



A community newspaper for East Finchley run entirely by volunteers.

SEASON'S GREETINGS

THE ARCHER team wishes all our readers, deliverers and advertisers a very happy Christmas. We hope a peaceful and prosperous 2018 lies ahead for us all.



Commonwealth Games hopeful gymnast Amaranta Chavez. Photo Daniela D'Amato

Amaranta needs help to achieve her Australian dream

By Diana Cormack

A 14-year-old girl from a Muswell Hill gymnastics club could become one of the youngest ever selected to represent England in the Commonwealth Games. Amaranta Chavez has been asked to trial for selection in rhythmic gymnastics at the Games, which are to take place on the Gold Coast in Australia in April.

But Amaranta comes from a financially challenged background and the elite training that could help her fulfil her dream of reaching the Games is hugely expensive, as are her competition, costume and travel costs.

New fund supports 'exceptional talent'

The London Academy of Gymnastics and Dance (LAGAD) in Muswell Hill has let her train for free for the

past few years. Founder Jessica Shenton described the teenager as a spectacular gymnast with an exceptional talent.

Now the club is taking the next step by making a film for a crowdfunding campaign and setting up a fund to help Amaranta continue her training and meet the cost of international competitions, hopefully giving her the chance to represent England in Australia.

Currently she receives help from the British Gymnastics Hardship Fund and a grant from a local trust fund, but these only account for a small part of the thousands of pounds needed.

If you would like to help Amaranta, please contact LAGAD RG on 07887 367 171 or alternatively make a BACS payment or write a cheque to LAGAD RG with 'Amaranta' written on the back. Post this to LAGAD, Muswell Hill Centre, Hillfield Park, London N10 3QJ.

The gymnastics club holds classes at north London schools, including Eden, Martin and Tetherdown Primaries. It also runs sessions for children with disabilities (*The Archer*, July 2017). Find out more at www.lagad.co.uk.

Library entry problems as user numbers fall away

By Daphne Chamberlain

Readers continue to report problems with gaining entry to East Finchley Library using the new personal identity system during unstaffed hours. Those who turn up without first registering often find no help or information and user numbers are reported to have fallen dramatically.

Staff who don't help ...

Brian Ingram, of Brookland Rise, NW11, told us: "My wife and I, with library cards in our hands, were rebuffed by the security guard who eventually came to the closed door and told us we could not enter until we had registered. My wife felt he was more about stopping people entering than helping. He has obviously not been briefed properly."

The Archer asked Barnet Council if all staff had received training in the new procedure, and whether there was a problem with the card-scanning

machines. The reply was: "Yes, all library staff received training. As the new technology has been bedded in we have experienced some issues. These have been quickly resolved and during this transition period we have had staff on hand to assist."

... and staff who do

At the same time, we have also had comments from people who have found the staff helpful and polite.

The council told us there will be library staff available during unstaffed hours until the New Year.

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