tuition that I am receiving. It goes with out saying, that none of this would be possible, if it was not for the volunteers who generally give up their time so that we, who are disabled, can enjoy the pleasures of sailing.

None of this would have been possible for me, if four years ago Peter Smith had not invited me to join the sailing club, which was run by the Derbyshire association for the blind. As most blind people know, after a day's sailing two years ago, that evening Peter had a massive heart attack, of which he never recovered. I hope by winning the championship it will be an accolade to him, and I am sure that he was looking down on us on the day.'

Keith's next challenge is climbing Ben Nevis: with his winning attitude I'm sure he'll succeed.

Congratulations and good luck from the Karten Network!



THE LADY WHO PAINTS THE WORLD AS SHE WOULD LIKE IT TO BE



Is there no end to the talents of the people attending Karten Centres? Lily Freeman, pictured above with one of her paintings, has recently had an exhibition of her work. Lily is an amazing lady, who says she feels as though she has lived six lifetimes in her life.

Lily was born in Vienna, and narrowly escaped death by fleeing to Holland in 1938, and to the UK in 1940. She married and had a daughter, and became a successful business woman. It wasn't until she was in her 40s that she began her art training. She still paints about 40 pictures a year.

Lily says 'I call my paintings happy because the landscape can open up a stillness that gives you a sort of inner peace and contentment. Obviously I want to inspire the same feeling in my viewer'. She has been told that she paints pictures that reflect this peace because this is how she wants the world to be. An amazing attitude, given the trauma of her young adulthood.

And just to prove that you are never too old to learn, Lily has recently started learning IT!

Lily attends the Karten Centre at Jewish Care, in London.

KARTEN CENTRE AWARDS

As I visit Karten Centres, I am always amazed at the incredible work that goes on. The commitment and enthusiasm of staff is stunning and much that happens is innovative. I hear stories of incredible achievements by your clients, who are always very welcoming. So the Karten Network Board would like to recognise your work, and that of your clients. The awards are:

- The centre with most innovative practice
- The centre most successful in moving clients to employment or improved independence
- The client with outstanding achievement

To apply send a one page application, stating which award, and detailing what it is makes your centre or client outstanding. For the centre awards, please also include a nomination statement by a significant person in your organisation. You are encouraged to include appendices with case studies giving examples of your achievements. Get the applications to Ceri by September 18th. So no hiding your light under a bushel—come shine in public!

The awards will be presented at the conference on 13th October. If you want more details, contact Ceri

BOARD MEMBERSHIP

The Karten Network Board are keen to broaden board membership, either with someone working in one of the Centres, or one of your clients. Do you have a client who would enjoy the experience of being on the Board? Contact Ceri for more details, for yourself or a client, including a person specification.

Need to contact us?

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