‘FLOTUS, it’s so good to see you again!’

Mulberry is proud to carry forward the work of Michelle Obama’s Let Girls Learn campaign in the UK; and, on Tuesday 11th October, our relationship with the current First Lady of the United States continued as we were the UK host for the first ever global Skype conversation between schoolgirls across the world and the education activists working alongside them, an event organised by Glamour Magazine.

Students from Mulberry and Elizabeth Garrett Anderson school gathered in the Mulberry and Bigland Green theatre for this historic event entitled ‘A Brighter Future: a Global Conversation on Girls’ Education’. The programme began with a Q&A with British actress Ruth Wilson, who talked frankly and with great passion about the need for complex female roles, the importance of tackling sexism in the arts and performance industry, and the importance of helping all girls to develop confidence and a strong sense of self – an area in which schools are a particularly important resource for young women.

The Skype call then went live, and we were able to connect with girls in Tanzania, Jordan, Peru and Washington DC. After a round of introductions, we listened to an interview between Michelle Obama and the actress and activist Yara Shahidi, hosted by Cindi Leive, Editor in Chief of Glamour Magazine. Mrs Obama was typically inspiring, revisiting the themes of the speech she gave at Mulberry when launching her Let Girls Learn campaign in the UK: she reinforced the transformative power of education in a girl’s life and the lives of her family and community; she stressed the importance of girls currently in education using the platforms and opportunities they are given to advocate on behalf of their sisters around the world who are currently denied access to such an education; and she placed great emphasis on the need for women and girls to support one another, saying ‘We can all rise together. We have to be a team of women and girls who love each other’. Yara Shahidi, herself applying for university places in the US, reflected on the difficulty of maintaining self-confidence when the world tells girls to know their place. She stressed to girls listening that they are ‘allowed to take up space’, and that they should resist the patriarchal interpretation of their confidence as unseemly aggression – a message the First Lady enthusiastically seconded.

After this interview, girls around the world were given a voice, placed at the forefront of this essential conversation. One student from each country gave a short speech about the importance of education for herself and her peers and the challenges unique to their situation. It is hard to put into words how it felt to see and hear our sisters around the world, to listen to them as they reflected on the role that school plays in their lives. It was one of the most powerful moments in Mulberry’s long history of pioneering women’s education.

Our own Ayesha Begum, 12GW, spoke on behalf of girls at school in the UK. Ayesha gave a speech that she had written herself, in which she reflected on the challenges that face
1st Mulberry and the Chief Guide

On 26th September, 1st Mulberry Guides and Senior Section received a very special visit from the Chief Guide, Valerie Le Vaillant-Owen. The Chief Guide is the highest ambassador for Girlguiding UK, representing the thousands of members and volunteers who make up the organisation – but she also has a special relationship with 1st Mulberry in particular: she ran a Tower Hamlets Guide unit at the school in the 1980s, a Unit which was attended by the mothers of some of our current Senior Section members.

Mrs Le Vaillant-Owen spent a whole afternoon with 1st Mulberry, learning about the work we have done and talking with members about the similarities and differences between 1st Mulberry and the original Mulberry Guide Unit. She praised us for our hard work and adventurous spirits, and gifted us some newspaper clippings about the original Mulberry Unit.

1st Mulberry Guides and Senior Section have welcomed 10 new members this term. We’ve been working hard on our independent living skills in the last year, and we’ve put them to good use this half term by planning – and enjoying – our annual Christmas party.

Year 12’s careers are in the bank!

On Wednesday October 5th, Year 12 students at Mulberry participated in an exciting career skills day with a focus on banking and finance.

Hosted by volunteers from Lloyds Banking Group, in association with Women of the Future, the day provided students with an opportunity to really get to grips with their options for the future. 30 participating students began the day by listening to a talk on the range of careers available within the Lloyds Banking Group, and the pathways they can take after sixth form – including apprenticeships and internships. The talk was followed by interactive workshops on budgeting, presentation skills and interview skills, and a murder mystery challenge that tested students’ teamwork and leadership skills. Students gave overwhelmingly positive feedback about the day, saying that the activities they participated in were interesting, relevant and enjoyable, and had given them new skills that they feel will benefit them as they plan their future careers. We would like to give our warmest thanks to Women of the Future and the fantastic team at the Lloyds Banking Group for bringing this great opportunity to Mulberry.
Congratulations, Ms Weston!

On Tuesday 11th October Deborah Weston, RS teacher and Head of Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural Development, travelled to Buckingham Palace to receive her OBE.

The award was given in recognition of Deborah’s services to education, and her considerable contribution to inter-faith work amongst Britain’s faith communities. Our warmest congratulations go to Ms Weston, a much-loved member of staff whose passion and dedication to Religious Education is a source of inspiration for students and colleagues alike.

Ms Weston receiving her award

Feminist Fridays Relaunched!

Ayesha Begum, 12GW, has stepped up as Student Chair of our school feminist society, Feminist Fridays.

