



CREATIVE AGEING FORUM

11.00 am	Welcome Geraldine Montgomerie (LAHWN)
11.05 am	Context of Creative Ageing with: Rachel Cooper (Leeds Older People Forum) Lily Craig (Freelance Artist) Alison Teader (Arts in Care Homes Day)
11.55 am	Making Connections in Breakout Rooms
11.40 am	Celebrating Creative Ageing in Leeds with: Maggie De Ruyck (Leeds Playhouse) Mauka (Freelance Artist)
11.50 am	Supporting Creative Ageing with: Catherine Smethurst (Care Delivery Services)
11.55 am	Keeping Connections and Close

Leeds Creative Ageing Forum Meeting 17th June 2021

Transcript

Geraldine Montgomerie (Leeds Arts Health and Wellbeing Network) 0:00

Welcome to everyone who has just joined us. Let's make a start and introduce Rachel.

Rachel Cooper 0:13

Hi, everyone. I'm Rachel Cooper from Leeds Older Peoples Forum.

I'm really pleased to be here today, I'm really pleased that we've got this forum. There's so much going on in Leeds. And sometimes when I'm out and about nationally, I feel like you though it doesn't really, you know, get the attention that it deserves. And so I think just bringing people together and raising that profile is so valuable, and of course, really important to celebrate, particularly at the moment when we've all been having a really tough time of it. So yeah, I'm Rachel, I'm the chief exec at Leeds Older People's Forum. My colleague, Ali, is also on the call. We started working together around the arts and wellbeing work. And I'll actually be stepping back from Leeds Older People's Forum in July and joining Leeds GATE, but we're very much putting a plan in place to make sure we continue that commitment to arts and health and older people. And our chair is also the chair of the Performance Ensemble board. So you know, we are very committed. So a very brief bit about who we are for those who don't know, so we're an umbrella organisation, and we have a membership of around 100 organisations, and they're all third sector organisations working with older people in Leeds. We aim to raise the voices of older people around decision making and that can be anything from getting involved in consultations to supporting older people to campaigns.

So we've been doing some really interesting and effective stuff around stigma and ageism for the first time. And we also provide that back capacity support and information. So that can also be 'jargony' and dry, but, you know, to older people's organisations to support them to do what they're doing. And, so yeah, I won't go any further on that. But for this presentation, I was reflecting back on. I've been with Leeds Older Peoples Forum from 2009. And reflecting back on where we were at with arts and older people, when I joined the organisation, both in terms of LOPF, nothing, you know, more broadly within the city. And, of course, we've always had people doing brilliant work, and, you know, Hey Days [at Leeds Playhouse] was probably already been going for a long time by then. So it certainly wasn't a cultural desert or anything. But, you know, I think attitudes thankfully have started to change around arts and all the people. So certainly, as I said to Lily that day, you know, that older people were seen as, their basic needs needed to be to be met, but any further kind of joy and nourishment within their lives was not really needed or not really a right. And, you know, why would you put your sort of time and effort into that?

In 2012, we ran an event with a care home where we co created an event with the care home residents and use the inspiration from the cocktails in care homes as a basis, and the residents built on that. And we had a sort of pseudo Tea Party and cocktail party and an arts activities within that and it was wonderful, but it actually publicly got backlash from people almost as if we kind of overstepped the mark on our ambitions for older people. So I do very much see our cultural analysis... our work has been, it's the right thing to do, but we're also campaigning and pushing and championing older people's rights and that they should have a right to that access to that cultural work. We would do a lot around that time around like International Day of Older People and have older performers and artists. But very much, it felt lodged in the kind of "nice to have" and celebratory rather than really thought as something that we embed in how we think about health and wellbeing.

