

MAKING

waves

WINTER 2023



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WELCOME TO WEST THAMES COLLEGE.

**TRACY AUST, CEO & PRINCIPAL,
WELCOMES YOU TO OUR
MAKING WAVES – WINTER EDITION!**



DEAR READER

Happy new year to you!

Our first term was a very busy one, with a lot of exciting news and achievements being celebrated in the College, which we will share in this edition of Making Waves.

One of our highlights so far this year, is being awarded Education & Training Provider of the Year at the West London Chamber Awards. It is a fantastic achievement for the College that celebrates our students and staff, and we could not be prouder. We were shortlisted alongside seven other providers and were delighted to win this award, presented to us by Samar Whitticombe, Director of West London Chambers.

The celebrations continued as the College won a national competition during the Love Our Colleges Campaign, organised by the Association of Colleges. The competition encouraged colleges across the country to submit video entries demonstrating the skills being learned in their classes, highlighting how essential FE colleges are when meeting the skills gaps within local communities. A special thanks to our students in art and design, hairdressing, computing, construction and supported learning who made this video possible!

Our students have continued to benefit from the excellent partnerships that we have with local businesses. Our Supported Internship Programme is now in its 11th year, and we are thrilled with the transformational impact the programme has had on the lives of so many young people. The programme provides work-based learning opportunities

for young people with learning disabilities. One of our newest partners - Marriott, London Twickenham hosted a pinning ceremony for the new cohort of students, as they start their next phase of their internship. This collaboration with the Marriott, London Twickenham, exposes our students to different working environments, with the goal to empower them to secure employment in the future.

We have recently launched the next phase of our Youth Hub Project at our Isleworth Campus. This service provides access to mentoring, advice and guidance, employability support and help with digital skills for Hounslow residents aged between 18 and 24. This opportunity in partnership with our stakeholders, Hounslow Job Centre Plus, Heathrow Academy and Work Hounslow, provides a space for young people to receive bespoke support with employment and training opportunities.

It is fantastic to see the inspiring journey our students go on at West Thames, and all that they achieve during their time with us. Within this edition, we share insights from some of our adult students, highlighting the positive impact returning to education has had on them and in doing so demonstrating that it is never too late to chase your dreams and expand your horizons.

We hope you enjoy reading this edition of Making Waves.

WEST THAMES COLLEGE **WINS** **EDUCATION & TRAINING PROVIDER** **OF THE YEAR**



Tracy Aust, CEO & Principal, West Thames College was honoured to collect the winning award on behalf of the College at the recent West London Chamber's Business Awards 2023 Ceremony, where West Thames College were named as Education & Training Provider of the Year.

The London Chambers shortlisted West Thames College alongside seven other providers as 'Education & Training Provider of the Year' and West Thames were delighted to be the recipient of this award, presented by Samar Whitticombe, Director of West London Chambers.

Companies were invited to submit their entries for the chance to win an award which were then subject to robust scrutiny by a panel of independent judges.

Tracy Aust CEO & Principal, West Thames College said: "We were delighted to be shortlisted for the Education & Training provider of the year award and thrilled to be named the winner. This award helps to recognise the fantastic achievements of West Thames College students and staff and I couldn't be prouder of them. And being part of this event was a great opportunity for us to engage with our businesses and partners across the region. A big thank you to West London Chamber."

The West London Chamber's Awards are held every year to celebrate growing business success across Hounslow, Ealing and Hammersmith & Fulham. The Chambers champion the businesses of our three boroughs including providing support and being their business voice, as well as encouraging new innovative start-ups to help them fill the demands of the market place.

This year's prestigious event was attended by more than 290 guests and business leaders including all shortlisted nominees and was held at the stylish Clayton Hotel in Chiswick.

