

2020-2022 REVIEW

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01. Welcome



Effecting social change & improving young people's lives through the arts.

Elevator Arts has a mission to deliver life enhancing, transformative & empowering arts & drama projects with young people in Southend.

We create community centred projects for young people most in need & with often least access to the arts.

Since 2020 we've developed drama projects alongside our community partners to support the mental health & wellbeing of vulnerable young people. Improving their life chances to aid our community's recovery from the COVID-19 crisis.

We have built strong relationships with organisations such as Trust Links, Metal Southend, Southend Carers, Southend Association of Voluntary Services (SAVS), Welcome To The UK, Project 49 & South Essex Homes.

Our projects are built around the values of:

- Fostering an inclusive, accessible and collaborative creative environment.
- Community & young people centred approach to decision making.
- Creative risk taking to develop outstanding & innovative participatory arts projects.

We work with communities who experience disadvantage, and multiple barriers to learning.

Elevator Arts project outcomes align with Southend's strategic aims and vision to ensure:

“**OUR CHILDREN ARE SCHOOL AND LIFE READY**”
Southend 2050 Ambition

Outcomes of our work:

- Combating social isolation & loneliness.
- Developing confidence & raising aspirations.
- Encouraging positive expression & empowerment.
- Increasing wellbeing and promoting good mental health.
- Building life skills & increasing employability.
- Promoting community cohesion and greater understanding.
- Promoting engagement in arts & cultural economy.
- Promoting diversity & accessibility within the arts.

SINCE FEBRUARY 2020 WE HAVE:



Worked with **162** participants, young people & vulnerable adults.



Facilitated **869** opportunities for attendances at Elevator Arts projects.



Delivered **222** hours of workshops.



Delivered inclusive projects. **29%** of participants have additional needs.



OUR **WORK**



02

02. Tomorrow Tales / Life As We Know It



OCT 2020 - FEB 2021

Partner: Triple Ts, Turning Tides Youth Groups, SAVS

Funders: Rosca Trust & Southend Emergency Fund

Triple Ts is a Children In Need funded project for youngsters aged 8-12 yrs based in Southend's most disadvantaged areas.

Tomorrow Tales explored dreams for the future through drama to support wellbeing.

Due to a second lockdown & the end to in-person sessions we adapted the project to recorded drama sessions & printed resources for the young people to access at home & keep them engaged in creative activities.

“
**GREAT PARTNERSHIP
WORKING AND HUGE
BENEFITS TO THE
CHILDREN INVOLVED**
”

Turning Tides Team

02. Who Do I Wanna Be?

“
**TAKING PART IS
RELAXING – RELIEVES
STRESS – TAKES MY
MIND OFF THINGS
AND HELPS ME STOP
THINKING ABOUT STUFF**
”

Young Carer

JUN - JUL 2021

Partner: Southend Carers, Young Carers

Funders: The Tudwick Foundation & Fowler, Smith & Jones Trust

Who Do I Wanna Be? with young carers aged 12-17 years, focused on raising awareness of young carers' lives, the positive as well as challenging aspects. Through sharing their favourite music & responding through drama the project also promoted good mental health & explored the anxieties & pressures of being a young carer.

02. Outside In



AUG 2021

Partner: Trust Links

Funder: National Lottery through Arts Council England

Outside In was an outdoor performance project responding to the youth mental health crisis due to reduced social interaction over lockdown. Bringing together creativity, nature & tools to support good mental health; developed by Elevator Arts in partnership with Trust Links & Smoking Apples Theatre.

We worked with young people aged 10-15 yrs, to create an outdoor performance; to empower, build resilience, confidence, learn, connect & grow – looking forward to a brighter future.

Puppet made by Kinetika

“

**WE LEARNT PATIENCE, RESPECT,
CONFIDENCE & SELF-BELIEF**

Project participants

”



02. Tales of The Sea

“THE PROJECT MADE ME FEEL REALLY GREAT, I FELT HAPPY. I HAVE LAUGHED A LOT, THE TEACHERS ALL LISTENED TO MY IDEAS, NO IDEAS WERE BAD

Project Participant

”

SEP - NOV 2021

Partner: Project 49

Funders: National Lottery Community Fund, Southend Emergency Fund & Postcode Places Trust

Tales of The Sea was a drama & storytelling project in partnership with Project 49 working with their service users, adults with learning disabilities. Tales of The Sea allowed participants to learn new creative skills to tell their own stories & share their experience of living by the seaside in a celebration of their hometown & community.

The project culminated with a joyful sharing of the work created to a limited audience of Project 49 staff due to Covid restrictions. A film created with Film 49 by adults with learning disabilities documented the project and was shown at Focal Point Gallery's Big Screen Southend in Spring 22.



02. BLAST

“

**WE'VE LEARNT TO BE MORE SOCIAL,
CONFIDENT & TEAM WORK**

BLAST participant

”



SEP 2021 - PRESENT

Partner: Welcome To The UK

Funders: National Lottery Community Fund & Postcode Places Trust, Rosca Trust, Fowler, Smith & Jones Trust & Arts Council England Let's Create Jubilee Fund

BLAST Youth Theatre launched in autumn 2021 as a pilot in partnership with Southend charity, Welcome To The UK who support newly arrived immigrant families to adapt to a new life in the UK. BLAST works with young people aged 8-12 who have English as an additional language and supports their English language skills, confidence and well-being through free access to drama activity.



