

UNIQUE COMMUNITY CHARITY







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Congratulations to all and long may this incredible charity continue to grow and evolve!

Erina Davidenko (Chair of Trustees)

sacrificing any quality.





www.uniquecommunity.org charity number: 1077222



CHARITY INFO

OBJECTS

The objects of the charity are to advance social inclusion, nurture creativity and create daring new art through the provision of arts activities supported by an arts therapist, including (but not limited to) drama & theatre-making, music, dance, writing, film-making, design & digital art. The work is for the benefit, in particular but not exclusively of; children, young people and people from traditionally marginalised communities such as; immigrants, asylum seekers & refugees, people with disabilities, people experiencing mental health & behavioural difficulties, people from ethnic minority backgrounds, people from lower socio-economic backgrounds, and other disadvantaged backgrounds with the aim of inspiring confidence, improving self-esteem, connecting with peers to reduce isolation, exploring challenging subject matter to build resilience and empowering people with tangible skills that can help them be actively involved in society.

VISION

Everyone deserves a safe space in which they can explore, create and thrive.

MISSION

- INSPIRE We inspire positive change in our community's mental health and wellbeing. We turn their struggles into confidence through the arts. Our community is built on sharing, learning and growing from each other's lived experience.
- CONNECT We tackle isolation amongst marginalised groups by developing peer-to-peer connection. We invite them to grow our community and create lifelong friendships.
- EXPLORE We explore emotive and challenging subject matter through the arts. We maintain a safe space for our community to be bold; finding their voice, building resilience and developing daring new art.
- EMPOWER We empower our community to co-design all of our projects. This develops tangible skills, to support them in navigating personal and global challenges.



CHARITY INFO

VALUES

- Safe Anyone can access our projects without risk of physical or emotional harm.
- Calm Everyone feels included in sessions without physical or emotional distress.
- **Prepared** All projects are carefully planned with the participating group in mind.
- Fun Every participant enjoys our sessions and the opportunity to celebrate themselves.

OUTCOMES

- 80% of people will have improved mental health wellbeing and feel more confident to express themselves.
- 80% of people will feel less isolated and more connected with their peers and community.
- 80% of people will have improved critical thinking skills & feel more resilient in the face of challenging circumstances.
- 80% of people will have gained tangible skills that will enable them to navigate personal and global challenges for a better future.

APPROACH

INCLUSIVE, ACCESSIBLE, CO-DESIGNED

Most people who find their way to Unique Community come from marginalised backgrounds, often having experienced significant trauma or social isolation. We shape our welcoming community around their unique needs. The personal stories and experiences of each person are entwined within every aspect of our programs, inspiring creative sessions that centre their perspectives. We invest in this approach through creating a safe, calm and prepared environment. An Arts Therapist/Wellbeing Officer supports every single one of our sessions. We celebrate each individual as they are and encourage our community to celebrate each other. No one is left behind. Our inclusive culture fosters creative exploration. In our small space, our community is empowered to tackle big things and better face the world beyond our walls. We encourage critical thinking through an empathetic lens. Critical thinking involves seeking, analysing, and evaluating multiple perspectives on a complex question or issue, being able to "see" through someone else's eyes is essential. Our staff and members hold themselves and each other accountable. Our values give them the vocabulary to do this.



CHARITY INFO

PROGRAM AREAS

BRENT YOUTH THEATRE

Inclusive arts activities for children & young people.

Actors Studio - Performing arts training including; musical theatre, physical theatre & acting. Backstage Crew - Theatre craft training including; scriptwriting, costume & set design, sound & lighting design and animation.

Music Den - Music production training including; songwriting, composition, singing, instrument playing & performing.

COMMUNITY

Inclusive arts activities to support people from traditionally marginalised backgrounds in the local community and beyond.

The Stork Project - Arts activities to support the mental health & wellbeing of refugees.

One Flow One Brent - Supporting young people through professional development and mentoring.

Bespoke Community Projects

SCHOOLS

Inclusive arts activities & teacher training to support children & young people's development at schools.

