

11th November 2024

Dear Parents/ Carers,

RE: Some things to brighten your day

“I just wanted to say I absolutely LOVE this.”

“What a wonderful idea. We really enjoyed reading this.”

“This is a fantastic idea and I hope it continues!!”

“What a fantastic idea, this is so lovely to see.”

“This is such a brilliant idea. I really enjoyed reading these lovely stories.”

That was just some of the feedback to our first ‘*Celebration Email*’ which is part of my mission to be more explicit in celebrating the brilliant things our school community does: Telling our students, sharing our successes, and proudly acknowledging the amazing staff and students we have.

So, here’s this month’s missive...

The Hidden Heroes

Did you know that 92 students, nearly 5% of our school community are classed as a Young Carer? That’s a person under the age of 18 who helps look after a family member with a physical or mental illness, disability, or addiction. Their responsibilities can include household tasks, personal care, managing medications, providing emotional support, or helping with mobility.

As you can imagine, the challenge of all that can be huge - let alone trying to balance these duties with school work. The brilliant Miss Mills runs our Young Carers Support Group here at Farlingaye, and I wanted to shine a spotlight on these amazing students through the example of Ted in year 7 and Milo in year 10.

Ted and Milo are both young carers for their brother at home. Every day, they step up to help him with daily needs, like meals, getting dressed, and providing companionship. They handle each challenge with patience and maturity, despite the inevitable interruptions to their routines and personal space. They accept that family activities often revolve around their brother’s needs, that trips or even simple family gatherings may look a bit different for them.

These impressive young men also support their grandmother, living in a multigenerational household where they often help with day-to-day activities, from running errands to keeping her company. According to their mum it’s rare for them to voice frustrations, though the weight of their responsibilities must sometimes show.

And they’re not alone—many other young carers at Farlingaye face similar experiences, and I want to thank these remarkable young people for everything they do, often quietly and without recognition, and for the empathy and kindness they bring to our school community. They are an essential part of what makes Farlingaye such a special place, and I am immensely proud of each of them.

The Football Superstar

Transitioning to high school is no small feat. Moving from a smaller, more familiar environment to a school where there are more students in your year group than in your entire previous school is hugely daunting. You might not know anyone; you might feel a bit overwhelmed.

Now imagine making that move while in a wheelchair. That's the story of one of our incredible Year 7s, Henry. Just navigating this transition into Farlingaye, with challenges few of us could even imagine, is an achievement. But that isn't all we're celebrating here. Henry is an exceptionally talented Powerchair footballer and the youngest competitor at a national level.

Though he's a long-time Ipswich Town fan, Henry plays for Norwich City (since Ipswich don't yet have a Powerchair football team) as a winger, and he's currently the team's top scorer. Following a promotion last year, thanks in part to Henry's impressive 17 goals, Norwich are now in the Premiership, competing against the country's top Powerchair teams. Henry is also part of the WFA Emerging Talent Programme, the first step on the England Pathway, and he hopes to represent England one day. Hugely impressive, Henry!

West End Calling

My last thing to highlight for you is to celebrate the old and the new combined. The joy of working with young people is about identifying their potential, setting them up for whatever comes next. And for so many of our students it's a joy to see them go and fulfil a passion and pursue a dream which started at school.

One of those ex-students is Reece Kerridge, who left us a little while ago to go on and become a star in the theatre industry. Reece has appeared nationally in productions of *Book of Mormon*, *Spongebob Squarepants The Musical* and many more. We were so proud to welcome Reece back to Farlingaye recently to talk to our students about the theatre industry and now another of our students has also made the move to the West End. But whilst Reece may have left us many years ago one of our current students is hoping to follow a similar path. Katelynn in year 9 is passionate about performing arts and has pursued that interest in and out of school with various clubs and classes. Recently she auditioned for a role in the play "*Cross the Line*" which is to be performed in the West End in May 2025. What an amazing achievement Katelynn, well done!

There are so many more stories I could have written but that's enough for this month. Thank you for joining me in celebrating the good, the great, and the inspiring at Farlingaye. Wishing you a wonderful November.

Yours sincerely

Mr P Smith
Headteacher