

DERWEN COLLEGE BUNGALOW REFURBISHMENT

Adults with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are being supported to learn valuable life and independence skills thanks to a generous donation to Derwen College Charity.

Derwen College, near Oswestry, has been granted £50,000 from the Basil Houghton Memorial Trust to help in the refurbishment of a revolutionary 'village' of bungalows for people with special educational needs and disabilities.



Pictured: Aaliyah James, Andrew Smith, John Hollick, Meryl Green, Francesca Cawood, Julia Baron, Denis Orme, Liz Hayward and Varvara.

The Agnes Hunt Village is a development of 28 bungalows which allow students at the specialist college, in Gobowen, to practise living away from home in a safe environment. The village is also home to adults with additional care and support needs, who are long-term residents at Derwen. They are encouraged to live as independently as possible in their own houses, and receive care and support from staff when needed.

Students Varvara and Aaliyah, are two students who live together in one of the bungalows. They showed visitors from the Basil Houghton Memorial Trust around their home, and described what living in the Agnes Hunt Village meant to them.

Hospitality & Food student Aaliyah and retail student Varvara make the perfect team.



Pictured: Aaliyah and Varvara.

Aaliyah says: "I do the cooking and Varvara does the tidying. My favourite meal to cook is Spaghetti Bolognese."

"We also enjoy a takeaway and have been making our own milkshakes and smoothies. We like to invite our friends, who are our neighbours, around for tea.

"We love having our own house, where we can invite friends around and have more freedom to do our thing.

Aaliyah and Varvara learn independent living skills in their bungalow, including planning, shopping and preparing meals, keeping the house tidy, and doing their washing.

Varvara says: "We've learnt how to live independently and would like to live in supported living after college. We'll really miss living together, though."

Representatives from the Basil Houghton Memorial Fund visited the college to present a cheque for £50,000 for the continuing refurbishment work at the bungalows.

Basil Houghton trustees Julia Baron (Chair), John Hollick (Treasurer), Liz Haywood, Denis Orme and Francesca Cawood met Derwen College Principal & CEO Meryl Green; Director of Finance Andrew Smith; along with Aaliyah and Varvara.

Julia Baron said, "We have an ongoing relationship with Derwen College and have supported activities including their Duke of Edinburgh's Awards, in the past.

"We were keen to support the Agnes Hunt Village because of the clear long-term benefit to young people. It is so important to offer young people greater independence for their future. Thank you to Varvara and Aaliyah for showing us their lovely home."

The Basil Houghton Memorial Trust makes grants to support people with learning difficulties and their family carers. Trustees are keen to hear from people who may need help to buy equipment, or access opportunities to help with independence.