

Our School

Fortnightly News: 20th October 2023

Welcome to The Bridge SEN School Newsletter

As we approach the halfway point of this academic term, I want to take a moment to express my gratitude and appreciation to our dedicated staff, supportive parents, and eager learners. Your collective efforts and commitment have created a thriving environment for education and personal growth. This month, we celebrate Black History Month, a time to honour the achievements, contributions, and rich heritage of African Americans throughout history. It is an opportunity to recognize the importance of diversity and inclusivity in our school and beyond. Additionally, as we approach the end of October, we eagerly anticipate the festivities of Halloween. Halloween is a time for creativity, imagination, and fun and I encourage our learners to engage in this celebration as a form of sensory exploration. During this half term break, I encourage our staff, parents, and learners to take some time for rest and relaxation. Thank you for your continued support and dedication

-Edith Eneanya-Bonito – Principal



Educational

The learners have been engaged with lot of activities like shopping, bowling, painting, recognition and matching of numbers, letters and money management, phonics and lot more. A Breakfast club has been introduced to the learners allowing them to practice social skills. Our learners have shown improvement over the summer and our new students have adapted well: a fine community achievement. They have also been involved in seasonal events like Halloween and have started doing relevant crafts which serve as a sensory and creative exploration.

Black History Month 2023: The stories of 4 African-Americans on the Autism Spectrum

The achievements of five remarkable African-Americans with autism or autism spectrum disorder are celebrated during the black history month. These individuals defied challenges and broke barriers, becoming inspiring figures in their respective fields:

Tom Wiggins: Born a slave in 1848, Wiggins found solace in playing the piano. Despite his struggles with communication, he mastered complex concertos and performed at sold-out concerts. At the age of 11, he became the first African-American musician to perform at the White House.

Armani Williams: Diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder at age two, Williams pursued his passion for racing and became a NASCAR driver. By prominently displaying the autism puzzle on his cars, he raises awareness about autism in the NASCAR community.

Morénike Giwa-Onaiwu: An advocate for autism and HIV awareness, Giwa-Onaiwu co-edited "All the Weight of Our Dreams," an anthology featuring works by autistic people of colour. She promotes awareness and equity in areas including disability,

gender, race, and HIV.

Lamar Hardwick: Diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder at 36, Dr. Hardwick authored the bestselling book "I am Strong: The Life and Journey of an Autistic Pastor." He conducts workshops, consults with organizations to create autism-friendly environments, and mentors' individuals with autism.

These individuals' stories highlight their resilience, accomplishments, and contributions to society, emphasizing the importance of inclusion and acceptance for individuals with autism.

Source: Behavioural Innovations

To read more: [Here](#)

NEW SEN TEACHER

The school is happy to welcome Gavin Thomas as a new SEN Teacher for the school. Gavin has worked with special needs for several years and joined us half way through this first term. We are very happy to welcome him to the school.



Activities & Advice

Sensory Friendly Halloween Crafts

Halloween offers a chance for enjoyable activities, especially for children. It's an opportunity for hands-on experiences, such as arts and crafts and exploring pumpkin insides. These activities are sensory-friendly, beneficial for children with special needs, aiding in self-regulation and sensory reactions. Engaging in these activities fosters creativity, fun, and enhances cognitive and functional skills.

Paper Plate Spiders: Making paper plate spiders is a simple craft that utilizes fine motor skills and creativity. You can use these adorable and spooky creatures to decorate your home, both inside and outside.

Toilet Paper Roll Crafts: Also simple, and making use of many items you likely already have, toilet paper roll crafts are a great way to improve your child's motor skills while encouraging creativity.

Pumpkin Finger Painting: A safe, easy and versatile alternative to jack-o'-lantern carving, pumpkin finger painting is a way for your little ones to get involved in your pumpkin-themed decorations this year. While getting their hands dirty and making a bit of a parent-sanctioned mess, they'll be experimenting with different touch sensations and enhancing their motor skills.

