



Creative Age Festival 2010

ac arts care



The concept for the **Arts Care Creative Age Festival** came from our desire to focus on the benefits of creativity in Older Age. As **Arts Care** artists one of our primary aims in facilitating this unique Festival was to invite Older Age healthcare service users to participate in a series of arts workshops in the hope that we could offer new skills, foster a sense of shared experience and celebrate the diversity of each other's lives. Having fun was, of course, very high on the list!

The Arts Festival took place in five healthcare facilities across Belfast, incorporating hospital, daycare and residential services. Visual, literary and performing arts workshops were offered in each facility comprising silk painting, dance, music and creative writing.

The Lord Mayor of Belfast, Councillor Pat Convery, generously hosted the festival finale in Belfast City Hall. The many possibilities for developing a lively and meaningful cultural life in healthcare environments were showcased at this event. All of the staff and service users involved in the festival were invited to share in the celebration. A short film of the process was shown, along with a dance performance by participants in the festival, an exhibition of the visual artwork created during the workshops, and musical performances.

Cheryl Bleakley, Artist-in-Residence, Belfast HSC Trust

“I have loved doing all this art and the music and dance. It reminds me that I still have so much to give, and how much life I have in me. It's been great to have fun and to learn about each other.”

May, Meadowlands

“I fully appreciate the importance of creativity to people's well-being and it is good to see the role played by Arts Care in providing this unique type of support.. I would like to offer my best wishes for a successful launch...”

excerpts from letter from Dr Andrew McCormick, Permanent Secretary and HSC Chief Executive



Music

*“The music was good - it made me happy.
I liked the dancing - it helped me a lot with
the exercises.”*

Theresa

*“It has been great to see how much the people
taking part have enjoyed themselves. I have been
surprised by the level of response to the arts
activities. It has been great to see and has given
us (the staff) ideas that we can try and use as well.
I would love to see more of this.”*

Care Professional, Meadowlands

*“Really good fun. I would love to do this all
the time.”*

Patsy





Visual Art

“The project has taught me to appreciate art more. It did me good and I’m beginning to look at things in a different light. I’m very proud of the work. I’m going to try some more of it when I get home.”

May and Gretta, Meadowlands

“I can’t believe I was able to do that so well. I love the idea of leaving behind something that I have made that is about me, and that other people can enjoy.”

Delores, Meadowlands

“It was great to find the photographs and tell the others about the times I spent there, and hear about their experiences. The colours spilled into each other when we were working with the inks and I was pleased with the atmosphere it created. I’m pretty proud of myself. No-one can tell me I’m past it!”

Evelyn, Meadowlands

Silk Painting 76 inches x 36 inches



By Ballyowen Group



Dance

“I didn’t think I would be able to dance in my wheelchair like this but I have really enjoyed trying this out. I would love to try more dance like this. It makes you feel good and takes your mind of other things.”

Service user, Meadowlands

“I heard we had dancing again here today and I was so looking forward to it. I remember the last class. We had so much fun and it was great to hear us all have a good laugh together. It takes your mind off things and brightens up the day.”

Service user, N.I. Hospice

“The dancing made me happy and made me laugh as well”

Mary, Ballyowen

Silk Painting 76 inches x 36 inches



By Chestnut Grove



Visual Art

“It was great seeing the people having so much fun together. Many of them got very animated and showed how much energy they (still) have.”

Member of staff, Ballyowen

“It was very great - I enjoyed it.”

Mamie

“One of the overriding observations that I have made during the dance workshops has been the high level of social interaction generated within each of the participating groups. They all seemed to enjoy the opportunity to express their thoughts, memories and aspirations.”

Jenny Elliott, Festival Dance Facilitator

Silk Painting 76 inches x 36 inches



By Northern Ireland Hospice



hens

goggles

Creative Writing

“At the moment because of my health condition I am learning a lot about Life” **Zella**

“Boy meets girl, what have ye – and that’s it!” **Margaret**

“If you go to bed with a pixie hat it’ll be a wee girl, go to bed with a small cap it’s a wee boy!” **Daisy**

I said to the doctor, “well doctor my mother said you have to give yourself a shake and get on with it, but its getting very sore to shake now” **Evelyn**

Silk Painting 60 inches x 40 inches



By Meadowlands, Musgrave Park Hospital



For all their sheer enthusiasm, hard work, and all the fun that was had,
we would like to thank:

All the participants and staff from :

Ballyowen House, West Belfast

Chestnut Grove, North Belfast

Edgcombe Day Centre, East Belfast

Meadowlands, Musgrave Park Hospital, South Belfast

Northern Ireland Hospice, North Belfast

and

Arts Care artists:

Brendan Popplestone - Musician

Beverley Healy - Visual Artist

Clare McComish - Visual Artist

David Cunningham - Creative Writer and Musician

Helen Shields - Visual Artist

Jenny Elliott - Dancer

Colin Cairns - photographs of the participants

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Recognised as a Charity by the Inland Revenue No XR 77433

Patrons: The Marchioness of Dufferin & Ava,
James Ellis, Evelyn Glennie OBE, Dame Mary Peters CBE,
Neil Shawcross, Seamus Heaney

Supported by
 **The National Lottery**[®]
through the Arts Council of Northern Ireland



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Social Care Trust