Sally Smith, COO of West London Chambers said: "2023 was the 10th anniversary for the awards and were the best yet! This year's entries to the awards increased from 94 to 153, which is a 62% increase. The awards dinner was at capacity with 290 guests and the calibre of entries this year was really high. The Awards are the highlight of our year and we could not do all we do without the support of our businesses. Congratulations to you all."

IT'S THE SEASON OF GIVING – WEST THAMES COLLEGE IN THE COMMUNITY



Supported Learning Department Christmas Craft Stall

Our Supported Learning students have been working hard to design and make items for their Craft Stall. They have been making cards, lanterns, calendars, and pencil cases to sell. 10% of the money that is raised is going towards the Pensioners Alone at Christmas Charity. The charity are hosting a Christmas dinner/party for those living in the Hounslow borough who will be alone at Christmas. The craft stall was set up in our Atrium and open during lunchtime for students and staff!



Green Skills at West Thames College

15 students supported a local women's group by improving their allotment space, with the help of the Hounslow Environment Champions and Groundwork London. After following instructions and working together as a team, the allotment was cleared and covered ready for winter. The students not only improved their gardening skills, but they all received a certificate for their efforts. There's even plans for future employment opportunities through Green Work 4 All Scheme for students.



Student Voice Hounslow

Our Level 1 ICT ESOL group actively participated in the Student Voice Hounslow Workshop. The goal of this workshop was to foster engagement with the younger generation and gain insights into their perspectives on interacting with the council. The contributions made by the group proved to be instrumental in generating effective and sustainable solutions to bridge the gap between the council and young people.



Health and Childcare Students Spread Festive Cheer!

Our Health and Childcare students supported the 'Hardest Day Of The Year' campaign by Age UK by creating handmade Christmas cards which were delivered to a care home in the local area. No one should be made to feel lonely, especially at this time of year. We are so proud of our students for doing their bit to tackle loneliness in older people.





Pictured (L-R): Alison Lindfield – Vice President, UK for TOLL Logistics, Seema Malhotra – Shadow Minister for Skills, Rosie Bailey – CitySprint, Tracy Aust – CEO & Principal, West Thames College

WEST THAMES COLLEGE APPRENTICE SECURES A **TOP PRIZE** AT THE **NATIONAL COURIER AWARDS**



A fantastic celebration at the National Courier Awards 2023 in London as one of our Logistics apprentice, Remi Collin, received an award for the ‘Apprentice – Next Generation’ category.

Remi who is on a Level 3 Freight Forwarding apprenticeship was shortlisted for the award to celebrate the up-and-coming talent within the express sector across the country.

Tracy Aust CEO & Principal, West Thames College said: “This is an example of partnership working at its finest and West Thames are looking forward to building on this, working with TOLL to continue to provide the skilled workforce of the future.”

The award was presented by Seema Malhotra – Shadow Minister for Skills and MP for Feltham and Heston, and was happily collected by Alison Lindfield – Vice President, UK for TOLL Logistics, on Remi’s behalf.

A big thank you to the Institute of Couriers, particularly the Chair – Carl Lomas and Dr Tracey Worth. Congratulations to all of the award winners and a special mention to the other apprentice winner, Ruben Sandu of CitySprint.

SEEMA MALHOTRA MP ADVOCATES FOR GREEN SKILLS AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT DURING VISIT TO SKILLS+LOGISTICS CENTRE



Seema Malhotra, Shadow Minister for Skills and MP for Feltham and Heston, recently visited The Skills+Logistics Centre, championing the role of skills and recognising the need for a clear skills strategy. As part of this, we discussed the significance of green skills in contributing to a highly skilled and sustainable workforce for the future.

The visit was a great opportunity for our MP to explore the college's newly refurbished motor vehicle workshop and see first-hand the progress the College has made.

Seema Malhotra said: "I was really pleased to visit West Thames College and the Feltham Skills+Logistics Centre and see some of the opportunities being created for green skills and logistics training.

"We will work with colleges to develop the skills Britain needs through a pause and review of the disruptive defunding of qualifications, simplifying the funding landscape for colleges and establishing a new body, Skills England, to drive our national ambition to upskill our country."