When we brought in the £6 million into the city for the Time To Shine programme at Leeds Older People's Forum, very much with partners and with Nicky [Taylor] at the time at the Playhouse, linking to other cultural partners in the city, we did extensive consultation, brought that money in and then built programmes off the back of older people's voices. And actually, the first piece of work that we commissioned was around culture and arts. And again, there was a bit of a backlash to that, you know, why weren't we putting all our money in older people's organisations that knew older people's needs and why were we paying artists and so we kind of had to weather that storm and go with it, and also return to the fact that we said that we've spoken to older people we know, this is right. And we know that the people that that we work with have got a really valuable position to in many cases expand their offer. Some of the big cultural organisations in the city have had young people's programmes but not old people's programmes. So we're all on a bit of a journey together really, and kind of fast forward.

And that's how we met Lily and continue to work together and see our future in our partnership with the Performance Ensemble and Lily working with us to reach some of those more marginalised people, like people living in care homes and to use arts as an approach to the different challenges that we face. So we know it has a valuable role, obviously, in isolation and loneliness. But we also

know that (and Lily will come to talk about the boxes later on) people are needing to rebuild connections and build their confidence to re-emergence into the world and we know that arts can play a role if facilitated properly and done in a very personalised approach with older people. Our real aim with the Time To Shine work was to start to build that evidence base and profile around saying that the arts had a real place in terms of supporting older people's health and wellbeing needs. And so we're in our kind of legacy year now with Time To Shine , we'll make sure that that evidence is very much there and available to you for funding bids and when you're meeting with stakeholders to make the case, and we continue to see Leeds Older People's Forum as being key in making that case, and even some of the seemingly simple stuff, like really championing with funders - don't just fund the arts through arts allocated funding, be really open to this through your health funding. So we'll continue to do that. We've got a lot of other great speakers on the bill, so I don't want to take up too much time. And as we said, before, Geraldine is running a really tight ship... but I just wanted to finish with some of my observations about what we would need to do next, in terms of bringing and integrating those two sides, in terms of artists and people who work with older people that don't necessarily have that arts background.

I think Lily will probably touch on taking that time to build relationships with older people's organisations. And there's really recognising that there are some instances where cultures are quite different across two and sometimes three organisations, certainly if you're working with, with care homes, and I will always remember in the early days of Time To Shine and talking arts organisations talking about what, what the artists would get out of it. And we were certainly like, we're totally taken aback because we would never talk about what we get out of our job and that being valuable and it was really a useful way of looking at self-interest in a different way of looking at how we value our staff and utilise them and their passion for what they do. In our bit of the world with we're used to giving across this image of just being very selfless and not having any kind of self interest in that. But I do think when it comes to funding, you know, it's a different story - we have to very much present what it is going to do in terms of benefit for older people. I think there are particular policy areas that we can kind of tap into if we want to further the resources and relationships. So there's a lot more out there about ABCD and strengths based approaches and utilising people's skills and assets within the community. There's a clear link there between arts and wellbeing and training and supporting older people to run their groups. I think tapping into other evidence bases - for example, we know that men will prefer activities that are shoulder to shoulder and so we can use the arts in that way where people don't feel immediately confronted by sitting in a circle and having to look at each other. They talk about some of the really difficult challenges and transitions in their life like bereavement so I think there's different kind of hooks that we can find in terms of linking arts and health.

The other thing, I think, finally, to say in terms of health are always really interested in that evidence base. I'm always a bit hesitant, because I do think that with the arts you can tap into, and people in positions of power are interested in, projects that are really exciting. And so I think I'd sometimes reserve judgement on whether that evidence base is kind of needed, if it's quite implicit, then really push, we should just really be pushing what we do and saying, we know that this works, because it's common sense that it works. But where an evidence base is needed, you know, using some of those tools, like SWEMWBS or scales or different things that can really map the changes in people's wellbeing as a result of their involvement in the activity and we will continue in Leeds Older People's

Forum to continue to connect and really try and capacity build those non arts organisations to value and build their arts-based skills.

Yeah, that's me - shall I hand back to you, Geraldine?

Geraldine Montgomerie (Leeds Arts Health and Wellbeing Network) 12:44

Yeah. So thank you so much, Rachel. And I think it's something we've discussed a lot. in Leeds and beyond this, when people are experiencing bereavement, when they're experiencing cognitive changes and are experiencing physical changes, as we all do, as we get older - I know I do! - then do the measures that we traditionally use for measuring wellbeing work as effectively with that kind of cohort of people? And so lots to be said, for thinking about new ways to do measurement. And that's something Lily has taught me a lot about through the work that she's been doing in In Mature Company... So over to you, Lily.

