



Sydenham Garden

A growing community

Sydenham Garden is an award-winning local charity that aims to transform lives through therapeutic activities. We deliver a range of events and opportunities for the local community, but our service focuses on Lewisham and Bromley residents experiencing mental ill health or other significant illness, enabling them to improve their quality of life, social interaction and physical and mental health in a supportive community environment.

Sydenham Garden Wins Volunteering Award

We are delighted to have been awarded **first prize** in the 'organisations' category of the **Make A Difference Awards** for our work with volunteers in Lewisham.

Claudia, our volunteer co-ordinator, and Jennie our Chief Executive accepted the award from Lewisham Councillor Joan Millbank, Cabinet Member for the Third Sector, at a ceremony in June. The expert judging panel were very impressed with the level of support we provide

volunteers with, in particular our volunteer handbook that makes roles and responsibilities clear. Our volunteers receive supervision and benefit from relevant training courses. Thanks to an Access to Volunteering grant we now also provide specialist adapted tools, an accessible computer workstation, and a hearing loop for volunteers with disabilities.

We are always looking for new volunteers to support our work.

Dates for your Diary

3rd September

Community Volunteering Day

10am - 2pm at De Frene allotment site beside 35 De Frene Road, SE26 4AB

24th September

Autumn Fair

11am - 3pm at Sydenham Garden. Plants, crafts, produce, refreshments, raffle and so much more

5th November

Community Day

De Frene allotment site. Bonfire, BBQ and official opening of 'Bug City'. Time tbc

See www.sydenhamgarden.org.uk for more info and other activities and events.

Take a look at the volunteering page on our website to find out how you can get involved.



Co-workers' art goes on display to the public

Art & Craft co-workers took confident steps forward in July, when their work went on display to the public during Sydenham Arts Trail.

Over 100 people came to Sydenham Garden to enjoy beautiful work from both Art & Craft sessions, through which many participants put their inner most thoughts on show.

This photograph was one of many pieces on display that emerged from a 6 week exploration of photography by Wednesday afternoon co-workers. They kept



photo diaries and produced photographic work exploring their environment, identity and the nature of change, providing a way

of giving a voice to the often unobtainable.

The group have been exploring the therapeutic uses of the arts by familiarising themselves with one medium over several weeks. Co-workers began with drawing and progressed to abstract landscape painting, photography and finally expressed themselves in three dimensions through sculpture. Each term concluded with contributions from a visiting artist working in the field, creating space for sharing and discussing ideas.

Daniela Fleckenstein

Latest at Art & Craft



Many of you will have attended our Friends Tea Party and seen our Art Exhibition which displayed wonderful examples of the range of art experienced here at Sydenham Garden - from photographs, paintings and prints to mosaics, batik and felt.

Our mosaic course was a great success, with co-workers, friends and volunteers enjoying the opportunity to learn new skills and gain a qualification, as well as producing really beautiful and varied mosaic pieces.

Many thanks to all of you who have recently donated items for the art and craft group. We are now starting to get ready for the Autumn Fair - if you would like to donate raffle prizes, unwanted gifts, nearly new items or home-made cake for us to sell please bring them to the office during the week beginning 19th September. Thank you!

Sarah Sikorski - Art and Craft Session Leader

Co-worker Profile

John has been coming to Sydenham Garden for the past 12 months and has been attending Wednesday morning's garden session. He has been looking after his own garden for 40 years and has a great deal of knowledge and experience in horticulture, so was very



pleased to hear about Sydenham Garden.

He says he very much appreciates the company, conversation and friendship he has found at Sydenham Garden and enjoys having a laugh and a joke with his peers. John enjoys the variety of jobs available in sessions and also feels a sense of purpose through helping and supporting his fellow

co-workers who don't have as much gardening experience as he does.

Down at the Allotment

The past few months have seen much activity on the De Frene allotment site with groups of co-workers and volunteers (corporate, community and those from external organisations) helping us transform the site.

We have a regular Thursday afternoon 'Focus Fit' group based on the site who have been working hard to make it productive, growing salad leaves, beans and caring for the fruit trees and bushes.



On the first Saturday in each month we have had well attended Community Workdays where volunteers have participated in a variety of activities from scrub clearance and fruit tree pruning to watering and weeding the raised beds.

Community Payback have been working extremely hard each week, clearing scrub at the top of the site, digging out concrete and removing broken fences in preparation for new ones.

We also held a corporate challenge day on June 17th with a visit from 15 staff from The Discovery Channel who built a dead hedge around a large part of recently cleared ground. This new area will become our 'bug city', full of insect houses and habitats that we will create at our Community Workdays and during therapeutic sessions.

Catherine Winsor - Garden & Services Manager

John has also made the most of the opportunity to complete an Open College Network accredited course in Practical Organic Gardening while he has been at Sydenham Garden, which he is very proud of!