Ayesha has been working hard with Women’s Education Officer Holly Green to plan this year’s programme of events, and to encourage students to attend society meetings. Ayesha has been presenting in assemblies for Years 9-11 all term, and involving other students in Years 11 and 12 in planning sessions on topics ranging from ‘feminism and mental health’ to ‘feminism in politics’. Ayesha has also been networking hard, and inviting speakers to come and lead guest sessions – so far, we have exciting sessions lined up with speakers including music producers, photographers and mental health professionals. Feminist Fridays meets every second Friday in F01 at 1pm from Friday December 9th, and is open to students from Years 9-11. If you want to know more, pop into the Women’s Education Office at any time and ask! All are welcome.

Intra-faith dialogue for A Level RS

Learning about differences within religions is an important aspect of Religious Studies at Mulberry and also part of the national examination courses.

With this aim in mind, the two A level RS groups paid a visit to the Al-Khoei Shi’a Mosque in North-West London on Tuesday, 18th October. The visit coincided with the Islamic month of Muharram which is particularly significant to Shi’a Muslims who mourn the death of the Prophet Muhammad’s grand-son Hussain at this time. The class found the Mosque draped in black embroidered cloth and heard from Ayatollah Syed Milani (pictured right) about the various ways that different Shi’a Muslims in London and around the world commemorate this event.

The students from the two schools took part in an intra-faith dialogue activity and really enjoyed learning about and getting to know the students from the Independent Muslim school attached to the Mosque. Mulberry A level student Anisa said, It was really interesting to realise how similar the Sunni and Shi’a ways of life are. The visit changed the way I think about different groups within Islam.
On 29th October, four students in year 13 departed on the trip of a lifetime. Sanjida Mustharen, Rubaiyath Reza, Tasnia Abdullah and Tanya Hossain were off to Florida to become election campaign interns.

The trip was part of a programme called Inspire US, run by a charity called The Transformation Trust, which seeks to empower young people from disadvantaged backgrounds by providing them with opportunities they might not otherwise have the chance to experience. Students had entered a competition to win places on the trip in February: after making a short film about why they thought this experience would enrich their own lives and the life of their community, and writing a series of short essays about American politics, team Mulberry progressed to the second round of the competition.

In this round, students had to design a campaign based on an issue they felt strongly about, and then present their campaign plans to the CEO of the Transformation Trust, Amy Leonard, and her team. Mulberry students designed a campaign called Beyond The Headscarf: the campaign focused on breaking stereotypes around Muslim women, and providing a platform to showcase Muslim women’s stories and their achievements. The inspiration for the campaign name came from the speech that Michelle Obama made when she visited Mulberry to launch the Let Girls Learn campaign in June 2015, in which she said that she hoped people would ‘look beyond your headscarves to see all that you are’, appreciating our students’ full, rich identities and not reducing them to a discriminatory stereotype. Students planned a campaign in which they will create an archive of Muslim women’s stories in a ‘Humans of New York’ style photo exhibition, and make a short film raising awareness of Islamophobia and the way that it affects Muslim women in particular. They will also design an interfaith workshop to be run at Mulberry’s annual youth conference in February 2016.

We were delighted to be told in July that we had earned places on a fully funded two week trip to the US to intern on the Presidential election campaign. This was the Inspire US 2016 programme. Our students were beside themselves with excitement when we told them the news (a reaction video has recorded their priceless reaction for posterity) but little did they know that they were about to have one of the most exciting experiences of their lives.

Throughout the trip, students were learning about both sides of the American political spectrum. They began by spending three days working on Republican Congressional races - the Marco Rubio for Senate campaign in Tampa, and the Dr Neal

Continued overleaf
Dunn for House of Representatives campaign in Tallahassee, the Florida state capital. Students used an app to call the homes of registered Republican voters and record data on how and when they planned to vote. Students also dropped leaflets off at the homes of Republican voters to give them more information as they planned their votes.

After their time with the Republican Party of Florida, students moved over to the Democrat side. They were given a warm welcome at the Hillary Clinton campaign office in Clearwater, Pinellas County. The Democrat presidential campaign was very focused on face to face interactions, and students spent the majority of their time ‘door-knocking’: visiting the homes of registered Democrats, speaking with them in person, and making sure they knew where and how to vote. Students also recorded information on how and when voters planned to vote, and who they planned to vote for ‘up and down the ticket’ (including President and choices for Congress).

On Election Day, students spent many hours door-knocking in some of the most vulnerable communities in Florida, where Hillary Clinton’s presidency would have been particularly important in improving quality of life for local residents. Team Mulberry were able to organise ‘rides to the polls’, arranging lifts for vulnerable voters who had no other way of reaching a polling station. In the space of an hour, we arranged lifts for four people who would not otherwise have been able to exercise their democratic right to vote.