Lily Craig 13:19

Thank you. Hello, everyone. And so I'm Lily. I'm a freelance arts practitioner, project manager and dementia care mapper. Although I try and think about a fun and small title to cover all the work that I do, and I just can't, I can't figure it out. So if anyone's got any suggestions after I've spoken, I'd love to hear them in the chat. So I work as a freelancer in the city, and work with lots of different organisations and I'm going to spend sort of the next 10 minutes kind of highlighting a bit of the work that I do in a couple of those organisations and so I'll start off with Leeds Older People's Forum. And so I have been brought on in a partnership role with the Performance Ensemble, so for people who don't know, the Performance Ensemble is an ensemble of older people who want to perform, create work and just share their creativity in partnership with Leeds Older People's Forum. I sit between those two organisations, bringing together creativity and artwork and finding new opportunities to create different work in the city, quite community focused, and very outreach focused as well.

One of the things that I'm working on at the moment is these things I'm calling immersive boxes, because I've got a real interest in working in in immersive spaces and about kind of creating work that feels all-encompassing and that you're really in it and then it's not just a really small intervention that then leaves ... it's about kind of developing work that that goes over a longer period of time. And hopefully Rachel might have one of our boxes I've taken over Leeds Older People's Forum's office recently with 55 boxes that have all been designed 'bespokely' for 55 older people in the community. Working in partnership with Richmond Hill Elderly Action and the Hope Project we've worked closely with them to identify 55 individuals who might benefit from receiving these immersive boxes... and they're not complete yet but Rachel is beautifully identifying the boxes. So they all have a personalised letter on the front, which welcomes into something called the garden. And the Performance Ensemble is doing a show called The Garden at Leeds Playhouse in August. Every box has got things like a plant pot in there with seeds to plant with a little note telling them how to do that. That's been wrapped in cellophane or hand done by myself, which took forever!

And there's a big and a small one. There's paints in there so people can paint the plant part. There's the paint, lovely. And there's a bag of sweets, which I think is traditional sweets, we've got rhubarb and custard, and we've got pens in there. Then there's also a recipe for Yorkshire Parkin, because we know people love to bake. And some of the people who have expressed an interest in baking, we're putting in actual things that they need so the flour, the golden syrup, and there's images on how to do that all in large print. And there's a quiz in there that's been written by one of the people that's receiving the boxes. So he's written a quiz about Leeds. And there's the answers on there. And we're gonna do phone calls with people and get them to answer the questions and learn a bit more about that.

There's also envelopes - there's an envelope for every day of the week. So it runs from Friday through to Sunday and in every envelope there is a different activity that can be done with a family member or on their own. And the sort of the activities go from talking about what a family tree might look like, or thinking about telling a story to someone they don't know, and to creating some flowers. And then also, we're going to put disposable cameras in there to get people to take photos of their environments. And then we'll get the photos printed. And there might be a mini exhibition if we can. And so there's so much in there and under so much kind of going on. And each box has different things depending on what people have expressed an interest in. So some people have said they really like music. So we've managed to get some melodicas in there, because people like to play keyboards, so everything's a bit different. And each box is designed to represent what it feels like to attend creative activity so it's not just about receiving a box and that's it. But it's about if you used to attend a group or you used to do things that you enjoyed pre pandemic that this box sort of replicates what that might feel like, there's lots of moments of interaction and engagement.

The Neighbourhood Networks are doing amazing jobs of reaching out to the people that receive boxes and building connection and relationships. And that actually everyone who receives a box can connect with each other through their boxes, saying, well, I've got this or I did this or on Tuesday, I've got this activity, should we do it together? Or can we can we share our results together. So that sort of that work is very much about reconnecting people, and also trying to bring that quality of art spaces back to the home and it's not about the fact that you can't leave the house means you can't do something creative, and that you absolutely can. And that your interests can also benefit how you engage with creativity and that it doesn't feel completely wild and nothing that you care about, or interested in. And so that work is ongoing. We've just received funding to do 25 more with Crossgates so there'll be around 75 of those boxes going out all personalised, all bespoke. So yeah, that sort of work is happening. And that that work feels really beneficial at the moment, especially when there's no kind of group activity happening. And it's particularly focused for those who don't have access to online or digital work.

