Aldgate East Stories

Six months ago, a group of Mulberry parents came together with other members of the local community to share their experiences, memories and stories of the area in which we live and work.

The result was a film, Aldgate East Stories, which celebrates the people who live, work and study in Aldgate East.

The 30 minute documentary takes us around the buildings, parks and markets of the local area and shows what these spaces mean to the people who live amongst them. Our learners not only conducted the interviews, they also learnt how to use cameras, set up many of the shots and planned the overall vision for the project, developing an amazing set of cinematography skills in the process! They worked hard over a period of three months to develop a really extraordinary piece of documentary filming. The project was really transformative for the participants, with one woman commenting that it “gave us the chance to experience something different, and opened my eyes to the different professions that are out there”.

Aldgate East Stories premiered at the Genesis Cinema in September, and on 20th November, the film was screened at a special event at our very own Mulberry and Bigland Green Centre. The very special event gave our community and learners an opportunity to see the film, and featured a panel discussion with the participants as well as a Q&A session with the audience and an exhibition of photographs of the spaces featured in the film.

A big welcome to the parents of our new Year 7s!

We want to extend a very warm welcome to the parents of all our new Year 7 students! As well as the trip to the Olympic Park, we have a special programme of events running only for these parents, which last term included the very popular bag decorating course, which runs at the Mulberry and Bigland Green Centre. Most of you will have had the opportunity to meet Sabina (see back page) last academic year at the transition meetings but if not please do get in touch to say hello - and watch this space for a special theatre trip next term!
Khatak dance explores experiences of migration

The last term saw a continuation of our partnership with Loughborough University and the Radar Dance Company, looking at different stories of migration and how they have shaped our community. A group of women worked with a researcher at the university and a professional dancer to share their own personal stories and histories of migration and to transform them into movement. Participants looked back through key moments in Bangladeshi history, moving through partition in 1947 to the Liberation War in 1971 and exploring the memories and the trauma, associated through those. The all-women group then worked with the facilitator to express these emotions and experiences through dance.

Royal visit

Mulberry School for Girls was honoured to host HRH the Duchess of Cornwall on 30th October. As part of her visit to the school, the Duchess met with Sabina Khan, the parent liaison at the school, and learnt about the wide programme of events that Mulberry offers to its community. She looked at pictures of artwork created by the Mulberry community, and learnt about the film that we have recently created (see page one)! 

Mulberry Celebrates Black History Month

During October, Mulberry put together its biggest ever programme of events in celebration of Black History Month.

There were plays, museum trips, workshops, film screenings and history sessions all celebrating the history and contribution of Black people in our community. Students, parents and community members came together to watch the film Hidden Figures, the inspiring story of three Black women whose remarkable mathematical skills brought them to NASA in 1950’s America. Local Black history was also the focus of our very first Black history pop up, run in conjunction with Tower Hamlets local archive. Halima from the archives led a fascinating session on Black migration to Tower Hamlets. There will be more pop ups throughout the year so make sure that you look out for these on our enrolment form if you are interested!

Contemporary Black art was the focus of our trip to Somerset House, where participants looked at photos by Ethiopian photographer Aïda Muluneh and South African artist Mary Sibande. They were treated to a tour led by Sabina and given the chance to respond to the works with their own drawings.

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Lantern Workshop

On Saturday 23rd November, parents gathered together for a lantern making workshop at the Mulberry and Bigland Green Centre. Parents from Mulberry, as well as from the local primary schools, worked together to make and decorate lanterns for Tower Hamlets’ third annual lantern parade. The lantern parade is part of the Aldgate in Winter festival which will be taking place on Friday 6th December and which is a celebration of the cultural diversity and wealth of the Aldgate community.

Olympic Park Trip

As in previous years, Mulberry’s Parent Liaison Officer, Sabina Khan, welcomed the parents of our new year 7 cohort to the school with a trip to the Olympic Park in Stratford. Parents were shown around the park and climbed the Orbit, Lakshmi Mittal’s towering 114m tower, enjoying the panoramic views of London from the top. Everybody really enjoyed the chance to talk and get to know each other, and to talk to other parents about their experiences of secondary school transition.

Sharing stories; sharing art

As part of our Migration Stories partnership with Loughborough University, we also gave learners the chance to explore the feelings and challenges associated with migration through art. A diverse group of learners, including those with heritage in Bangladesh, Pakistan and Somalia, came together to turn their migration stories into artworks. This project was an opportunity for those members of our community still at an early stage of English learning to participate in the project and the drawings we produced were turned into an animation showing the collective experiences of our

Bangla Drama!

What would you do if militants stormed a café while you were enjoying time out with friends and family? This was the question posed by Terror, a new play at the Pinter Studio which our learners watched as part of Tower Hamlets’ Season of Bangla Drama. The play, based on the real life experiences of Faraz Hossain in Bangladesh in 2016, recalls an incident that shocked both the nation and the diaspora, and included dialogue between the survivors and the departed.
We know that social media, friendships and the pressure of exams can make parenting a teenager seem like an impossible task! This year we have our most extensive programme of workshops to support parents and carers with seeing their children through those tricky teenage years. We started off last month with ‘Managing Teenage Emotions’ and ‘Emotional Wellbeing’, looking at how we can help teenagers stay on top of their feelings and not become overwhelmed by them. We have lots more workshops coming up next term so do sign up on the enrolment form.

Coffee with KPMG

Our learners were treated to a very special coffee morning in October when four visitors from KPMG, one of the UK’s ‘big four’ accounting firms, came to talk to us about careers in technology and coding. Anne Gosal, Director of Technology Consulting at KPMG shared her personal story with us and explained how this changing world creates a wealth of new career opportunities for adults as well as for young people. She also gave information on how parents can support their children in accessing these opportunities and in gaining internships at KPMG.

Our new enrolment form is included. We have lots of new workshops and classes starting in the new term, including Holistic Health, Community Interpreting, and Sewing. Please do take a look and contact Sabina or Muslima if you would like to sign up!