

The Programme

The Our Work of Art Rural Outreach Programme ran from 1st April 2019 to 30th September 2020.

It was led by Espression Arts CIC (Catherine Arnell) supported by Kent Arts & Wellbeing (Fay Blair & Ken Scott). The project mentor was Dr. Pat Chung, Canterbury Christ Church University.

The programme was designed to help to overcome some of the loneliness and isolation that many older people (aged 50-100) experience, including those who live with dementia and, or, other long term chronic conditions.

It also extended a rewarding experience to more, older, 'active ageing' people (aged 50-80+) as creative volunteers.

The group creative workshop sessions included painting ceramics and many other diverse crafting activities.

Our Work of Art Rural Outreach 2019-2020 EVALUATION SUMMARY



Kent Arts & Wellbeing



The 2019 programme successfully built on the 2018 Our Work of Art project. Age UK Canterbury and Age UK Herne Bay & Whitstable were again the core project beneficiary and steering group partners.





Giving a friendly smile puts everyone at ease. Listening to the older people talking about their past, brings a smile.

Maria, Volunteer



I have overcome a lot of my anxiety and nervousness that undermines my self-confidence.

The other project volunteers have become my new family, my new community. They are so friendly, kind and supportive that I feel comfortable and can talk about my mental health issues and the challenges I face to do with my own family.

Jacqui, Volunteer



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Over 50? Want to learn new skills? Make new friends & be creative?

4-PART Training Programme 2019
 Time: Wednesdays 4-7pm
 Next start date: October 30th, 2019

Join our fun, friendly **FREE** Training and meet our fab 'Our Work of Art 2018' volunteers.

You then decide what suits you: times and type of tasks to support older people in arts & crafts in local Age UK and other community centres. No previous creative/crafts experience needed.

You'll love being part of the volunteer team!

Contact Catherine or Fay for further details:

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espression
 in the community

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Kent Arts & Wellbeing




The 2019 programme extended the volunteer base in ‘arts for wellbeing’, recruiting and training more volunteers.

Some of the 2018 volunteers contributed to the training, to enthuse and motivate new people, keen to become creative volunteers, wanting to ‘make a difference’.

The formal feedback from questionnaires and forms, regularly collected from the volunteers and participants, was very positive. This was collated and analysed from 217 volunteer respondent forms, gathered over the programme.

The outputs

- 18 taster creative workshop sessions in rural outreach in 9 locations
- 47 creative workshops at Age UK day centres and other care settings.
- Training 14 new volunteers in safeguarding and creative workshop skills.
- Volunteer support via 10 peer network meetings, mentoring and 2 specialist craft sessions.

Achievements

The rural outreach workshops, through tea-time group activities, in village halls and other settings, were appreciated by all. The volunteers and the older people who took part in the local Age UK (and other) care settings, very much enjoyed their social and creative group experience.

The programme built the confidence of the volunteer team.

The ongoing facilitated, peer support network meetings offered a powerful means for sharing volunteers’ insights, building their creative skills, stimulating innovation with knowledge sharing. It consolidated their friendship network which proved invaluable with the advent and shock of Covid-19 in March 2020.



Overall the programme provided a positive challenge to sustain the volunteers' motivation and development.

The activities generated a sense of purpose for the volunteers, empowering them to support more, older people, reconnecting with some older people acquaintances from 2018 and meeting new people.

Supporting clients, especially those with complex needs, really gave me confidence.

Sue, Volunteer



It was lovely to see people's faces light up when they saw what they achieved, especially when initially they were so hesitant to paint.

Jill, Volunteer

Volunteer feedback

- 94% felt the sessions provided a chance for older people to chat and make friends.
- 92% felt the sessions provided a pleasurable experience for the older people.
- 92% felt the sessions enhanced the older people's wellbeing.
- 89% felt that the team working went well a lot or excellently.
- 88% felt the sessions motivated them to want to do more like today.
- 75% felt the sessions offered them an opportunity to make new friends.
- 64% felt the sessions enhanced their confidence in taking more of a leading role in creative sessions in the future.
- 49% felt the session gave them new insights about themselves.
- 40% felt the sessions challenged them to work out of their comfort zone.

Due to my illness and having had a long time off work, my confidence had been knocked and clearly I wasn't able to work at the same level of competence, as before.

Becoming a volunteer allowed me to be me, as the other volunteers interacted with me at face value.

Most of them were unaware of my health issues. My confidence grew.