So I've been told I've got one minute and I had three pages of notes, and I haven't even covered any of it. And I just wanted to talk a little bit about some of the work that I do at Yorkshire Dance and Fragments - work that's very much care home based. And there's so much learning that can be that can be done in care homes. But I think some of the key things I wanted to share was about how artists and staff can learn from each other and that artists based in care homes is so beneficial, but that they don't come in with the knowledge that they have something to teach but that they do have something to share. And that care staff can also share that relationship, that learning with artists too, and that it's mutually beneficial. That co creation is always amazing and that people living in care have creative ideas have things to share. And that if we can use their ideas co create projects to help deliver projects, they're always going to be better and more enriching.

And I just wanted to quickly share a project I worked on called Fragments. And I'm just going to quickly share some images of a project called Fragments, which is about creating immersive spaces and care homes, where it was co-created with the residents. So they told us what they like to do, what they missed going to see. And we built a 360 immersive space, which was it was a garden or a park that we took over their cinema room, we took everything out, we put grass down, live plants, festoons, there was a 24 hour soundscape from morning to evening. And there was the sun beaming in the corner. And we built a full programme of activities. And we had storytellers live performances, dance, and then we had an arts and crafts based activities. And that was very much about getting to understand what the residents want and need. And then also just kind of having a space that feels that safe, creative, fun. And that can be enjoyed at any time of the day. So it starts is open 24 hours. So it's not just a one activity a day. It's a full experience for 24 hours over a week. I've also got some podcasts to share where we talk about that work and the Yorkshire Dance work in care homes. And if you want to know any more about the Leeds Older People's Forum I'll put my email in. Thank you.

Geraldine Montgomerie (Leeds Arts Health and Wellbeing Network) 22:11

Thank you so much Lily. I feel like we could just have a whole episode just listening to you tell us what you've been doing in the last few weeks. And Alison, if you could tell us a bit more about the national context of Arts and Care Homes.

Alison Teader 22:25

Okay, lovely. Thanks, Geraldine. Lovely to be here and great hearing all your stuff. Lily. I was nodding away a lot of that rang very true to me. And I think I'm going to try hard to keep to my notes because I know if I stay if I go on to anecdotes, and I love all this rich lovely stuff from projects I'll go on all day and, and I may be interrupted by my teenage son at some point looking stumbling into look for breakfast. So apologies if I am. I'm the programme director for Napa Arts in care homes. My background is I've worked for a London based Housing Trust for over 20 years, managing a programme of arts activities in care homes, sheltered housing and supportive mental health schemes. I stumbled into it... I had no interest really in working with older people saw an ad in a job centre saying arts and education coordinator wanted and I thought that sounds like that sounds interesting. And started doing work in a care home and absolutely loved it. I learned so much so went from there.

So my current role for NAPA: NAPA is a membership organisation and charity that they provide resources and support for staff including a free helpline and training. We just had our annual conference yesterday, which was very exciting. And they really focus on engagement and meaningful activity. My role is to manage the Arts and Care Homes project. So that is an NAPA project. We're in our third year now. The National Day of Arts in Care Homes is an annual event - it takes place every year on the 24th of September and we're gaining momentum each year. It's exciting seeing people take part and the build up to get involved. We invite care homes to plan an event. It can be something big or small, any art form for the 24th of September, and this year, we're really pushing the message of the process - so it's the "imagine" bit. I saw a lovely quote on Twitter the other day about how imagination doesn't fail. You know, it's still there and that magic that comes from the imagination, and then the "create" part of it and the "sharing". So we're inviting care settings and

partners to share events on the day, but also in the week running up to the 24th of September please share good practice stories, it's a really good opportunity to share some of the wonderful stuff that you're all doing.

