

# Items donated to help city academy students in need

by ECHO REPORTER

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**H**AIR academy donation dec23  
Students of the award-winning Hair@theAcademy have been given food and Christmas gifts by the local community to spread a little joy and happiness over the festive season.

PR consultant Glen King has supported the not-for-profit Exeter-based academy for several years on a pro-bono basis as her way of giving back to the community.

After hearing the Christmas period can add pressure to the young adults with complex needs the academy works with, and make their mental health issues worse, she wanted to do something to help.

So Glen asked her neighbours to donate items to give to the students to help ease some of the burden.

She said: "I found it heart-breaking knowing what a struggle it would be for them, when so many of us overindulge at this joyful time.

**“No words can describe how grateful we are to Glen and the local community for their immense generosity; it will make a huge difference**

Mary Pugsley

"I put out a plea to my local residents of Gras Lawn where I live through our WhatsApp group, and family and friends, asking them to rummage in their kitchen cupboards for tins and packets of food to help the students enjoy some festive cheer. They came up trumps and were so generous.

"Food parcels and Christmas goodies started piling-up on my doorstep; it was a heart-warming and neighbourly response, and I am



» PR consultant Glen King, left, with Mary Pugsley from Hair@theAcademy and items donated for academy students

so grateful to them for their kindness and support."

Mary Pugsley, who set up the academy in 2004 from a small room at Exeter Royal Academy for Deaf Education with just three back-wash basins, thanked everyone who gave to the appeal.

She said: "No words can describe how grateful we are to Glen and the local community for their immense generosity; it will make a huge difference to the lives of the students who desperately need our help. Thank you to everyone involved from the bottom of my heart."

The academy works with young people who are vulnerably housed, in the care system and from all kinds of backgrounds or circumstances to teach them hairdressing, barbering and customer service to help them to get into paid employment or further education.

## COMMUNITY NEWS

### TRAUMA TEDDIES KNITTED

Residents of Millbrook retirement village handed over 66 knitted teddies to Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service as part of the trauma teddy initiative.

Trauma teddies are provided to children involved in incidents to help provide comfort during upsetting situations.

Firefighter Sean Avery, from Blue Watch Crownhill, asked people to help provide trauma teddies and was amazed by the response. The call to arms was heard across the country and Crownhill has been flooded with cuddly bears ready to give to children.

The Exeter residents learned about the initiative and the village's Knit and Natter group set to work. Fifteen of them met Sean to hand over the teddies and learn more about the initiative.

Sean said: "The trauma teddy initiative has been a great success so far, with teddies available to all our fire stations.

"Crownhill alone has handed over more than 10 to children who have had fires at their homes and other emergency services are also interested in the scheme.

"We are so grateful for the support we've received and it's been incredible to see people of all ages and walks of life come together to knit for this great cause.

"It was lovely to meet with the Millbrook Knit and Natter group, and I'd like to thank the ladies once again for their support."



» Millbrook residents with firefighter Sean Avery after knitting 66 teddies for the trauma teddy initiative

Millbrook resident Faith Walters added: "One of our housekeepers first told us about the appeal. It inspired us to get started and it's nice to know the teddies are going to children who need them."

### CONCERT FOR VETERANS

Exeter veterans enjoyed a Christmas party with a difference at The Not Forgotten Jingle Bell Rock drive-in concert at Exeter Racecourse.

The Not Forgotten, a British Armed Forces charity which supports serving and ex-service men and women, performed in Exeter during their Christmas concert tour which aims to entertain, boost morale and lift lockdown spirits by reaching veterans

across the UK.

More than 100 veterans and their guests enjoyed a feast of festivities in their social bubble at the concert, providing a real boost to many local residents who have been struggling with loneliness and isolation.

The team performed a varied set including popular classics and festive favourites, which saw veterans letting their hair down and enjoying a singalong and a dance after so many weeks in lockdown this year. They also got involved with interactive games such as singo bingo and a numberplate raffle during the memorable afternoon.

To complete the Christmas party feel, a hog roast with all the trimmings was served to guests,

which was enjoyed from the safety and warmth of their cars.

Brigadier James Stopford, from The Not Forgotten, said: "Sadly, as Covid continues to impact our daily lives, we've had to put our traditional Christmas parties for veterans on hold.

"But it is a year when we need to do more for those who have really felt the restrictions. So, we've improvised, adapted and overcome the obstacles and are bringing some much-needed cheer, fun and entertainment to those who have served our country by offering them some early Christmas celebrations."

If you are a serving or ex-member of the Armed Forces or you know someone who could benefit from the help of The Not For-

gotten, call 0207 730 2400.

### TRUSTEES APPOINTED

The Ted Wragg Trust has appointed Ben Manning and Lindsay Hetherington to its board of trustees.

The trustees bring a range of experience and knowledge which will strengthen the board and help shape the work of the trust over the coming years.

Trust chief executive Moira Marder said: "We'd like to give a very warm welcome to Ben and Lindsay; between them they have a wealth of experience that will really contribute to the team and the vision of the trust.

"It is a real testament to the trust's reputation that we have been able to attract such talent and I look forward to working with them as we strive to support all our young people over the months and years ahead."

Lindsay is an associate professor of science education and head of initial teacher education at the University of Exeter. She has a strong understanding of evidence-based education and is committed to supporting schools in the effective use of research to inform and improve teaching and learning for all children.

Ben is deputy principal of City College Plymouth and is enthusiastic about enhancing learning experiences through innovative and responsive curriculum opportunities alongside aspirational teaching and learning strategies.