DYCE - Developing young people's critical thinking & empathy through process drama workshops Drama Club - Extra-curricular performing arts sessions for schools Chalkhill School Arts Project



THEME

ANNUAL THEME EXPLAINED

Every year we collaborate with participants and the wider community to develop a theme for the artistic year's season. Themes explore societal challenges our community is facing and are used as a catalyst for making original devised work across all projects. The intention is that through the creative process participants are able to find answers through difficult situations.

2021-22 THEME: SNAKES & LADDERS, STORIES OF SURVIVAL IN TIMES OF TURMOIL Centred on learning from the diverse Brent community about moments that they were in 'turmoil' and gaining wisdom through their journey of overcoming and 'survival'

2022-23 THEME: MONSTERS, FACING OUR MONSTERS SO WE DON'T BECOME THEM Centred on finding the route of our fears, analysing the ways in which they could manifest in our behaviours and finding the strength for overcoming them.



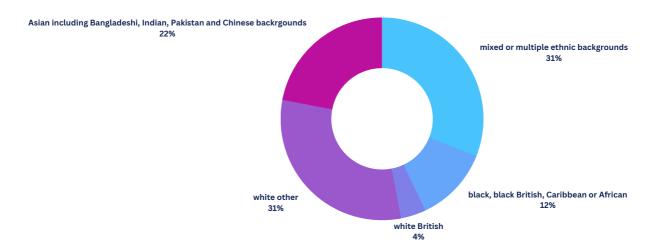
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SESSIONS & PARTICIPANTS

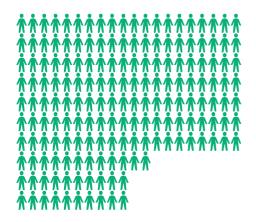
Mostly children and young people (CYP) find us through referrals or word of mouth as a support service. 30% have Social, Emotional and Mental Health difficulties, 30% are on Free School Meals, 30% are refugees, 2 CYP identify as gender fluid and 25% have a disability and/or are neurodivergent.

ETHNICITY DEMOGRAPHICS



180 TOTAL SESSIONS DELIVERED

172 TOTAL CYP ACCESSED BRENT YOUTH THEATRE







ACHIEVEMENTS

The Snakes & Ladders project ran throughout 2022 as an exploration of Brent's heritage through the gathering of oral histories based on the theme 'Stories of survival in times of turmoil'. 30 local people from diverse backgrounds shared their stories.

Children and young people then created art on the basis on these stories which included:

- 2 original shows performed at WAC Arts
- 1 comic book based on one of the shows
- 1 animation based on one of the shows
- 1 exhibition displaying behind the scenes of how everything was made

In 2023 we also ran our very first fundraiser open mic night, raising over £1000 for the charity!

FEEDBACK

"I watched the show and half way through I realised this is about us, about how we came here and I started to cry..." Audience Member, WAC Arts July 2022

"It reflects Brent's diversity, which is very special." Exhibition Attendee, The Yellow January 2023

"It is encouraging to see young people working together and learning essential things such as friendship & love." (Exhibition Attendee, The Yellow January 2023)

"I feel more connected with my community because I have learnt about people and their experiences." Young Person, Exhibition Attendee, The Yellow January 2023

"Wow, wow, wow... So many beautiful cultures in one!" Exhibition Attendee, The Yellow January 2023

"I think this project has allowed a lot of young people to see & understand all different structures in different cultures, helping develop empathy." Exhibition Attendee, The Yellow January 2023



OUTCOMES & OUTPUTS 2022-23

		OUTCOMES	IMPROVED MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING		INCREASED SOCIAL CONNECTION		INCREASED RESILENCE	GAINED TANGIBLE SKILLS
		AGES 7-11	94%		90%		75%	95%
		AGES 11-16	8	7%	70%		90%	90%
OUTPUTS	HOPE ROAD & AMBER HOUSE				E ROAD C BOOK	SNAKES & LADDERS EXHBITION		SPRING SPECTACULAR FUNDRAISER
VENUE	PUBLIC REHEARSALS & WAC ARTS, CAMDEN	ONLINE, INSTAGRAM		PRINTED COMIC BOOKS DISTRIBUTED ACROSS THE BOROUGH			HE YELLOW, MBLEY PARK	THE YELLOW, WELMBLEY PARK
AUDIENCE/ VIEWERS	332	1289		750			150	100
	2,621							