Seema was welcomed by our college staff and students, who expressed their gratitude for her long-standing support not only to the Skills+Logistics Centre, but to the college as a whole.

Engaging in discussions with our college leadership team, Seema placed great emphasis on the importance of careers advice and guidance for young people. She stressed that providing accurate and comprehensive guidance is crucial in enabling individuals to make informed decisions about their future aspirations.

Seema also highlighted the significance of apprenticeships in bridging the gap between education and the workplace. She recognised the need to increase apprenticeship opportunities, to ensure that young people are equipped with the necessary skills and experiences required by employers.

Tracy Aust, CEO & Principal, West Thames College, said: "It was great to meet with Seema today at our Skills+Logistics Centre and to discuss with her the skills and challenges that we are facing as a sector.

"We were pleased to share with Seema the work we have been doing around skills at both a local level, as well as across the West London patch, working in collaboration with our partners. This included a visit to our newly refurbished motor vehicle workshop, highlighting the progress we have made in green skills. We are excited to continue to work with Seema as she takes on her new role as Shadow Minister for Skills."

Beverly McGuire, Director of Skills+Logistics Centre, said: "It was a pleasure to meet with Seema today and to hear about the positive discussions that are taking place, particularly in terms of careers advice for young people and apprenticeships."

#LOVEOURCOLLEGES 2023 RECAP..

We celebrated #LoveOurColleges, a two week celebration of all the amazing work colleges across the country do for students and the community. At West Thames College the celebrations included many events and activities, and filled with celebrating the achievements in the College.

Here's some of our highlights of the weeks - it was a busy one!

Before Love Our Colleges weeks officially started, we welcomed Seema Malhotra, Shadow Minister for Skills and MP for Feltham and Heston, to our Skills+Logistics Centre in Feltham to visit our newly refurbished motor vehicle workshop.

Week 1

Show Your Skills Competition - We kicked off Love Our Colleges with entering the #ShowYourSkills competition that was initiated by Association of Colleges (AoC), which were running across their social media channels. We can announce that our entry (created by Digital Marketing Officer Mahna Kasraee) was selected as the winner of the national competition!

Open Day - We hosted an Open Day at Feltham. Potential students were able to have a tour around the building and watched demonstrations from our teachers in the workshops.

Student Enrichment - To finish the first week off, students were involved with activities and events with local employers. Our media students went to visit Sky Academy Studios, and The Body Shop visited our Beauty students at Isleworth Campus. As well as our Football Team winning 14-0 against West London College.. Well done boys!



Week 2

Student Show Your Skills Competition - The second week kicked off with announcing the winner of the #ShowYourSkills competition for our students. The winner was Amanuel Hailemichael, who is studying Computing. He showcased his amazing skills in painting and sculpture. He has won a £50 Amazon voucher for his efforts!

Special Visits - Business students had the opportunity to visit University of Sunderland at their London campus this week for a taster day, as well as having a visit from the New Zealand High Commissioner in Spring Grove House. Heathrow Academy also visited our ESOL students and spoke to them about jobs and careers in the industry.

Black History Month - We had the pleasure to invite performer BREIS into the Isleworth Campus to perform inspirational rap songs to students, that looked at themes of identity, aspiration, growing up in London and more as part of Black History Month.

Freshers' Fair - Students were involved in the annual Freshers' Fairs at both campuses, with a lot of freebies on offer for the students, as well as a rodeo ride and a DJ to enjoy. Many organisations attended such as St Mary's University, London Fire Brigade, West Side Radio, More Life Hounslow and more.

Youth Hub - We launched our new phase of The Youth Hub, that provides a service for residents of London Borough of Hounslow, aged between 18 and 24, that enables access to mentoring services, provides advice and guidance for employability support and mental health awareness, and helps to develop digital skills through the use of technology. You can read more on Page 13.