Jill, Volunteer

Participant Feedback

Feedback from the older people participants who engaged in the taster sessions and workshops was that:

- 95% felt the sessions offered a pleasurable experience
- 92% felt the sessions was a chance to socialise, chat and make friends
- 85% felt the sessions motivated them to do more like today
- 84% felt the session enhanced their sense of wellbeing
- 68% felt the sessions gave new insights about themselves and what they can achieve.



What participants liked:

- *Support was great helped you get over insecurities*
- *Trying something new*
- *Good company, excellent tuition*
- *Very helpful team*
- *Meeting all other ladies and seeing all end results*
- *Doing something unusual*
- *Finding something I could do that I didn't think I could do*
- *Being praised*
- *People looking at what I've done*
- *Sitting with people and friendship*
- *Everyone talks to you, it breaks up the day*
- *Painting and having my own mug*
- *Achieving something*

The challenges and learning

- The face-to-face engagement, directly supporting the older people, is what most volunteers preferred as their priority and focus. Some were keen to support by preparing the resources needed ready for the sessions.
 - The development journey and confidence-building among the volunteers was slower-paced than expected. Few felt confident to take on a volunteer 'team lead' role. This meant more supervisory time (not budgeted for) had to be allocated to ensure all aspects were covered.
 - Although some volunteers had the relevant skills and experience they did not want to take on a workshop supervisory role. Some felt it too triggering of the stressful demands of their past professional work.
- Recruitment of a new group of volunteers took longer than expected. This pushed back the workshop delivery and resulted in an intensive bottleneck in delivery in the last few months.
 - An alternative workshops venue had to be found given one venue had refurbishment and staffing issues.
 - The budget had to be reworked given full project funding was not secured. Despite this, all aspects were delivered with increased 'in kind' time from the team lead.

- The COVID-19 Pandemic national lockdown measures meant that the final few workshops could not be delivered. However 29 out of the scheduled 36 workshops were successfully completed.
- The impact of stringent social distancing and isolating measures was a shock for most people. The project team spent time supporting volunteers one-to-one via phone.
- Many volunteers were anxious and vulnerable people in their own right, who found life mentally and emotionally very challenging.
- Volunteers were empowered (by the project leads) to connect via social media and encouraged to connect with each other online, using Zoom for the network meetings.

- The learning from the project highlighted the need to widen the net of skills and experience of future volunteers. This would be to attract in more people keen to help with the admin and other logistic tasks needed to make the project tick and be sustainable long-term.
- The need for further training was identified: to deepen the project team lead & volunteers' understanding and practice in admin management relating to the project protocols (monitoring of safeguarding issues health & safety assessments).

Volunteering gives me a chance to support others whilst being part of a caring team.

I have helped with tidying up after arts groups and continue to help in many ways, such as preparing arts kits for distribution at Expression Arts studio/café.

I have learnt to use Zoom, which has been a lifeline, although my internet plays up sometimes.

Sue, Volunteer

Some of my biggest achievements were: being able to support other more anxious co-volunteers; leading volunteer team debriefs at the end of a workshop.

Being part of a loving and caring, cohesive team meant that we could run a workshop unsupported (thus freeing up Catherine).

This was very rewarding.

Jill, Volunteer



Peer Network Meetings



Both experienced and new volunteers valued the peer Network meetings.

77% enjoyed them a lot and 85% felt the meetings were very useful (or excellent).

I help with prep and support many different kinds of activities both in the studio café and in mobile, community activities. They are my lifeline that gives me a sense of purpose. I have been happy to lead and take on more responsibility.

Maria, Volunteer

What volunteers liked:

Lots of conversation and fun

Meeting new and interesting people

Did something for the community

I like to help others succeed

The smiles and pleasure of participants

Volunteering enhances my sense of wellbeing

Enabling people to fulfill their potential

Workshop Locations & Venues

**Barham
Bekesbourne
Chartham Hatch
Chestfield
Harbledown
Seasalter
Tankerton**

**Age UK Canterbury
Dementia Café, Thanington**

**Whitgift Court Sheltered Housing,
Canterbury**

Lang Court Sheltered Housing, Whitstable

**Old Farmhouse Care Home, Wincheap
Canterbury**

Harrier Lodge Care Home Whitstable

**Age UK Herne Bay & Whitstable
Cogs Group**

**Age UK Herne Bay & Whistable
Bradbury Centre**

**Catching Lives,
Open Centre for
Rough Sleepers & Homeless
Canterbury**



Programme Funders

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Fay Blair, Programme Evaluator 2020

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