I'll put some details in the chat the end of the links to how you find it. It was wonderful last year to see the stuff from Leeds. Thanks so much to Geraldine for really supporting it and it was really noticed - all those little stories popping up. You know, quite a few people commented. So please get involved, share your stories. It's a National Event, you know, we don't want it all to be about down south we want to get those stories we've got. Manchester and Liverpool are really excited this year, and they're going to be sharing stuff. So please get the voice of all your lead partners and make sure you're heard. And, you know, I love the work of Leeds Playhouse and Yorkshire Dance. So it's really nice to be here with you. I've been following you kind of through social media and stuff.

The other piece of work that we're working on this year, is a consultation on creativity and culture. Now, I've been asked to lead on this by our funders, the Baring Foundation, it's a very small piece of work. It's not a big budgets, not a big time scale. But we think it's really an important one. And there's been a lot of interest. So what we're focusing on is the question: "what would it require for all care homes in England to offer their residents access to relevant creative and cultural opportunities on a daily basis?". So it's about this daily offer, this daily person-centred offer, obviously, as part of that, you know, we have to look at how people react to the word arts and culture and, and how to how to find relevant things and make the arts and culture and creativity inclusive and accessible.

So we have on our website, we've got some online surveys for staff, residents and relatives. We're doing some best practice case studies. And I'm thinking maybe we ought to have a lead- I shall talk to Geraldine about that. I can't ask all of you individually to submit stuff but maybe you could do some kind of group one for Leeds - that would be fantastic.

Again, all the info is on our website, which I'll share with you. And I think, really, in terms of that daily offer, we're stressing it's really moving away from talking about activity. And it's looking at how can we really embed the arts and creativity and culture into care provision - it's this creative approach. It's sometimes these very small but meaningful interactions, which actually elevate the day, or how you can bring creativity into daily tasks. I mean, the one I always say, but I used to love was seeing staff use dance to encourage people into the dining room is just so lovely, a nice way of moving into another space in a really fun way. And we're thinking about, you know, how can we allow for spontaneity and play - they're so important. And I think with that, it's the type of resources that mean that staff don't have to plan things, they've got it there, they can be playful and discover things together. Training, the staff structure is absolutely key and that kind of culture shift. It's a massive subject - can't go into that here but I think you possibly will know what I mean by that. But at the whole home approach, which a lot of care providers are working towards, where everyone has a vested a role in in that engagement. And lastly, really partnerships. For me all of the learning I got in my previous job was from staff, resident relatives, but also artists and arts organisations, museums, archives, I think they have an absolutely key role to play in all of this. Care homes can't do

it on their own, and don't need to. And we've seen over COVID this amazing sharing of all this digital stuff, sometimes a bit too much, a bit too overwhelming I think! There's been so many amazing events, but there is stuff out there. And as Napa saw yesterday at our conference care homes really are getting involved with the digital stuff and their wi-fi.

You know, at the beginning of all this, there was a big, big difference in terms of access to digital stuff, but we really think that's got a big role to play. So I'm looking at the time, I think I've got, I'm getting in just under one minute. So I'm quite pleased with myself because I'm a bit of a rambler. So I'm going to share my stuff in the chat. I do hope please get in touch with me if you want to talk about anything else. But just to end with that it is lovely to be here and to be with all of you doing such lovely stuff. Thank you.

Geraldine Montgomerie (Leeds Arts Health and Wellbeing Network) 30:36

Thank you so much, Alison, and particularly as we ran over a little bit, so thank you for curtailing yourself even. So Ali from Leeds Older People's Forum is going to set up some breakout rooms. And this is going to be a very quick breakout, but it's just a couple of minutes each to share our reflections and say hello to each other. And then we'll come back to catch up on some of the work that's been going on in Care Delivery Services in Leeds, at Leeds Playhouse and with our special guest Manuka (who has come even further than Alison - all the way from India today!) So one of the many benefits of being able to do some online events is being able to hear from people that we wouldn't usually hear from and we have that in the chat with Rachel coming all the way from Essex today to hear about good practice locally. So thank you so much and take it away Ali.