National Courier Awards - We celebrated our Level 3 Freight Forwarding apprentice Remi Collin, who received an award for the 'Apprentice-Next Generation' at the National Courier Awards 2023 in London. You can read more on Page 5.

School Liaison - And finally, Jeeten and Mollie (part of our Outreach Team) were invited to attend local secondary school, Heston Community School, for their careers fair to talk to students and parents' about our courses, as well as inviting them to our Open Day.

That's a wrap.. until next year!

WEST THAMES COLLEGE WINS **#SHOWYOURSKILLS** COMPETITION



We are thrilled to announce that we are the winners of the #ShowYourSkills competition, as part of Love Our Colleges Week celebrations.

#ShowYourSkills, organised by Association of Colleges and sponsored by Irwin Mitchell, gives colleges an opportunity to showcase the brilliant work they do every day.

The standard of entries this year was extremely high, with colleges across the country showing off their skills, from hairdressing to hospitality, construction to performing arts, and so much more.

Colleges Week, now in its sixth year, is an annual celebration recognising the vital role colleges play in our society by showcasing the breadth of their activity and the ways in which they transform lives and communities.



Tracy Aust,
CEO & Principal,
West Thames College
said:

"I'm absolutely delighted that West Thames is the winner of AoC's Show your Skills Competition as part of the Love Our Colleges Campaign. This is just a glimpse into the fantastic work that FE colleges do, day in and day out, developing the skills of their students and preparing them for their chosen careers. All of this is made possible by the highly skilled and professional staff that we have.

This video is just one example of why FE colleges are indeed the anchor institutions of the local communities they serve and essential in meeting the skills gaps and challenges our economy faces. I'm very proud of our students and staff at WTC and a special thanks to our students in art and design, hairdressing, computing, construction and supported learning who made this video possible. Well done!"

Julia Belgutay,
Head of Communications,
Media, Marketing and
Research, Association of
Colleges said:

"As a team we have been blown away by the quality of entries, and the time and effort both students and staff have put into their videos. I'd encourage everyone to watch all the videos posted on social media under the hashtag #ShowYourSkills as they are a brilliant visual representation of the creativity and talent in colleges right across the country. Choosing a winner wasn't easy, but we were so impressed by the West Thames College's entry and believe them to be a very worthy winner. The video was completely student-led, and highlighted skills across a number of subjects. Congratulations to West Thames, and huge thanks to all who entered."

Daniel Wells,
Business Development
Manager, Irwin Mitchell
said:

"I was amazed by the creativity of this year's entries and how well they engaged with the theme. The amount of time, effort and care that the colleges put into their entries should make them feel rightly proud. It has been a privilege to be part of the judging panel and to play a part in Irwin Mitchell's contribution to Colleges Week. Many congratulations to West Thames College for their outstanding entry."



Watch the full video

RETURN TO **ADULT EDUCATION**

West Thames College is proud to support adults as they return to education. It is fantastic to see all the inspiring journeys our adults go on with us, all steered by their determination and commitment to developing their knowledge and personal growth.

Their passion and dedication serve as a reminder that it is never too late to chase our dreams and expand our horizons. Our college becomes a place where they feel supported and valued, surrounded by like-minded individuals who share a common goal of self-improvement.

We are proud to provide an inclusive environment that facilitates their educational endeavours, ensuring they have

access to quality education, resources, and opportunities for personal and professional development.

As these adults return to education, they not only redefine their own lives but also inspire and serve as role models for others, demonstrating that education is a lifelong pursuit that can transform lives.



“Studying at West Thames College has been a fantastic journey so far. I can’t believe how much I’ve learned about myself and others. I love making people feel confident and highlighting their beauty, as every one of us is beautiful and unique in our own way. This course has prepared me for my work life; soon I will be able to open my own salon.”

Viktoriia, Level 2 Beauty student



“Every business needs an accountant; even in your own personal life you need to be a good accountant. The bookkeeping skills I have learned here at the college have been invaluable.”