On Election Night, we gathered at our hostel in Tampa to watch the vote come in. The result was not what we had expected, nor what we had hoped for. The next morning, students from Mulberry and other schools felt subdued by the gravity of what had happened. We spent some time sitting and talking together: about our fears for the future, but also about our hopes, and the ways in which all of us can work together to ensure that nobody is left behind in the next four years. The volunteers from the Clearwater Democrats office joined us that evening, and told us of the impact we had made in Pinellas county: the precincts (small residential areas) we had canvassed had turned out to vote for Hillary Clinton. Our enthusiasm and our dedication had made a difference, even if the national vote had told another story. We felt a sense of hope as the Democrats assured us that many groups were already making plans and joining together to ensure that the most vulnerable and most marginalised people continue to be protected and supported, and that there continue to be many voices speaking out against injustice, discrimination and fear.

On November 10th, we flew from Tampa to Washington DC. We visited the UK embassy, where we met with the UK ambassador to the US, who answered some of our questions about American politics and encouraged us to keep on growing our interest in politics both at home and abroad. We then visited the White House, where we met with Rumana Ahmed – Senior Advisor to Barack Obama’s Deputy National Security Advisor for Strategic Communications, and the first Bengali Muslim woman in the White House. Ahmed has spent much of her career leading outreach work with vulnerable communities such as Muslim Americans and Cuban Americans, to ensure that no community is left behind or excluded. She spoke to us very frankly about her own experiences of Islamophobia and discrimination; the hope she felt under the Obama administration as politics seemed swept by real energy for change; and her confidence that many groups and individuals were currently organising to ensure that President Elect Trump is accountable to all Americans, and that his Presidency - and all those that support him - respects the most marginalised people and communities.

After an energising two days in Washington DC, we flew home to London. We felt that our lives had been changed by the trip: we had made wonderful friends in the other 16 students from UK schools who attended, and we had honed our independent living skills as we practised living in a shared environment. We had pushed ourselves beyond our comfort zones, speaking to countless new people, trying high level campaigning skills for the first time, and working alongside very experienced volunteers in a fast paced environment where the stakes were high. We had been away from our families and our communities for a long time, some of us for the first time.

The world had changed while we had been away, and we had been there to witness the moment of its changing. Coming back, we feel apprehensive about the new global political context that has been created in America - but we also feel strengthened by our experiences, and motivated to make real change.

Also included in this edition: articles written by students for the Times Educational Supplement whilst on the campaign trail
‘Post-Election Reflection’

Reporting from Florida are Rubaiyath Reza, Tanya Hossain, Tasnia Abdullah and Sanjida Mustharen from Mulberry School for Girls in Tower Hamlets, East London

Early this morning, we sat together in Tampa and watched the vote come in.

Having spent the week learning about US politics, we understood that democracy had spoken.

And having spent six days campaigning for Hillary Clinton, we understood just how hard her team had worked to get voters to the polls.

Our week had been taken up working in the volunteer office at Clearwater in Pinellas County, one of the most hotly contested counties in Florida. Our main job had been door-knocking: we visited registered Democrats in local communities, recorded data on whether they were planning to support Hillary Clinton, and then encouraged them to vote.

On Tuesday, we were out in the baking sun for 10 hours, in some of Florida’s poorest communities. We knocked on almost 500 doors, explaining to voters where their nearest polling station was and how they could vote.

One of the most rewarding things we did was organising rides to the polls: we worked with volunteers to arrange lifts for people who couldn’t make it to the polling stations themselves.

We met a Hispanic couple who couldn’t get to a polling station because the husband had just had an operation. They didn’t have access to a car and told us that they really wanted to vote but it just wasn’t an option.

When we told them that we could arrange for somebody to take them to the polls, they were thrilled.

That same morning, we met an elderly African American woman who was caring for her grandson at home and had no way of reaching her registered polling station, an hour’s drive away. We arranged for her to be collected that afternoon so that she could cast her vote.

It was exciting and rewarding to know that because of our work, people who would not otherwise have cast their vote had been able to exercise their democratic right and express their beliefs.

It has been said that Florida had its highest voter turnout in history, and we feel proud to have been part of that story.

We were part of a large and dedicated team of volunteers – many of them women – from all ages, backgrounds and walks of life.

When we worked alongside them, we felt that it was truly possible to change the world, and we still feel that energy now.

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Girl Leading

Mulberry is extremely proud to support the work of Michelle Obama’s Let Girls Learn campaign in the UK, and we have been working on a range of initiatives to take forward the work of the campaign over the coming months. In April 2017, we will host ‘Girl Leading’: a residential camp with a focus on girls’ leadership, open to girls attending secondary school in London and Somerset.

Taking place at Kilve Court residential centre in Somerset, Girl Leading offers girls attending secondary school in London and Somerset an exclusive opportunity to develop their leadership skills. Through a mixture of panel events, group work, and practical workshops, girls will think in depth about what it means to lead. Campers will have the opportunity to learn practical leadership skills from experts, and will benefit from meeting a wide range of leadership role models. A range of adventurous team-building activities taught by instructors will also be included. Ultimately, girls will work towards planning Personal Leadership Challenges to be carried out after the camp: these challenges will focus on supporting the work of Let Girls Learn in increasing access to education for every girl around the world. Even as they put their own leadership skills into action, Girl Leading participants will be helping open up opportunities for the global community of girls.

