

## **Rugby charity donation has autistic students jumping for joy.**

Students at [Autism Unlimited's](#) Portfield School Sixth Form in Christchurch are enjoying a host of mental and physical benefits from their new trampoline donated by a national rugby charity.

[Wooden Spoon](#) donated £5k to cover the cost of the 12ft, fully enclosed trampoline at the sixth form in Airfield Road.

The 'Wooden Spoon Trampoline' was officially opened by the charity's Trustee and Dorset, Wiltshire, and Hampshire Regional Chair Brett Bader, who then joined student Jack for an impromptu jump around.

Assistant Headteacher of the Sixth Form Carol Maccoll said: "We were absolutely delighted when Wooden Spoon announced it would be donating this fantastic piece of equipment to our outdoor area. Physical activity, exercise and healthy living are integral to our teaching here and many students use the trampoline to help them with their sensory regulation. It also helps when students have excess energy, as the physical activity releases endorphins which help students to calm and reduce anxiety. Using the trampoline can also aid balance and co-ordination."

She added: "It was wonderful to host Brett and Lucy at Portfield Sixth Form and as well as seeing the trampoline, they enjoyed a tour of the state-of-the-art building from the students and refreshments prepared in our training kitchen. We hope to form a lasting relationship with Wooden Spoon."

Portfield School Sixth Form opened its doors to students aged 16-19 in September 2023.

Students are offered a full curriculum including functional skills in English, maths and digital, Prince's Trust Personal Development and Employability Skills, ASDAN, RSHE, Preparation for Adulthood, and the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme.

The Wooden Spoon charity funds projects to support vulnerable children and young people across the UK and Ireland and since its formation in 1984 has raised more than £31m.

Brett Bader said: "The students we've met have been a real credit to Autism Unlimited. It was a wonderful opportunity to see the inspirational work and the power of a collective group of people to make a real difference, to people having their stepping stones as they progress into the community and onto future aspirations."

Ends.

Here's a link to a video to hear from students first-hand about the difference that this Sixth Form has made to their lives: <https://youtu.be/ZuTYn7RL9ew>

**Picture captions:**

[trampoline1] Wooden Spoon Trustee and Dorset, Wiltshire, and Hampshire Regional Chair Brett Bader with Assistant Headteacher of Portfield School Sixth Form Carol Maccoll.

[trampoline2] Sixth Form student Jack (centre) tried out the new trampoline with Wooden Spoon Trustee and Dorset, Wiltshire and Hampshire Regional Chair Brett Bader and Wooden Spoon Communications Manager Lucy Roy.

[www.autism-unlimited.org](http://www.autism-unlimited.org)

### **Information for editors:**

#### **Autism Unlimited**

Portfield School Sixth Form comprises a state-of-the-art learning hub, a professional kitchen for health and nutrition training, an in-house gym area, music recording studio and an actor in residence to enable students to study drama and work in theatre.

Autism Unlimited exists to create unlimited possibilities for autistic people. We do this by supporting autistic children, young people, adults, and their families with bespoke education, independent living skills, advice, and guidance. The charity also manages Portfield School for primary and secondary school students aged 4-16 in Parley and Futures for young adults aged 18-25.

#### **Wooden Spoon**

Wooden Spoon was born as the result of the disappointing performance of England during the 1983 Five Nations Rugby Championship. After watching their side condemned to the bottom of the tournament table with a 25-15 defeat to Ireland, five England supporters seeking solace in a Dublin bar were presented with a wooden spoon, wrapped in an Irish scarf, on a silver platter. Accepting the gift with good humour and grace, the group – which included Wooden Spoon's President Peter Scott – resolved to hold a golf match to see who would have the honour of keeping the tongue-in-cheek gift. Since then, the organisation's player members have raised more than £31m for more than 1400 children's projects. [www.woodenspoon.org.uk](http://www.woodenspoon.org.uk)

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