

Sussex Avenue celebrates 30 years of supported housing success

September 2023

A supported housing service in Canterbury celebrated its 30th anniversary with a formal open day to mark the occasion.



The Sanctuary Supported Living's Sussex Avenue has been transforming the lives of people with profound and multiple learning disabilities, physical disabilities and mental health for three decades, by providing CQC-registered care and supporting residents to improve their wellbeing and quality of life.

Sussex Avenue was first inspired and facilitated by the charity ACORN, and the charity's founders Paul and Jenny Blake attended the anniversary celebration with their son Gavin, who was Sussex Avenue's very first resident back in 1993.

They joined staff, residents, family, and friends, who were in high spirits as they gathered to celebrate the milestone anniversary with a buffet spread and tree-planting ceremony.

There was also a drum display, thanks to support from the local Royal British Legion, who had traced ex-soldiers and original fundraisers, Carl Ferber and Alan Mitch, so they could attend the event.

Also enjoying the occasion were Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Kent, Kate Fenwick, and the Lord Mayor of Canterbury, Cllr Jean Butcher, who both planted commemorative trees, along with the Bishop of Dover, Rose Hudson-Wilkin, The Lady Mayoress, Di Baldock, and Sanctuary Supported Living's Head of Service, Jane Knights.

As other members of the community rallied to support the occasion, local businesses were keen to contribute and donate - including high street pizzeria, Franco Manca, music and entertainment retailer, HMV, and independent bakery, Moons Cakes and Bakes.

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Thanks to the support from the local community, the service raised over £450 for future activities and events.

Jane Knights said: "Sussex Avenue's longevity is a testament to the team, who share a commitment to providing an exceptional care and support service, as well as the residents who have made it their home.

"Our Local Service Manager, Alex, leads by example to put residents first and make sure that everyday life is as happy and fulfilling as possible. Thank you to Alex and her team for organising such a wonderful occasion that truly highlights the vital role supported housing has in society."

Alex Mephram, Local Service Manager, added: "We were delighted to join with our partners at ACORN to mark this significant milestone for Sussex Avenue.

"The fact we were able to celebrate with residents and staff who have been part of life at Sussex Avenue for 30 years underlines the strength of the community created here as we support people to live purposeful lives on their pathways for independence. We were delighted to welcome everyone to our celebration, and I'd like to thank my terrific team and all who supported us to make the day a huge success."

Earlier this year, staff at Sussex Avenue were thrilled to triumph at the National Housing with Care Awards in The Care Team Award category.

Describing the team, the judges commented: "They demonstrated a real passion and dedication to care that was palpable. They work around the principles of a truly person-centred practice and are outstanding at what they do."