Schools in our network have responded enthusiastically to this event, and we are pleased to be working in partnership with the following organisations:

- Isaac Newton Academy
- Bow School
- St Philomena’s Catholic High School For Girls
- Stancheaver Academy
- Wadham School
- Lister Community School
- Green Spring Academy Shoreditch
- Clapton Girls’ Academy
- Plashet School
- Ursuline Catholic High School For Girls

Baking Club

Thanks to the fantastic youth empowerment charity XLP, we have been running a baking club for Year 8 students for the last few months.

On November 17th, a dedicated team of Year 8 bakers had the chance to visit Luminary Bakery in Stoke Newington, East London.

Luminary harnesses the power of baking to provide employability skills training to vulnerable women, including survivors of domestic violence and women who have been homeless. Staff at Luminary talked to students about the work that they do, answered students’ questions about the way in which social enterprises can help the most vulnerable people, and guided students in a cake-decorating exercise – in the course of which they learned some professional piping skills!

Students had a tour of the premises and saw first-hand the dedication and organisation that goes into shaping this fantastic organisation.
**Young Star Rising**

On November 16th, Mulberry had the honour of attending the Women of the Future Awards 2016, and watching as our own Nusrath Hassan won the Young Star Award.

This brand new category recognises the work of exceptional young women. Nusrath, who graduated from Mulberry in July 2016, had been nominated for the extensive work she had done during her time with us; not only as an ambassador for the school in her role as Deputy Head Girl, but as a role model for younger pupils, and a tireless advocate for the rights of women and girls everywhere.

Nusrath has been a central presence in Mulberry’s Model United Nations conferences since her earliest years at the school: now studying Law at SOAS, she continues to work with Mulberry students as a trainer, having occupied every conference role from rapporteur to Secretary General whilst still a student at the school.

As Deputy Head Girl working alongside Head Girl Muslima Sheikh, Nusrath was a sensitive and effective representative for her year group, and could always be relied upon to act as an ambassador of Mulberry.

A committed feminist and a gifted public speaker, as eloquent on Twitter as she is on the podium, Nusrath remains a vocal advocate for the rights of women and girls, and is particularly passionate about the need to place intersectionality at the forefront of feminist debates and feminist activism. In recognition of her dedication to girls’ rights, Nusrath was selected to host Michelle Obama when she visited the school in June 2015 for the UK launch of her Let Girls Learn campaign. In the wake of the visit, Nusrath was interviewed by local, national and international news.

Six Year 13 students attended the event in support of Nusrath. Team Mulberry were filled with pride as she gave an acceptance speech in which she reflected on the ways in which racial and faith-based discrimination impacts the lives of women in particular, and the importance of using the platforms that are offered us to speak out against intolerance in all its forms.

Nusrath consistently uses the platforms she is offered to advocate on behalf of women everywhere, especially those most often silenced. We are very proud of her, and of all Mulberry girls – we look forward to watching as they change the world.

**The Rights of the Child**

Our MulberryTalks programme was relaunched for this academic year on Wednesday November 30th, led by guest speaker Ruth-Anne Lenga, Head of Academic Programmes at the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education.

MulberryTalks are interactive seminars designed to bring our school community together in lively intellectual debate. Speakers give a presentation on a topic of their choice, followed by a Q&A session in which students and staff alike are encouraged to participate as actively as possible.

Ruth-Anne Lenga gave a fascinating presentation of the life of Dr Janusz Korczak. Korczak is widely recognised as a pioneer of children’s rights. He ran an orphanage in Poland in the early twentieth century where his charges were treated with the utmost respect and kindness: Korczak placed the rights of the child at the forefront of his practice, drawing up a set of principles which recognised a child’s right to dignity, respect, love and fairness. He instituted a children’s court run by children at his orphanage, where their peers and the adults entrusted with their care could be brought to trial in the event of an injustice. He had a visionary perspective on children who misbehaved or engaged in antisocial or delinquent behaviour, insisting that no child should be branded a lost cause on the basis of his actions. In particular, he recognised a child’s right to be treated with respect, and said that children ‘are not people of tomorrow, but people of today’: a child is valuable, important, and worthy of respect and dignity at all times, not just when they reach adulthood.

When the Nazis invaded Poland during the Second World War, and the orphanage was relocated to the Jewish ghetto, Korczak worked against appalling conditions to ensure that the children in his care had their basic needs provided for as far as was possible, and continued to be treated with love and kindness. Despite efforts by his supporters to rescue him from transportation to the Nazi death camps, Korczak refused to leave his children, and was eventually taken to his death in the gas chambers with 250 orphans.

Ruth-Anne Lenga traced the legacy of Korczak’s vision to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which is underpinned by many of the principles Korczak first articulated. She also showed how Korczak’s principles have influenced the most progressive modern thinking on teaching and caring for children, relating this directly to the kind of teaching and learning we practise at Mulberry.