**** BREAKOUT ROOMS FOR 5 MINUTES****

So, Maggie, Manuka, I'd asked you to tell us a bit about the "Reasons to be Hopeful" project that we introduced last time we had a forum and is now amazingly concluded in that brief few weeks.

Machteld (Maggie) De Ruyck 38:06

Hello, everybody. And thank you so much, Geraldine. So I'm Machteld and I'm the older people's programme manager at Leeds Playhouse. And Manuka is here with me who is one of the artists who worked on "Reasons to be Hopeful". I am going to be the first person to 'do tech' today. Is that right? So I feel like it was a bit of pressure on this. But let's, let's give it a go - I hope you can all see this. So last time we spoke, I think we just started the workshops of "Reasons to be Hopeful", which was 100 people from multiple generations - so young people and older people - took part in 10 weekly workshops with 10 different artists. So it could be on zoom, it could be letter writing, it could be via email via the phone, a lot via zoom. And people took part in those workshops. And it resulted in a multimedia tapestry, which you can now see at the front of the Playhouse. So if you walk past the Playhouse, you might see all of the artwork from far away. But you can see lots of detail close up as well. So do pop in and have a look at the results of the work.

But mainly what we wanted to talk about today was one of the results that's come out of the project is a song that was written by the group that Manuka led with the "Reasons to be Hopeful" participants at the Hamari Yaadain dementia cafe, which is led by their BME Dementia Service from Touchstone. And yeah, I think I'm not exaggerating to say it was a little bit bonkers because we sometimes had four languages going on at the same time, and obviously you'd be in India, it was all kind of it felt a bit crazy, but in a really good creative way. And so yeah, what I would love Manuka, if you want to talk a little bit about the song, and then we'll listen to the song, which hopefully will be great.

Manuka Batebajwe 40:19

Okay. Yeah, sure. Hi, everybody. This song in particular was obviously based on themes around reasons to be hopeful; the intention of this project was using whichever artistic medium to bring out what we've overcome during the pandemic time. So being the songwriter, that was my strength in how I could help the group to communicate and what was really interesting is that we had a really good mix of individuals from different backgrounds, different age groups. As well, we had younger people coming from the "Reasons to be Hopeful" and then we also had the Hamari Yaadain group as well. And it was, I would say, it was a bit bonkers. And it was a bit chaotic with sometimes because I'd be speaking different languages, I'd be explaining in English, then in Punjabi and in Hindi the same thing. So it was a very fluid process in the sense that there was no kind of linear control or system put into place to make the song come about. So it clearly just came about because of the relationship that we developed as a group and the energy that everyone brought forward.

Just using exercises, I put out there different ways to trigger creativity and remove those barriers of, you know, insecurity of thinking that you can do this, or you can't do this. And that's one of those things. And once we overcame that everyone just was blossoming with so many ideas, and in the English part was complimentary to the Punjabi part, and everyone is collaborative. And then they were conversing in each other's languages, people were interested in one another, and they genuinely were sharing and it became more rather than me facilitating, I just became part of the group. And it was a very organic, kind of a flow towards the, to the end of the session. And the song really portrays that because the song was about initially, when I was asking people, we were having conversations about, you know, what would what do you feel hopeful for? We're having these conversations. And we said, honestly, speaking, we're not hopeful. We're not feeling very good about it. But then, after delving into these conversations, and we spent a good couple of weeks on this actually more time on understanding and getting out the deeper meaning behind how everyone is feeling. And then they talked about embracing the little moments in their life. And they were remembering things. So actually, I saw Robin in my greenhouse, that was really beautiful. They're picking out lots of imagery, which is really nice. And then lessons learned also came out as well. So that became the theme of the song. And it was it was really, really nice. So I don't want to say too much - the song will speak for itself. So yeah.

Machteld (Maggie) De Ruyck 43:22

Thank you so much. So now I'm going to be really high tech and share the lyrics. You can also see the lyrics on the Play House with a QR code at the bottom as well. So if you do walk past, you can scan it and it will take you to the link. I'm not going to try and play the song whilst you still see the lyrics. So let's see how that goes.

