

In the garden

We all need a break from the hustle and bustle of life, and spending time out in the countryside or in a peaceful garden gives us a chance to rest, gather our thoughts and recharge.



For those with a learning disability or a sensory impairment, a sensory garden isn't just a peaceful place to sit and contemplate – it can provide real therapeutic benefits. That's why we were excited to receive an extremely generous donation from the Lord Leonard and Lady Estelle Wolfson Foundation to enable us to build two new sensory gardens at Ravenswood in Berkshire.

These beautiful gardens have a variety of scented and textured plants, and were designed by experts to provide sensory opportunities that users may not normally experience. Each of the raised beds has a different theme. There's soft, dry sand; spiky cacti and mounds of hard rock. Easy to reach vegetable beds make growing your own fruit and vegetables a pleasure, and

gardeners can listen to the soft sound of running water from the garden's bubble fountain. The garden is filled with musical instruments, specially designed for outdoor use, which bring the garden to life with sound, while specialist gym equipment, donated by HSBC's charity panel, means residents can keep fit in the open air.

The gardens were opened in a ribbon-cutting ceremony by Lady Wolfson's sons, Edward and Jonathan Jackson. Norwood's Chief Executive Elaine Kerr said: "These gardens are a tribute to Lady Wolfson's vision and insight into understanding the therapeutic benefits and enhancements to the quality of life for someone with a disability or sensory impairment."

Leahanne Black, Pamela Barnett Home Manager, says the garden has made a huge difference to the people who live in the village. "Many people we support can't



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give a verbal comment but their body language speaks volumes. They've learnt about different textures of plants and sat back and watched the funny antics of the squirrels! They've re-enacted being on a beach and enjoyed building sandcastles."

The garden has also supported the Life Long Learning team with courses using intensive interaction and is playing host to some of this

Sensory garden at Ravenswood in numbers

- **222** tons of sand and sub-base material required
- **1,650** hours to build
- **360** bags of cement needed
- **6** digger and dumper machines used
- **340m** of metal edging used
- **240** holes dug by hand



A Ravenswood resident enjoys the sensory garden

year's Rosh Hashanah celebrations.

Leahanne added: "When you enter the sensory garden you feel that you are entering a place a million miles away. It's like a hidden oasis and it's great to be able to watch the wildlife in action. There is a real desire for people in Pamela Barnett to want to spend time outside."

