

'Growing People'

'Growing People' was set up in 2006 to improve the lives of people with support needs in North Herts and Stevenage by providing horticultural therapy services.

Initially focusing on people with mental health issues and acquired brain injury, we are keen to expand our provision either through setting up new projects ourselves or by working with other local organisations – such as in this case.

We are grateful to our existing volunteers and are always looking for more help. A CRB check will be required. Please contact John Cliff for more information.

Triangle Community Garden

The Triangle Garden is a community garden set up by people who enjoy learning about growing and how nature works, and who want to bring the community together. There are informal gardening sessions every Friday afternoon when the Garden is tended and cared for by members of the community – everyone is welcome.

New features are created planted or built by volunteers at our monthly weekend activity mornings. New volunteers are always welcome: the more help we have, the more we can achieve and the more friendships are made.

For more information please visit www.trianglegarden.org

Staff

John Cliff has been managing horticultural therapy projects since 2001, working mainly with the national charity Thrive at their London Gardens.

He is a qualified horticulturalist, has a Diploma in Social and Therapeutic Horticulture and is now working independently as a horticultural therapist and consultant.

The staff team also includes other qualified horticulturalists, people experienced in working with adults with learning difficulties as well as volunteers. New volunteers are always welcome.

All queries should be directed to:

John Cliff
Telephone 07764 940812
email john.cliff@talktalk.net

For more information on Horticultural Therapy visit www.thrive.org.uk

Growing Ability

Social and therapeutic horticulture for adults with learning difficulties



A partnership between
'Growing People' and the
Triangle Community Garden

Growing Ability

Introduction

'Growing Ability' is a partnership between the Triangle Community Garden and 'Growing People' to provide social and therapeutic horticulture for adults with learning difficulties in North Herts and Stevenage. It builds on a successful three year pilot run on a voluntary basis by the Triangle Community Garden.

What is Social and Therapeutic Horticulture?

At its simplest, it is the use of gardening and horticulture to promote and develop well-being. It has been around for thousands of years – there are references in Ancient Egypt, the Middle Ages, and in 1856 at Dorset County Asylum “male patients shall be employed in gardeningto promote cheerfulness”.

This is achieved by active or passive involvement, and is effective with people with disabilities, those recovering from major illness, e.g. a stroke and those who are socially isolated.

Programme Structure

The project, run by a qualified horticultural therapist, provides a structured programme geared to the support needs, abilities and personal development aims of each individual.

The project is based at the Triangle Community Garden, Ransom's Recreation Ground, Hitchin. Activities take place in both the Community Garden and on the associated allotment. There are also plans for a workshop with woodworking facilities.

There are currently three sessions on Monday and Thursday afternoons (1-3pm) and Tuesday mornings (10am-12). A fourth is planned to start in June, probably on a Thursday morning. The maximum group size is 6 depending on the support needs of the individuals concerned.

Who is suitable?

With a limited number of places, the project seeks to focus on individuals who will benefit from the structured approach. Placements are not time limited but are reviewed regularly.

How are people referred?

Referral can be from local agencies (social services, day centres, support workers etc) or individuals can self refer.

A simple referral form is available from John Cliff (contact details overleaf). Referrals are taken at any time subject to vacancy.

A visit to the project is arranged and if an individual then wishes to attend the project a full referral pack is issued. Once complete, a start date is agreed or the individual is placed on a waiting list.

During the first few weeks, an initial assessment is carried out, following which 3-5 objectives are agreed which cover what an individual wishes to gain from attending. These could include improving self confidence, work related skills such as improving assertiveness or team working or increasing their horticultural skills. A programme is then developed for that individual and progress is reviewed regularly.

Cost

The project has benefitted from set-up funding from Luton Airport Community Trust and now receives central funding from the NHS and Herts Social Services, jointly, until 2011. In order to ensure the long term sustainability of the project we actively encourage client-funded placements.

NB A large print version of this leaflet is available.
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