[You can listen to the song and see the lyrics here <https://soundcloud.com/leedsplayhouse/let-the-light-in-sabar-aaya>]

Thank you for listening. I hope you enjoyed that and I hope that what Manuka said made sense in the context as it's really hard to explain what this song did and it's all been recorded over zoom. Even the guitar solo at the end that's a participant, one of the younger participants, who sent that in. Every element of it is participant led, which is very much a credit to many of Manuka's participants, who have done such an amazing job. I really just want to say a big thank you to Manuka, because I think it's a really special thing that she's created with the group and having this on the front of the Playhouse. I still can't quite believe they let us put it on the windows of their new building, but they did. So it's very exciting. So thank you so much, Manuka. I'll share the link in the chat and we would really appreciate if you could share it wide and beyond so these voices get heard and this song gets heard. I don't know if you want to say anything more when you can before we carry on.

Manuka Batebajwe 49:05

Just that, you know, even despite it being such a great project in itself, I had no idea what to expect coming into it. And I didn't want to leave. And I felt so attached to the group and what we'd created and their growth as a group and individually was truly magical. And it just goes to show how the arts can really have an impact on people's wellbeing; the capacity to provide something valuable to the community and have a voice and express themselves and it's just a really nice medium to have access to. So you know, this project gave the community that everything that the arts do. It's awesome.

Machteld (Maggie) De Ruyck 49:55

Thank you so much for coming and joining us today. So I believe I have a few more minutes to just talk about something a little bit different, which is the "Promise of a Garden", which is a production by the Performance Ensemble which is co-produced by Leeds Playhouse, Leeds 2023 and Leeds Older People's Forum. Yes, I got them all right! And it is a production that is created by older artists and older people from the community - I think they describe it as art that's been created with the experience of age. So the Performance Ensemble is created this amazing piece of work, and it's turning the Quarry Theatre, which is the largest space in the Playhouse into a beautiful garden as part of this, because originally, I think the idea was that the community could contribute to the garden - could come into the Quarry space and add stuff to the garden. Obviously, COVID is not playing ball just yet. So we had to, unfortunately, let go for that idea.

So now we have a project called 5000 flowers, where the Performance Ensemble is asking people across the city to help contribute to the set of the promise of a garden by making flowers. We are looking for 5000 flowers and communities across Leeds and older people younger people are creating these flowers. And I will put a link in the chat of how you can get involved in the 5000 flowers. If you know anybody who would like to make flowers, please do. And there's some really wonderful stories coming out of the flowers being made people that are really reusing materials to do. So. Yes. Really fantastic. The 5000 flower projects, and we would love for you to get involved in some way or anybody that you know, would get involved. So I'll share the link in the chat. And, yeah, there's more information on when the garden is on the Leeds Playhouse's website

[<https://leedsplayhouse.org.uk/events/the-promise-of-a-garden/>]. So yeah, I'll do that. Because I think that we have to move on.

Geraldine Montgomerie (Leeds Arts Health and Wellbeing Network) 52:23

So thank you so much. I think again, we could talk about all the projects around that and who's involved for a long time but just wanted Catherine Smethurst from the Care Delivery Team, just to talk a little bit about some of the work that she's been doing with arts organization's as part of Wellbeing Wednesdays and let us know if she's got some capacity to have anybody else join us. So take it away, Catherine.

Catherine Smethurst 52:49

Hello! So my name is Catherine Smethurst. I work for Leeds Care Delivery Service, which includes five care homes, three extra care schemes, and three recovery hubs for older people, as well as the mental health accommodation services, shared life support, day opportunities (and that includes the complex needs services), older people services, as well as Mental Health day opportunities. So I work with the operational development team. And hilariously in our little break out session, I met up with Elizabeth who's there as Care Delivery Digital, who works with me, and we were just talking about I'm gonna throw away my notes because I've got about two minutes left. But what we wanted to talk about is the Wellbeing Wednesday's sessions that we've been running.