SPRING SPECTACULAR FUNDRAISER FAMILY FEEDBACK

"This is just to say a huge thank you for the truly extraordinary and exceptionally enjoyable concert last week. I was blown away to witness strong bond between all members, young or old and it was especially heartwarming to watch teachers guide children as well as blend in and perform alongside them. Every single teacher in your team is exceptionally talented and unconditionally dedicated to our children. I was feeling the warmth and care directed to them and it touched me and made me very happy."

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CASE STUDY

AGE OF YP: 9
SESSIONS ATTENDED: ALL

BACKGROUND

Lara began attending in September 2022. They are listed as gender fluid. Iara often requests to be referred to by female pronouns and the female orientation of their name. They are cheerful, bubbly and very talkative. They have been known to attach themselves strongly to a trusted adult. They will begin to state that they like everything this member of staff likes. If the space is not calm they can become overstimulated, using high pitched vocalisations in energetic activities. They also have a tendency to want to separate themselves from the group, standing by the window or the corner of a room. They are usually willing to re-join the group when prompted by a trusted member of staff.

TAKING PART

Attended all the sessions but with a couple of weeks absence towards the end of term. Iara particularly enjoyed movement activities and artistic activities. Drawing seemed to give lara an outlet, time and space to regulate emotions. They also enjoyed group work but needed some support in being able to navigate peer interactions, especially with YPs who are quite boisterous. They are very imaginative and relish moments in which they can engage to explorative and imaginative play. They tend to be drawn towards overtly feminine subjects and ideas within the sessions.

IMPACT

They seems to relish the opportunity to explore their gender in a new space. They were particularly excited to be allowed to use the girls bathrooms. Positive relationships developed at BYT could potentially be beneficial as they grow and further develop their identity. Iara appears to feel comfortable in the space when they have a trusted member of staff nearby. They are learning to form and maintain friendships with young people from a wide range of backgrounds. Lara has been developing their communication and social skills through group work. Over the three terms, they have benefited from developing independence within the sessions and have made positive connections and friendships in the group. Lara also performed on stage with great confiednce, and expressed their excitment in performing their scenes.

YP FEEDBACK:

Improved mental health & wellbeing? Agree 7/10
Improved confidence & self-esteem? Strongly Agree 10/10
More Connected with peers? Strongly Agree 9/10 because Moira is my friend
More connected with community? Strongly Agree 10/10 yes because I <3 Brent Youth Theatre
Improved critical thinking skills? Agree
Improved resilience? Agree because I am kind
New skills developed? Agree



CASE STUDY

AGE OF YP: 13

SESSIONS ATTENDED: Previously Actor's studio, currently backstage crew

BACKGROUND

Lucy has been attending Brent Youth Theatre for many years with her two younger siblings. Her family has a close relationship with the organisation. Lucy experienced family based trauma as a young child. Lucy initially came across as unapproachable and resistant to adult or peer interactions. She often looked visibly tense in sessions, crossing her legs and balling her fists, she often provided non-verbal responses, such as shrugging, or answering in a monosyllabic manner.

TAKING PART

Lucy previously attended the actor's studio in which she requested to have a non-acting stage manager role, in which she had to plan and organise the stage design, costumes and props. She had to go and speak to YP to find out about costumes and props. It was really positive to see her challenging herself to initiate conversations with YP, some of whom she had never spoken to before. Lucy took part in some BYT mentoring sessions and spent time working 1:1 with the wellbeing officer as part of the stage manager role. She used the time to communicate challenges and anxieties she experiences, particularly at school. This year Lucy has joined backstage crew so that she can continue nurturing her interest in the non-acting roles. This is a calmer session which felt like a better fit. She often engages in conversations with other YPs and will join conversations with known adults.