As our Citizenship students begin learning about human rights, and our MUN delegates prepare to debate the treatment of refugee children at the Safe, Sustainable Seas conference, this year’s inaugural MulberryTalk was a rich resource indeed. We would like to thank Ruth-Anne Lenga and the Holocaust Education Centre at UCL for a wonderful start to this year’s MulberryTalks programme.
Team Mulberry joins Team GB!

This term, the Berry Bugle heard that Inaya Shajahan of 8RA has achieved something remarkable: Inaya has earned a place on Team Great Britain (Team GB), representing the UK at international sporting competitions, with the chance to compete in the Olympics when she is old enough to qualify. Inaya’s sport is karate. We interviewed her to find out more.

Tell us about how you qualified to be part of Team GB.
I had to enter a competition where I competed against girls my own age, in the same weight division and belt category as me (I’m a brown belt). I had to do a set of moves called Katas, and then fight an opponent, which is called Kumite. As soon as I stepped into that hall to compete, my stomach filled with a million butterflies. I was really nervous, but when I found out that I had made the team, I was over the moon.

What gave you the confidence to compete to be part of Team GB?
My uncle and my dad knew that I was capable of becoming part of the team, so they pushed me. I didn't really think that I could do it, but when I showed the judges my moves and heard their feedback, I started to believe in myself. Also, you can only enter the Team GB competition when your sensei – your karate teacher – thinks that you are good enough to have a real chance at winning, so I knew in my heart that I must have talent. At first I was really nervous, but when they announced that I had made the team, it was a really amazing feeling.

What is the rest of Team GB like?
It’s a big team – around 50 people. It’s a mix of different ages – the youngest member is only 7! We all train together, but we stick to our own Divisions, which are based on age and belt category. Everybody is so lovely and supportive. The older athletes mentor and encourage me. They set a positive example: if they can do all these amazing things, then so can I.

How did you get involved in karate?
My dad started taking me to karate classes at Kaizen Ryu Karate Club, which is the top club for young people in the UK. I was eight at the time. I really hated it at first, but my dad encouraged me to keep going: I started learning more of the moves, and making friends, and before long I found that I loved being there.

What is your training schedule like?
I used to just do one hour a week, then two hours, then four – now I do seven hours a week across three days, and once a month I have an extra four hours of training with Team GB on a Sunday. I’m training for Nationals at the moment, so I have an hour of training every Saturday as well.

How has karate affected you as a person?
It helps me to be more confident, and to recognise what I am capable of achieving. It’s quite a unique sport, and that motivates me more. I love being around all these wonderful people, and doing what makes me happy. I’m lucky because my family and friends are really supportive. My form group at Mulberry call me the karate girl!

What advice would you give to somebody who wants to try karate?
Just get involved! Find your local club and try it. Don't do too much at once: start slowly with an hour a week, and then build up. Make sure you drink lots of water, get plenty of calcium for your bones, eat a healthy balanced diet and sleep lots!

Which of your achievements are you most proud of?
I won a gold medal in Kumite at the Essex Opening, which is a big national competition. I was really proud of that because my mum wasn’t expecting me to win such a big award so soon, and she was really proud of me. Team GB is definitely my biggest achievement, though!

The Berry Bugle wishes Inaya the best of luck for the future! We look forward to cheering on a Mulberry gold medallist at the next Olympics…
Mulberry School for Boys gets the Go Ahead from the Department for Education

The Department for Education has given the go ahead for the Mulberry Schools Trust, which operates in Tower Hamlets, to open a brand new Secondary School in East London.

The school called Mulberry School for Boys will be a state funded Free School and will be a non-selective school. The site is yet to be determined.

This will be the third school within the Mulberry family of schools and the boys’ school will be modelled on the Trust’s oversubscribed and successful flagship school, Mulberry School for Girls. The approval comes at an exciting time as the Mulberry UTC is set to open in September 2017 which will provide ground-breaking employer-led education on the site of the Bow Fire Station on Roman Road. All three schools will work together so that the new school benefits from expert support as it grows to full capacity. Mulberry School for Boys will be an 11 – 19 six form entry boys’ school and will have 1,080 places. The aim is to develop the very highest aspirations in the young men at the school as the Trust believes that this enables them to lead successful, happy and fulfilled lives, making a contribution to their own community and to wider British society.

Like Mulberry School for Girls, the education provided at the new boys’ school will be tailored to the needs of gender in the 21st century and the school will share the features that have led to the girls’ school becoming an exceptional provider of education with a securely established reputation both locally, nationally and internationally – as seen in the links made in 2015 with the USA’s First Lady and her ‘Let Girls Learn’ initiative.

The vision of the Trustees of the Mulberry Schools Trust is underpinned by moral purpose – a desire to do more to improve the quality of education for all young people – and by a commitment to local schools working together to secure the future of Tower Hamlets education through an inclusive, ambitious, collegiate and high quality offer.

Dr. Vanessa Ogden, CEO of the Mulberry Schools Trust expressed her delight at the announcement from the Department for Education and would like to thank the community for their support.