So back in the autumn, we realised that we needed to develop our digital offer, originally with day opportunities, because people were isolated at home, very stressed, or lonely. And then we gradually realised that we had to develop that across the service because there were people in care homes that had been very isolated as well. And so we started approaching different arts organisations. Initially I got in touch with Geraldine and then we got in touch with lots of other people so it's lovely to see the all the people here that we've already been in touch with, that we're working alongside and we have worked alongside and then we're hoping to do some more with. One of the things I would say is that just getting people together online to do these different wellbeing activities, we realised that the activities that people most responded to under this umbrella of Wellbeing Wednesday. We did an online session for one hour a week on Zoom and we've involved people like Yorkshire dance, Live Music now, Ascendance, Leeds Libraries, Museums, any number of organisations, you're all here. And we wanting to just make those partnerships. So when we were talking earlier about the partnerships and found, that's the absolute key thing, find those networks, find those partnerships, and then link that up in a strength based way where we're saying who this person particularly loves something, let's see what's about for them.

So just lovely to hear about the Playhouse project, one of our residents in the care home said, I really want to do that. We linked her into it, she's absolutely loved it. And because of that, we looked at it for somebody else who wanted to do some creative writing and one of the day opportunities, we then kind of looked a bit further and saw aha, the "Promise of a Garden"! And so we were making all those connections. And people are being able to say hello to new people, that's what we find is that people who are lonely, are now kind of meeting each other, getting in touch, that allows us kind of

boosted morale, but then being able to look at the things that they love doing. And it's not just about one activity, it's about sort of creating opportunities for those individuals or for new groups. We've got a regular Yorkshire Dance session that's now got, I think Elizabeth was saying about 40 people logging in from all different places. And then we've got something else that came up was a lady who wanted to do some knitting. And so they've set up their own little natter group. And we've now linked a few more people into that, of course, they're interested in making some flowers and that develops that whole project. We've got an event coming on tomorrow for as part of the Great Get Together, and we've done it live previously, we're doing it as a zoom event, we'd love it if you wanted to join us. We'll be creating some more opportunities through that.

We've got some lovely work with Together With Music that's linking up the care homes and the schools. We're looking at showcasing some of the performers who we know are great performers that use our services. So we have a little concert live with them. And that's linking them into being able to do their performances as things open up, or even to be able to progress their connections and their learning and their opportunities online. So we've got gardening, we've got baking, we've got all these opportunities, but we found that really, it's what people have said is they've got something to look forward to. And that's and we make all these activities and opportunities as accessible as possible. So sometimes, you know, certain activities aren't, might not be suitable, for particular individuals or groups. So then we look at "Well, how can we make them more suitable? Or what can we look out for those people?" And so that's, that's kind of where we're going with Wellbeing Wednesday. And we're going to continue it as an ongoing opportunity, both for our people that use our services, and the staff teams because it's enhances their knowledge. And again, that touches on what you were talking about earlier about providing opportunities for people; making things easy and making introductions between different partners, so that people can, can start to do the things that they love doing.

Geraldine Montgomerie (Leeds Arts Health and Wellbeing Network) 59:20

So thank you so much, Catherine. So it's slightly over time, really sorry, for running over slightly. But the important thing is that everything is all tied together, which is always seems to happen. These meetings is absolutely wonderful. Lots of running themes around partnership, around the power of creativity, and the importance of range - getting people with different perspectives together, to work differently, solve problems and to promote wellbeing across the board. So if anybody has any contact details you'd like to share in the chat or otherwise, I'll be sending out a recording to share. I'll be putting out a newsletter with everything that we've discussed. So all the links and everything clickable form. And yeah, we'll be hopefully doing another session in September, with the Yorkshire Dance and Leeds Playhouse looking at older people in the driving seat; so older people as the creators of creativity, their creative powers, and possibly linking in with work in Sheffield and Manchester. So, again, getting out of Leeds a little bit, but showing off what we do locally. So I do hope you can join us. We'll be circulating on Twitter and our newsletter. And we welcome anybody who'd like to speak or be involved in the planning of these sessions, the more the merrier. So thank you for joining us, everyone, and take care and see you soon.