IMPACT

She has developed new skills around communication and managing others within a theatrical setting. Lucy appeared more open to responding to initiating interactions with YPs. She has been able to step out of her comfort zone and form connections with other YPs. Lucy formed a friendship group at school, which she finds very difficult to manage and often worries about appearing "weird". Her relationships with adults within BYT is more trusting. She is now able to openly speak about the difficult emotions she frequently experiences, particularly around her self-image, friendships, social inclusion and her relationship with food. Lucy's mood fluctuates and some weeks she presents as having low mood. However, her attendance is very constant and she appears to use the sessions well to support her wellbeing.

YP FEEDBACK

Improved mental health & wellbeing? Strongly Agree Improved confidence & self-esteem? Neutral More Connected with peers & community? Strongly Agree Improved critical thinking skills? Strongly Agree Improved resilience? Strongly Agree New skills developed? Strongly Agree





THE STORK PROJECT

This project was launched in the previous financial year as a result of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. from April - September we continued with the delivery of weekly coffee mornings alongside which we offered group therapy and ESOL classes. In September we noticed a shift in the needs of the group and being an arts organisation proposed an arts project to the group. To our great delight they were very open to the idea. The project launched as an intergenerational arts support service with the aim of helping children and young people process the effects of war and migration together with their adults. Alongside this work continued to support the community with the help of a dedicated team of volunteers who continue to work tirelessly to support this community.

- **18 COFFEE MORNINGS**
- **13 ARTS SESSIONS**
- **11 GROUP THERAPY SESSIONS**
- 11 ESOL CLASSES
- **4** PEOPLE SUPPORTED INTO FULL TIME EMPLOYMENT
- **23 PEOPLE ASSISTED INTO COLLEGE**
- **15** INDIVIDUAL CRISIS GRANTS APPLIED FOR & RECEIVED
- 12 FAMILIES ASSISTED INTO INDEPENDENT HOUSING
- **87 FAMILIES ADDED TO SUPPORT WHATSAPP GROUP**
- 1 ORIGINAL MUSICAL WRITTEN AND READY TO BE PERFORMED IN SUMMER 2023
- **25 CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE ATTENDED WEEKLY SESSIONS**
- **38 ADULTS ATTENDED WEEKLY SESSIONS**





THE STORK PROJECT

CASE STUDY

Tanya and her son Sasha found themselves alone on the 24th February as the father was called to fight in the war as soon as it began. Based in Kharkiv, the danger started from the moment the war began. They made their way to the basement of their home with only the clothes on their backs. For one month they lived in a basement. Several attempts to rescue the family were made but they were too scared to leave having witnessed others die attempting to do so. Finally they took the chance and escaped. Luckily once they were out of Ukraine they were quickly able to get a family visa and arrived in London to live with a family member who was already here. For 3 months they lived in a small studio flat with their family. Both Tanya and Sasha were experiencing significant mental health & wellbeing difficulties due to the trauma they had experienced and their living circumstances. Sasha was especially struggling as he had no English and hadn't yet started school. The family was referred to us by another parent whose children were already accessing our services. They started attending our weekly coffee mornings and with that began our support for the family. We helped them find a new home in Harrow, we helped Sasha transfer to a new school, we supported Tanya through accessing mental health support and most importantly Sasha started attending our weekly youth theatre. He was welcomed into the service with open arms and not only participated in the final show, Amber House but was given one of the biggest parts. It was performed at WAC Arts in July and a film of this show has been circulated to family, friends and members of the army in Ukraine who have used it as a source of hope. Tanya and Sasha continue to attend weekly sessions and are looking forward to being in more





THE STORK PROJECT

PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

"Although I don't always participate, I would like to thank you from the bottom of my heart for the kind hearted work you are doing, for the time you have spent helping and for the effort you have put in. But mainly I want to thank you for the brilliant achieved result."

"I want to really thank you for what you are doing. Recommendations, advice and help - all of this we do not have enough of. Thank you God for giving us you."