**Mulberry Schools Trust** is a Multi Academy Trust which has been set up in 2016 in Tower Hamlets by the Governors of Mulberry School for Girls. Schools under the Trust include the Flagship school – Mulberry School for Girls, Mulberry UTC and now Mulberry School for Boys.

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**Mulberry’s Annual Charity Week 2016**

As the early autumn days drew in, the ambitious sixth form students of Mulberry were full of countless ideas for the upcoming Charity Week, an annual week of fundraising for causes selected by Islamic Relief.

It seemed befitting that levels of expectation were high, as the previous year’s fundraisers had set extremely high standards, which this year’s group felt the need to exceed – and oh boy, they did exactly that!

From Monday 31st October – Friday 4th November, with only five days to raise significant funds, the small but determined group raised a whopping total of £3442 to be donated to orphans in Aleppo, the Syrian city currently being bombarded by constant attacks in one of the worst global conflicts of modern times.

Our dedicated team of volunteers organised various activities, using every spare minute to reel in even the smallest donations – they knew that a little goes a long way. As I sat in the library one morning completing coursework, the room suddenly filled with the sound of a cheerful group chirping ‘Lollies! Lollies for 10p!’ It wasn’t so much the sweets as their enthusiasm that had them bringing in large sums on that day alone.

Earlier that day as I walked into school, a sensational aroma struck me – a smell unusual on the school grounds, but familiar to me from my mum’s kitchen. I learned that the team had been working tirelessly, cooking away to produce hot, steaming pakoras that had everybody, including the teachers, racing to the kitchens with their taste buds tingling. How can we forget the scrumptious bakery goods that they cooked up alongside traditional South Asian foods?

This huge variety of sweet and savoury foods was the result of exhausting but fun hours spent in the school kitchens: from 7am in the morning to the evening. Our dedicated team of volunteers organised various activities, using every spare minute to reel in even the smallest donations – they knew that a little goes a long way.

Our volunteer team with some of their fantastic teachers, celebrating a successful week.
Women of Faith: Leading the Change

A group of Mulberry Sixth Form students attended Women of Faith: Leading the Change, a school conference on Thursday 10th November at the Queen Elizabeth II Centre in Westminster.

Hosted by Ursuline High School, Wimbledon, the event was an exciting celebration, where students considered together the values they share and opportunities they have as a generation of women who will have more power than any that came before them. A diverse range of speakers inspired discussion, and our students were particularly struck by the contribution of Annie Zadie who is breaking down stereotypes through her work as a football coach, and Tulip Siddiq MP, who spoke about the importance of young people using their right to vote. Mulberry students took part in discussions with young women from other schools and faith backgrounds, considering how their values influence them to make a positive difference in the world. One Mulberry student, Hafzah Mohamed, was invited to give a speech onstage at this prestigious venue. She spoke articulately about women's religious freedoms, and shared with the audience the rich history of Muslim women refusing to be underestimated and achieving their dreams, from Fatima Al Fihri who founded the first university in the world over a thousand years ago, to Nadiya Hussain who won the Great British Bake Off last year, and Ibtihaj Muhammad, who was Team USA’s first Olympian to wear a hijab. Hafzah ended her speech by telling the audience that her “hope for the future is that women will be free to achieve their dreams, unrestricted by society’s expectations.”

Learning from Auschwitz

Two Year 12 students, Myesha Haque and Tasnim Basit, participated in the Lessons from Auschwitz Project this October.

Run by the Holocaust Educational Trust, the programme involved a one-day visit to the former Nazi concentration and death camp Auschwitz-Birkenau in Poland on 13th October. The course explores the universal lessons of the Holocaust and its relevance for today and aims to clearly highlight what can happen if prejudice and racism become acceptable. On the visit to Auschwitz, Myesha and Tasnim learned how perpetrators of the Holocaust sought to dehumanise their victims by forcing them to endure appalling conditions, such as living in stables intended for animals. The museum exhibitions we saw returned dignity and individuality to the victims, by displaying the family photos and children’s drawings. Students also attended an orientation workshop, at which they heard from a Holocaust survivor, and planned how to share their experience with our wider school community at a ‘next steps’ workshop. Our students have approached the programme with thoughtfulness, maturity and a desire to turn their feelings into actions. They plan to share their experience at the Mulberry Youth Conference in February 2017, with hundreds of young people from across London, and hope to encourage their peers to challenge prejudice and discrimination. Challenged by the dehumanising of victims, Myesha and Tasnim have also been inspired to create a visual memorial in our school grounds, using their research to commemorate some of the individual victims of the Holocaust personally.
‘Maths in Action’ event had me repeating 6 words: “WOW, I did not know that!”

I personally found this event was very informative and intriguing. I know, I get it; when you think maths you automatically assume boring lectures and picture some complex algebraic equations. However, once we got thinking and engaging with what the speakers had to say, we were presented with some pretty mindboggling stuff.