Ammar, Level 3 Accounting student



“The teacher training course I’m currently doing is terrific. In class, we learned the importance of building a rapport with students in order to engage with them properly. I want to make sure everyone is taught the way this college is teaching me; it’s amazing.”

Surbir Kaur, Teacher Training student

Find out more about
our adult courses



FROM STUDENT TO TEACHER: **A JOURNEY OF GROWTH AND TRANSFORMATION** AT WEST THAMES COLLEGE



We've had the pleasure of witnessing the journey of our students for years, and we're so proud to see one of our own staff members take on a new challenge. Tazeen recently completed her CELTA course and is now a ESOL teacher here at the college!

We recently met with Tazeen to speak to her about her journey at West Thames College. Tazeen started as a Business student at the College, and now is qualified as an ESOL teacher, after completing a CELTA course.

"The Level 5 CELTA course was an amazing experience. It is great learning how to teach English to adults from all different backgrounds."

Tazeen spoke about her obstacles when first coming to the UK, and the many language barriers faced in her early educational journey.

"When I first came to this country aged 13, my first language wasn't English so I know how it feels to learn a language for the first time. My personal motivation to become an ESOL teacher has always been deeply rooted in my own experiences

and the desire to help others overcome similar obstacles and barriers as myself."

The CELTA programme at West Thames College is the perfect stepping stone to kickstart your teaching career. CELTA is an initial teacher training programme designed for aspiring ESOL and EFL teachers.

The CELTA qualification is globally recognised and respected, opening doors to teaching opportunities all around the world. The course may even be free depending on where you live and current income.

"I highly recommend this course if you want to become an ESOL teacher. This course really boosted my confidence. My confidence went from 0-100 in a short space of time. When I first started, I was really nervous, I didn't know where to begin but the teachers really help you gain that certainty to be able to deliver your lesson effectively."

Find out more about
our CELTA courses



SUPPORTED INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME **CELEBRATES STUDENT PINNING CEREMONY** AT MARRIOTT TWICKENHAM



Marriott, London Twickenham hosted a pinning ceremony for the new cohort of students enrolled in their supported internship programme.

The ceremony celebrated the start of their first internship, where they will gain practical experience while learning employability skills.

West Thames College, Marriott, London Twickenham, and DFN Project SEARCH partner to offer work-based learning opportunities for young people with learning disabilities and/or autism, empowering them to secure competitive employment.

The DFN Project SEARCH programme operates through a collaborative approach, involving partnerships with various sectors including public, private, and voluntary. The involvement of these different sectors allows for a diverse range of internship opportunities and ensures that students are exposed to various working environments.

By collaborating with employers, educational institutions, local authorities, and other organizations, the programme can provide students with a holistic and comprehensive support system, ultimately contributing to the success of the programme.

The pinning ceremony marks the continuation of the programme's mission to promote inclusion and provide equal opportunities in the workforce for young adults with learning disabilities and autism.

During the ceremony, the students shared their excitement and gratitude for the opportunity to participate in the programme and gain valuable experience.

"I am so excited to start my first internship at Marriott, London Twickenham," said one student. "I am grateful for this opportunity to learn new skills, meet new people, and gain experience that will help me get a job in the future." said student, Reanna De Los Santos.

Tracy Aust, CEO & Principal of West Thames College, said: "We are delighted to be continuing another DFN Project SEARCH programme with our fantastic partner, Marriott, London Twickenham. West Thames have been running DFN Project SEARCH supported internships for 11 years and we have seen first-hand the transformational impact this has had on the lives of so many young people. It's not just the interns that benefit from these programmes but it's also the hugely positive impact on the College and the host employer. Here at West Thames, we've had the privilege of employing an intern and what a great appointment this has been. We are really excited to be working in partnership with the Marriott on this new venture."