"Can not express my gratitude enough to Natalia and The Project. First of all I am grateful for the support on all levels, emotional, informational, material; I am grateful for the meetings where we all can share and discuss the worries or just get such needed knowledge or information about help for Ukrainians, who are in difficulties. And the biggest thank you for the help for our children, for creating amazing projects for them being involved and ease their stress on how to settle or integrate in a new environment in a new country. Huge thank you!"

"This project is a helping hand and moral support for everyone who accesses it. There is advice and an answer to all of our questions, psychological and moral support. Empathy towards our situation is what we need most at the moment. I think that the project is priceless. Thank you so much."

"I am very grateful for this project because it has provided us with a platform for finding out necessary information that is not easily accessible to us. For me personally it was very wonderful to meet someone like you because you are the first person since arriving that I have been able to speak to in a hopeful way and leave in a good mood."

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ONE FLOW ONE BRENT

Throughout Autumn 2022 - Spring 2023 we worked in partnership with Connect Stars and Young Brent Foundation to deliver professional development workshops and 1:1 mentoring sessions to young people. The project is centred on supporting young people at risk across three estates in Brent; Stonebridge, Church End and Chalkhill. It is part of the Violence Reduction Unit's 'My Ends' program to prevent violence across 32 London boroughs.

We delivered professional development workshops based on what the young people wanted to learn about including; CV writing, interview technique, public speaking, photography, wellbeing and personal boundaries and social media planning. Mentoring sessions were delivered by a trained Drama therapist whose approach was both to support in day-to-day struggles as well as doing mental health check-ins.

PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

"1:1's helped me think in the long term and set goals for the future which helped me feel and think more positive, the workshops were really helpful in helping me think more positive about what I was going through, helping me expand my knowledge. From the photography workshop we did I now use my photos and it is a conversation starter. I feel a lot more resilient about the things that are happening locally, I tend not to think about the things happening globally because it's not something I can control. I'm definitely, more confident in communicating in a large group of people, the cv workshops I was able to see my achievements and reflect on the things I have done, also positive self talk."

- **18 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS**
- **59 1:1 MENTORING SESSIONS DELIVERED**
- **24 YOUNG PEOPLE BENEFITTED**















BESPOKE PROJECTS

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK

We were approached by Wembley Park, Quintain to partner in the delivery of creative workshops as part of Mental Health Awareness week. The project involved bringing together Year 6 pupils from 8 local schools and participants of the Dementia Cafe, to create music together.

- **3 WORKSHOPS DELIVERED**
- **80 SCHOOL PUPILS PARTICIPATED**
- **8 SCHOOLS WERE INVOLVED**
- **12 DEMENTIA CAFE PARTICIPANTS**











FESTIVE PROJECT

We were funded by the Harrow Holiday Activities Fund to deliver a week-long project for Ukrainian families during the festive season to support them through the loneliness they may experience as a result of being far away from home. We explored the idea of 'Christmas' what it means in Ukraine and what it means for people in the UK. They created a film based on these ideas.

4 WORKSHOPS DELIVERED / 514 FILM VIEWER AUDIENCE

STAT

We work with Sport at the Heart, Connect Stars and the Safer Neighbourhoods Board to provide Year 6 pupils on the cusp of transition a chance to experience what's on offer at our service through weekly workshops. Mentors then accompany interested CYP to our sessions. These workshops are aimed at young people who are vulnerable or at risk and wouldn't normally have access to extra-curricular activities.

10 WORKSHOPS DELIVERED / 90 CYP PARTICIPATED



SCHOOLS

DYCE WORKSHOPS

DYCE (Developing young People's Critical Thinking & Empathy) was developed as part of 2021-22 Snakes & Ladders season during which young people explored real life stories of survival in times of turmoil. As part of the work we spoke extensively with participants, schools & local youth organisations about what would truly help the next generations cope with the extreme challenges we are facing as a society. The biggest concerns our community raised were; feeling overwhelmed, lack of connection with others & powerlessness.



The workshops are based on the shows created at Brent Youth Theatre. This gives school pupils the opportunity to experience the story and concepts in real time during the **process drama** sessions.