John is planning to join a computer course at Lewisham College when he leaves Sydenham Garden but is keen to come back and give his time as a volunteer.

Katie Hooper - Outreach and Development Worker

Use your skills for Sydenham Garden

Throughout the spring and summer our Friends have been demonstrating their creativity by organising fantastic events in aid of Sydenham Garden. Between them they have already raised over £2500 this year, providing crucial funds to support people experiencing mental ill health at a time when local need is increasing. Could you do something to support Sydenham Garden? From plant sales and coffee mornings to choir concerts and sponsored walks, fundraising for Sydenham Garden is a great way to put your skills and passions to good use. **Read on for inspiration...**

Sell your wares

Bake cakes, grow plants, knit or clear out your bookshelves. Every year co-workers and volunteers make beautiful crafts and delicious treats to raise cash at our fairs. Why not go a step further and put on your own sale? Office volunteer Sue organised a plant sale and persuaded some friends to sell other homemade goods including cakes and jewellery on behalf of Sydenham Garden. By promoting it locally, they drew a huge crowd and made over £1000. Is there an upcoming event at your local club or group where you could sell for Sydenham Garden?

Put on a concert

Beckenham Ladies Choir and The Elm Singers both put on beautiful choral concerts in aid of Sydenham Garden, with short talks in the interludes and delicious cakes for sale. Why not ask your band or choir to donate proceeds from their next concert to Sydenham Garden? We can provide someone to speak along with information displays and flyers about our work.

Get sponsored

Doing a sponsored activity allows you take part in a challenge you've always wanted to try while raising money for charity. You might fancy taking part in a sponsored walk or run but there are many other activities you could try too, from travelling the country on your free local bus pass to sponsored silences and skydives. We can provide you with a sponsorship form or you can ask people to donate online very simply through www.virginmoneygiving.com.

Contact Fiona in the office (fiona@sydenhamgarden.org.uk) if you would like to put on a fundraising event and would like support in making it happen!



Message from our Chair

Dear Friends,

An organisation like Sydenham Garden needs all sorts of talents to make it tick, and one very important skill is fundraising. But is it really only one skill? While I have written applications to charitable trusts, I know i'm very bad at selling raffle tickets and certainly not an accomplished baker of cakes - both examples of the skills needed to raise money for our work. In

this issue Fiona, our Fundraising and Enterprise Assistant, mentions some of the ways in which people have already made a big contribution to our work by raising money.

If you have any new ideas or want to organise a tried and tested fundraiser with our support we would be delighted to hear from you. I hope you all have a good summer and look forward to seeing many of you at our Autumn Fair on 24th September.

Dr Jim Sikorski - Chair of Trustees

Breaking news...

Research shows Sydenham Garden's impact on lives

Between 2007 and 2009 an evaluation took place of the experiences of Sydenham Garden co-workers. The results provide a detailed picture of the multiple ways in which co-workers benefit from their time at Sydenham garden.

> After 6 months at Sydenham Garden co-workers demonstrated significant reductions in distress, dropping from clinical to 'normal' levels.

> Co-workers described improvements in well-being as a result of participating in purposeful and enjoyable activities, which 'improved mood and self perceptions and provided an escape from life's pressures'.

> The welcoming, community atmosphere was identified by all co-workers as the thing they liked best about Sydenham Garden

Take a look at the executive summary enclosed for a further insight into the evaluation's findings, or download the full report from our website.



New funders...

A special thank you to:

Garfield Weston Foundation, London Catalyst and 29th May Trust - grants towards core costs and increasing the number of co-workers we support.

The Drapers Charitable Fund - grant to fund our Therapeutic Gardening worker.

FreeSport (GLA) - grant to fund sporting activities for those experiencing mental ill health.

D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust - grant to support our therapeutic Art & Craft work

Join our community choir! More information can be found on the flyer enclosed and on our website. Visit www.sydenhamgarden.org.uk/news-events

In the Garden

After a very dry and warm spring followed by a wet May all sorts of strange things have happened in the garden. Some crops like tomatoes are shooting ahead while other crops such as lettuce are only now beginning to catch up. The slugs have now arrived with vengeance after an absence in April, so we have been trying to protect our tender seedlings with a barrier of gravel and a keen eye.



The vegetable garden is following a crop rotation plan laid out by co-workers who attended an organic gardening course. This method of planting has promoted a greater understanding of the vegetable families and aims to reduce problems with pests and good soil management for the future. In keeping with our organic gardening principles we have been using companion planting - nasturtiums and marigolds are helping with pest control, while planting onions and carrots together is warding off carrot root fly. In the spirit of recycling we are making use of unusual containers for planting, for example a wicker carrycot filled with sunflowers and old drainage pipes for the straightest carrots ever!

The pond has had a revamp and, with expert advice from Pond Life, native plants wrapped in hessian sacks have been added to provide habitats for pond wildlife.

Claudia Sartori - Therapeutic Garden Worker

Contact us

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