We like to think that we’re independent and single-minded – at Mulberry we are empowered independent women! But maths tells us that the picture can be more complicated than we think. More often than not our actions are influenced by those around us, so much so that we tend to act together like ‘a gigantic human herd’. There are hidden connections connecting all of us. For example, roughly we all know a similar number of people, although we have those extreme loners who know approximately nobody and those popular people who seem to know everybody. This idea can be represented as networks. Did you know that a similar idea about networking is used to identify the location of a serial killer from the positions of his killings? Or how about those traffic jams that seem to appear from nowhere? Well, that’s a result of the drivers reacting to other drivers and compensating for the minute difference in speed.

So, where can mathematics lead you in life: to become a maths teacher? Well, that’s what I thought too. However, this trip definitely broke that assumption. During World War Two, the Germans had mathematicians devise the Enigma code to send each other secret codes, and on the opposite side the Allies had mathematicians working on deciphering those codes. It’s said that the group at ‘Station X’ – shh, a top secret place – actually helped shorten the war by 2 years, saving millions of lives.

Hey, if you want to be an evil genius trying to take over the world, you might want to consider taking up maths. If ‘Evil’ is not your thing, how about being a hero and tracking down criminals? Maths can help you there. Or, if you want to just chill and play around on your electric guitar – have you ever considered how tight to tighten the strings or how to achieve the same strum sound at various paces on your guitar? Hey! Mathematics is the route to take there, too.
Tasneem Chowdhury, 13SS

Sign of the week

Each week, the Support for Learning Department teaches our students a different word or phrase to sign.

Why do we do this? Well, accessible sign-supported communication expands the education, opportunities and life experiences of children and adults with learning difficulties. At least 50% of the messages we receive are conveyed through non-verbal communication, so we decided it was important for the whole school to learn a ‘Sign of the Week’!

Our students use hand gestures to create representations of words: these are photographed and circulated to teachers who practice the signs with their forms and present it in assemblies too. This way, every child and member of staff has access to the weekly sign, learns a new skill, and comes to understand that communication is presented in many different ways.

We hope you enjoy using your signs with all your friends and teachers.

“I want to be a teacher now so I can teach people different signs!”
Nadirah Khanom, 8U

“I love learning new signs with my form”
Maesha Ali, 8Y

“Sign of the Week is fun”
Somaiya Ali, 8M

“Sign of the Week is a great idea to integrate all members of the school community”
Ms Spellman, Head of Year 7
Politics in Action

Four Year 12 students travelled to Manchester on Sunday 27th November to attend the Women’s Equality Party’s first ever party conference. Nafeesath Misiriya, Shahanara Islam, Aniqa Anjum and Nadia Ali represented our school feminist society, Feminist Fridays, at this exciting political event.

Party conferences provide opportunities for political parties, their members, supporters and observers to come together and debate the issues that matter most to them, working toward a clear set of policies that the party adopts as their official stance on a range of issues. Mulberry students attended as observers and so were unable to vote in matters of party business - but we were invited to submit a motion via the party leader, Sophie Walker.

Nafeesath Misiriya spoke on behalf of the Mulberry group, proposing a motion to improve the precarious socio-economic status of women - particularly disadvantaged women - through the following key objectives:

- Requiring companies to publish data on what they pay their male and female staff, with financial penalties for failure to comply fully
- Launching a government-funded public awareness campaign to raise awareness of the burden of unpaid care work placed largely on women
- Making funds available for schools serving underprivileged communities to run employability skills and adult learning classes for disadvantaged women
- Instituting a mandatory element of gender equality education in the National Curriculum
- Incentivising FTSE 100 companies to set a target of equal representation for women and men on their boards by 2025

The motion was put to the vote by Women’s Equality Party members, who passed it by a comfortable majority. The motion proposals have now been accepted as official party policies that will now be put into action over the course of the next few years.

This was a fantastic opportunity for students to observe and participate in the political process at first hand, and to learn about a political movement that has harnessed considerable grassroots energy. We would like to thank the Women’s Equality Party, and in particular Halla Gunnarsdóttir, Head of Policy and Partnerships, who worked hard to provide a platform for our students to make their voices heard at this event.

Global Cities Education Network Annual Symposium

On Monday 31st October 2016, Mulberry hosted a visit as part of the Global Cities Education Network organised by UCL Institute of Education (IOE) and the Center for Global Education at Asia Society for a group of Educational Leaders from around the world.

The aim of the visit was to look at the effective educational practice of Mulberry School for Girls and hear about the holistic approach the school takes in educating young women. The group heard and learnt about the City Excellence in Teaching Initial Teacher Training programme, the Women in Leadership programme that Mulberry runs with UCL IOE, the Extended Learning and Women’s Education programme for students and also about the Mulberry UTC and how the new school will further engage 21st Century Learners. The visit was hosted by the Year 10 and 13 Prefects who did a brilliant job and all the visitors were wowed by the school and have taken many educational strategies back to their own cities. We would like to thank UCL IOE for choosing Mulberry to form part of the visit.

Safe, Sustainable Seas

On 13th and 14th December, Mulberry hosted London state schools and international schools for the first of our two annual Model United Nations conferences. This year’s winter conference focused on the theme of safe, sustainable seas, including topics such as maritime piracy, marine litter and climate change.