Process drama is a method of teaching and learning where both the students and teacher are working in and out of role. It involves the group becoming part of a world where they are invited to take a walk in someone else's shoes.

...a task to be undertaken, a decision to be made, or a place to be explored." - Cecily O'Neil, Educator & Scholar

The workshops give children & young people the opportunity to safely engage in a dialogue of empathy and critical thinking based on themes that acknowledge world events through fun & interactive drama activities led by trained facilitators.

41 WORKSHOPS DELIVERED

1204 PUPILS PARTICIPATED

12 SCHOOLS WERE INVOLVED

2 YEAR FURTHER FUNDING SECURED





SCHOOLS

DYCE

FEEDBACK

"I just wanted to say a huge thank you on behalf of our year 5 children and staff for the amazing workshops today. The children absolutely loved it and all of the teachers gave such positive feedback. There were even individual children who had real lightbulb moments in the sessions in terms of how they view things."

Teacher, Grange Primary School

"Great workshop very engaging, using drama to help children understand empathy. Excellent delivery we all enjoyed it."

Teacher, Chalkhill Primary School

"It opened my imagination to think critically and use empathy when needed." Young Person, Park Lane Primary School

"At first I didn't think I was going to like it. But it was very fun and exciting and I enjoyed it because it was about working together. I loved it."



"I really liked this workshop because it proves that when the government say that unity doesn't exist or that people don't deserve homes they're wrong."

Young Person, Capital City Academy

"I feel good, enlightened perhaps - as in more emotional aware." Teacher, Harrow High School

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SCHOOLS

DRAMA CLUBS

This year we delivered Drama Clubs across three schools:

- Park Lane Primary School
- St Joseph's RC Jnr School
- Chalkhill Primary School

50 WORKSHOPS DELIVERED

67 PUPILS PARTICIPATED

3 SCHOOLS WERE INVOLVED

4 SHOWS CREATED

170 AUDIENCE MEMBERS

CHALKHILL PRIMARY SCHOOL ARTS PROJECT

We were funded to deliver an arts project to Year 6 pupils at Chalkhill Primary School in preparation for their transition into secondary school. They devised and performed their show in July 2022.

30 WORKSHOPS DELIVERED

60 PUPILS PARTICIPATED

1 SHOW CREATED

300+ AUDIENCE MEMBERS











PARTNERS 2022-23

The Yellow

Wembley Park & Quintain

Roundwood School & Community Centre

Sport at the Heart

Connect star

Young Brent Foundation

Young Harrow Foundation

Harrow Council

Brent Council

Safe Neighbourhoods Board

Violence Reduction Unit

Hyde Housing

MTVH Housing

Catalyst Housing

Park Lane Primary School

Chalkhill Primary School

St Joseph's RC Primary School

Stag Lane Primary School

The Grange Primary School

St Teresa's Primary School

Harrow High School

Pinner High School

Hatch End Secondary School

Capital City Academy

Leopold Primary School

Vaughan Primary School

Kenton Learning Centre

Wealdstone Youth Centre

Romanian and Eastern European Hub

Clube dos Brasileirinhos

POLICIES

Adult Safeguarding Policy

Anti-Bullying Policy

Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

Complaints Policy

Data Protection Policy

Equality, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Policy

Health & Safety Policy

Lone Working Policy

Ethical Fundraising policy

VOLUNTEERS & PLACEMENTS

20 Volunteers were engaged in projects2 Placement students from Royal Central School of Speech and Drama



TOTAL SESSIONS DELIVERED & PEOPLE REACHED

PROGRAM	SESSIONS DELIVERED	CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SESSION PARTICIPANTS	ADULT SESSION PARTICIPANTS (INCLUDING TEACHER TRAINING)	OLDER PEOPLE PARTICIPANTS	AUDIENCE/ READER NUMBERS (DIGITAL & LIVE)
BRENT YOUTH THEATRE	180	172	N/A	N/A	2,621
COMMUNITY	137	219	38	12	514
SCHOOLS	121	1,331	15	N/A	470
TOTAL	438	1,722	53	12	3,605