Pumpkin and Ghost Stress Balls: Not only are these stress balls fun to make and decorate during Halloween, but they can also be useful throughout the entire year. Stress balls serve as both good sensory objects and a method for calming oneself down. Consider taking this time to talk to your child about coping with anxiety-provoking situations.

To read more: [Here](#)

Source: American Autism Association.



A New feature, where we examine fictional representations of autistic people.

Billy Craston (The Blue Power Ranger)



One of a group of teenaged costumed superheroes, Billy Craston was the 'Blue Ranger'. Often considered the brains of the Power Rangers, Billy Craston the alter ego of the Ranger was played by David Yost and then Later by RJ Cyler.

David Yost's portrayal was of the archetypical "geek" while RJ Cyler's declares outright that they are on the spectrum in the 2017 movie. In the movie Billy's autism was portrayed as an asset, not a liability. His meticulous attention to details and obsessive interest in scientific phenomena, proved not only useful but crucial. Another common misconception about autistic people is that they lack empathy. However, Billy's character showed that once he had understood the emotions of his friends he responded more empathetically and actually, helped his companions form emotional bonds with one another. However, you feel about the Power Ranger franchise, this is a refreshing and largely accurate portrayal of autism in a mainstream movie.

Tom Aspinall: Talks about his son's Autism Diagnosis

UFC heavyweight contender Tom Aspinall's son was diagnosed with autism at the age of three. Initially in denial, Aspinall pushed for a diagnosis after observing his son's developmental challenges during the UK lockdown in 2021. His son exhibited typical autism symptoms, such as difficulty with communication and understanding social cues. Aspinall, now an advocate for autism awareness, emphasizes the importance of understanding and acceptance for autistic individuals and their families. He shares his son's progress, noting improvements in communication through non-verbal methods like using pictures to express desires. Aspinall believes raising awareness can empower parents and make public interactions easier for autistic children.

To read more: [Here](#)

Source: BBC News.

Our Activities Centre

The learners have been engaged in so many sensory activities including bus ride, bowling, museum, cycling and park. They were also involved with indoors activities like cooking, art & craft especially for Halloween and yoga activities. The learners are enjoying the activities being carried out in the activity centre. -Activity Co-ordinator-

The Bridge SEN School admits students all through the academic year between the ages of 14-25. If you are interested in placing a student at the school or obtaining more information, please contact admin@thebridge-school.co.uk or Tel: 02077038587

THE BRIDGE ACADEMIC CALENDAR

EDUCATION

- Half Term: 23rd – 27th October 2023
- End of Term: 20th December 2023

Please visit our website: www.thebridge-school.co.uk for full Academic Year 2023/2024 Calendar)

ACTIVITY CENTRE

Our activity centre in Thornton Heath is open throughout the year, Except on Bank Holidays.

COVID 19

We are in regular contact with the local authorities to ensure that we react appropriately and in a timely fashion to any development. We observe the most up-to-date rules concerning COVID 19.

- Weekly tests are carried out on learners and staff
 - Social Distancing measures are in place
 - Regularly handwashing is mandatory
 - NHS Track and Trace QR Code are signposted around the school.
 - Face masks are worn throughout classes
- Our Full Policy is available on our website**

Drawings/Pictures of the month



OPENING TIMES AT LIRAL VEGET COLLEGE LONDON

Liral Veget College Limited is the sister company of Right Support Management, under which The Bridge SEN School is now operating. We offer a variety of **English language courses, After School Club** and **Life in the UK Preparation classes**. Our current opening times are 8.30am – 18.00pm Monday to Friday and 10.00am - 14.00pm on Saturdays.
Academic Manager - James Nuttall.

QUOTE OF THE FORTNIGHT

"Education's purpose is to replace an empty mind with an open one."

—Malcolm Forbes, Entrepreneur and Politician