Within the MUN programme, students are able to learn about the structure and functions of the United Nations through assuming the roles of UN council members. Students are allocated to countries in advance, and are expected to spend considerable time researching their country’s stance on the conference topic. Students also undertake training on the processes and procedures of UN committees. On the day of the conference, students are required to engage in fast-paced, often intense debates with council members representing other countries. They must represent the opinions of their allocated country, even if these opinions do not align with their personal attitude towards the conference topic.

MUN provides a stimulating atmosphere in which students are challenged to hone their research, debate and presentation skills, and to thoroughly understand crucial aspects of international politics and diplomacy.
Mulberry UTC: opening in September 2017

Mulberry University Technical College (UTC) is a new school for boys and girls aged 14-19 which is opening in Tower Hamlets in September 2017. It is being set up by the Mulberry Schools Trust and will be part of the same family of schools, a ‘sister school’ to Mulberry School for Girls. The UTC will be located at 64 Parnell Road, E3 2RU.

Mulberry UTC has three curriculum specialisms: digital technologies, the creative industries and the health sector. These are some of the fastest growing sectors of the UK economy and areas where there are many job opportunities for young people within east London. At Mulberry UTC, students will study GCSEs and A-levels alongside technical and professional qualifications, giving them a head-start when it comes to applying for university and their future careers.

The UTC is sponsored by leading organisations in our specialist areas: Bank of America Merrill Lynch, the British Film Institute, the National Theatre and Barts Health NHS Trust. Our university sponsor is Goldsmiths University of London. These sponsors will work closely with our Principal, Dr Katharine Vincent, and Dr Ogden, our Executive Headteacher, to ensure that Mulberry UTC provides the highest possible standard of education for our students, and that they are well prepared for future study and the world of work.

Creative industries specialism

There has never been a more exciting time to pursue a career in the creative industries. The creative economy is creating new jobs at more than twice the UK economy average and many companies struggle to recruit the skilled professionals they need. Mulberry UTC will give young people the knowledge, skills and professional networking opportunities they need for the wide range of exciting jobs within the creative economy. This might involve becoming an actor, designing theatre sets, producing and directing plays, films or TV programmes, designing websites, developing apps or becoming a journalist.

Students within the creative industries specialism will take part in a wide range of activities including:

- Creating TV and radio shows and broadcasting them to live audiences
- Planning, filming and producing your own films
- Reporting on local, national and international news stories
- Performing alongside professional theatre companies
- Learning the art of stage management
- Designing and creating costumes and sets to be used by real actors

Health specialism

Many young people aspire to work in the health sector, attracted by the opportunity to make a positive difference to people’s lives by helping to reduce the causes of ill-health and caring for people when they need it most. Mulberry UTC’s health curriculum, designed in collaboration with our sponsors Barts Health NHS Trust, will prepare students for a wide range of careers in the health sector. Students will learn in our simulated health environments and will develop a deep understanding of health workplaces and healthcare values, priorities and practices.
Health Science students will:
• Develop laboratory, research and analysis skills relevant to a range of science and health settings
• Learn to work safely and to control hazards in a hospital or a lab environment
• Study human physiology, nutrition and genetics, cell biology, microbiology and drug development
• Discover more about infection control, phlebotomy and pharmaceutical services.

Health Care students will:
• Build understanding of the requirements and challenges of healthcare settings
• Focus on relationships, safeguarding, equality & diversity, health & safety
• Develop a person-centred approach to care
• Study anatomy, behaviour, nutrition and support for dementia or mental health conditions
• Learn about public health, therapy services and immunology

State-of-the-art facilities and equipment

At Mulberry UTC, students will learn their craft in an environment specifically designed to foster their imagination and creativity. Our brand new building will house two dedicated performance spaces designed and developed by leading theatre consultants Charcoalblue, whose recent work includes the redevelopment of the Dorfman Theatre at the National Theatre. We will also have set and costume workshops, so that students can study all aspects of the theatre making process from lighting and sound to costumes, make-up and set design, as well as television, photography, radio and animation studios.

Health students will also have access to fully equipped science labs as well as a specialist hospital and healthcare simulation suite. They will learn how to programme Pepper, our friendly Robot, who is already being used in some European countries as a healthcare assistant.

Open Evening

If you are interested in learning more about Mulberry UTC, please come along to our Open Evening on Tuesday 17th January 2017 at Rich Mix (35-47 Bethnal Green Road, E1 6LA). For more details and to book your place, please email info@mulberryutc.co.uk

How to apply to Mulberry UTC

We are currently accepting applications for students who are in Year 9 or Year 11 and who want to join us for Year 10 or Year 12 in September 2017.

We also have some places available for Year 12 students who are currently studying Level 2 courses and want to undertake Level 3 study at the UTC.

The most important quality we look for in prospective students is a passion for one of our areas of technical specialism and the energy, enthusiasm and drive to succeed within the UTC environment.

Application forms can be completed on paper, online or downloaded from the Mulberry UTC website. The deadline for applications is 31st January 2017.