ABOUT DFN PROJECT SEARCH



DFN Project SEARCH is a business-led, one-year transition to employment programme for young people with a learning disability and/or autism.

DFN Project SEARCH believes that everyone deserves the right to aspire to the very best future, yet 4.8% of people with a learning disability who are known to local authorities in England go on to secure full-time paid employment. The programme's ambition is to ensure that everyone with a learning disability or autism can attain high-quality, integrated employment in their local area.

The programme has supported more than 1,600 young people into paid work and it has the aim to support 10,000 interns into work by 2030, and 20,000 by 2035.

SUPPORTED LEARNING ENTERPRISE: SUPPORTING CAUSES CLOSE TO THEIR HEART



In order to support causes close to their heart and raise money for their department, Supported Learning students have been working on several enterprise initiatives this term:

Charity Shop: A charity shop has been set up in our Atrium at Isleworth Campus that is supporting a charity called Mapomboli (Blessing), which is based in Congo R.D.C. Students and staff across the department have donated items from home such as clothing, shoes and even video games!

Lunch Club: At Lunch Club the students learn new skills while preparing food and selling it to raise money for their end-of-year trip. Meal Deals are on offer with a tasty selection of sandwiches and paninis. The money raised is also used to buy ingredients so that Lunch Club can continue to open!

Stationary Club: This club teaches students how to buy and sell stationary and run a business. They also learn important money management skills and learn how to receive and give the right change back to their customers.

A staggering £400 has already been raised in less than a week by the initiatives.

The money raised will help fund enrichment activities, including trips to Sky Studios, Lord's Cricket Ground and Kew Gardens.

"It's amazing to witness the growth and increased confidence of the students as they take on responsibilities and learn new skills through the enterprise. From something as simple as giving back the correct change to safely making a cheese toasty, each step they take is valuable and contributes to their development."

Shelby Styles-Graham – Teaching Support

"The motive of the initiative is not just to raise money for the department, but also to make the students engaged and more independent. By exposing the students to the work environment and teaching them important skills like money management, the enterprise plan aims to empower the students."

Shazia Khan - Lecturer in Supported Learning

"The social action activities such as the Lunch Club and regular Jumble Sales fosters a sense of belonging and community among students. Group activities are designed to encourage interaction and collaboration, promoting social skills and communication among students. This also incorporates practical activities that focus on developing essential life skills relating to daily living, social interaction, and vocational skills, tailored to each student's developmental level."

Jane Pendrey - CQTM in Supported Learning & Foundation Learning



WEST THAMES COLLEGE HAS RECENTLY LAUNCHED THE NEXT PHASE OF THEIR **YOUTH HUB PROJECT** AT ISLEWORTH CAMPUS



The Youth Hub, provides a service for residents of London Borough of Hounslow, aged between 18 and 24, that enables access to mentoring services, provides advice and guidance for employability support and mental health awareness, and helps to develop digital skills through the use of technology.

Eric Stober, Director of Business, ICT, Travel and Partnerships said: "This is an opportunity to bring together young people,

employers and other stakeholders to a single space to support all our young people into employment and training. We are proud to be at the centre of this wonderful opportunity which will enrich the lives of our residents in the community."

This is a result of the successful partnership with the Job Centre and DWP during the recent COVID pandemic during which over 70 young people were supported into employment.

The Youth Hub is in partnership with Hounslow Job Centre Plus, Heathrow Academy and Work Hounslow.





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*Subject to eligibility, providing evidence, and meeting the entry criteria



UPCOMING OPEN DAYS

📍 Isleworth Campus

London Road, Isleworth, Middlesex TW7 4HS

Wednesday 31 January 5pm - 6.30pm

Saturday 9 March 10am - 12.30pm

📍 Feltham Skills+Logistics Centre

Boundaries Road, Feltham, Middlesex TW13 5DR

Tuesday 6 February 5pm - 6.30pm



Book your place now
west-thames.ac.uk/opendays

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