02. Sound ON

“
**IT HAS MADE ME FEEL
REALLY HAPPY AND
MORE CONFIDENT. I HAVE
LEARNT TO BE MORE LIKE
MYSELF & LET MY REAL
SELF SHOW**

Participant

”

NOV 2021 - MAR 2022

Partner: South Essex Homes

Funders: Ragdoll Foundation & SAVS

Sound ON was a drama & storytelling project in partnership with South Essex Homes engaging young people aged from 8 to 14 years, living in temporary accommodation.

Young people experiencing homelessness are more likely to experience social isolation & anxiety plus low attainment in school. Sound ON was developed to provide regular creative activity to support the wellbeing plus communication & life skills of young people in family hostels.



02. SPARK



MAY 2022 - JUL 2022

Partner: Little Heroes ASD Support

Funders: Postcode Places Trust

Over ten weeks Elevator Arts worked with young people aged 8-12 with autism at Little Heroes ASD Support to explore puppets & tell stories. They worked with hand puppets; brought objects to life; created their own shadow puppets and characters out of brown paper, milk bottles & a giant junk Jabberwock!

The project supported participants to explore emotions, verbal & non-verbal communication skills and learn to express themselves positively with confidence.

“IT WAS GREAT WATCHING THE CHILDREN FORM FRIENDSHIPS, INCREASE PATIENCE AND ATTENTION SPAN”

Little Heroes staff member



02. If I Ruled The World

“ I ENJOYED BEING ABLE TO TRY NEW THINGS AND DEVELOP NEW SKILLS IN NEW AREAS ”

Participant

AUG 2022

Partners: The Song School & Metal Culture

Funders: National Lottery Through Arts Council England, Ewans Music Trust & Music On Sea

Over just 5 days Elevator Arts & The Song School worked with 10-15 year olds to create their own performance; fusing music, song, soundscape, drama, movement, spoken word & digital art to express their vision of the future!

The project took place at Metal Southend and allowed young people with least access to arts activities the opportunity to learn many new creative skills, build confidence, connect with others and share their ideas through innovative theatre making.





**MAKING A
DIFFERENCE**
**CASE
STUDIES**



03

03. Billy*

“Billy had been apprehensive about taking part in any form of drama, so I was pleased that he agreed to attend as I felt he would benefit from meeting with other children in a supervised setting.

After the first day, he came home elated and so happy to have met some new friends, and had such a good time.

He went in happily for the duration of the week, and took part in the final performance which was great. I was very impressed with the organisation of the club and how approachable and friendly the staff are.

I’m so happy that Billy is asking to join other drama groups, and has realised that this is something he can do and enjoys in the right environment” - Feedback from Billy’s Foster parent.

Billy is in foster care and has autism and sensory processing disorder (SPD), a condition that affects how your brain processes sensory information. As such Billy experiences significant barriers to inclusion, with opportunities to socialise with other children in an artistic environment being scarce.

[Children with autism in foster care] are at particular risk for poor educational outcomes amongst this already disadvantaged group of looked-after children.¹

Billy’s foster carer enrolled him onto Elevator Arts’ Outside In project in the Summer of 2021. Project leaders ensured they took the time to understand Billy’s personality, access needs and adapted the project and Billy’s role within it to best suit him. This included harnessing his keen interest in video games, asking him to take ownership of choosing the 8-bit music for the performance which enabled him to have a level of independence and ownership over his creativity and learning.

Billy left the week asking when Elevator Arts would be doing their next project.



“**AFTER THE FIRST DAY,
HE CAME HOME ELATED
AND SO HAPPY TO
HAVE MET SOME NEW
FRIENDS, AND HAD
SUCH A GOOD TIME.**”

¹ Parsons, S., McCullen, A., Emery, T., & Kovshoff, H. (2018)

'Awareness within local authorities in England of autism spectrum diagnoses of looked-after children'

British Educational Research Journal, 2018

https://bera-journals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/berj.3485#berj3485-note-1001_11

Foster Care in England: Review

*Names have been changed to protect the privacy of the participants.

03. Josh*

“**YOU CLEARLY ALL MADE HIM FEEL AT HOME AS HE FELT CONFIDENT AND ABLE TO PARTICIPATE**”



“Josh had a great time with you over the summer... he settled very well and had a blast. Drama is something Josh has always wanted to be involved with but struggled to access due to confidence issues - you clearly all made him feel at home as he felt confident and able to participate with all your sessions very well. He was buzzing after the performance and I feel this has provided him with a great feeling of achievement to carry with him he does other things in the future.”
- Josh’s parent

Josh is a young carer and was a participant on the Elevator Arts project with Southend Young Carers and having enjoyed the sessions so much, he asked to join our Outside In project during Summer 2021.

Young carers experience poorer mental wellbeing than the general population, with 4 in 10 young carers reported feeling sad, 1 in 4 reported feeling lonely, and 1 in 2 reported feeling angry in the preceding week. They are more likely to be bullied in school, to have missed days of school and have fallen asleep in school in the preceding week.²

Providing an environment where young carers are free to express themselves and forge new relationships is of even greater importance since the Coronavirus pandemic, as in a 2020 Carers’ Trust survey: 40% of young carers say their mental health is worse; 69% of young carers are feeling less connected to others; and 66% of young carers are feeling more stressed since the pandemic.³

Josh was apprehensive at the beginning of the project; he was reserved and often did not feel comfortable removing his face mask. Over the course of the week, he became visibly more confident in engaging with tasks and offering ideas within group discussion. Outside In facilitators noted that Josh even began supporting other young people in the group, and he took on the lead role in the final production.

² Department for Education (2016)

‘The lives of young carers in England: Qualitative report of DfE. 2016.’

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/498115/DFE-RR499_The_lives_of_young_carers_in_England.pdf

³ Carers Trust (2020)

‘Our survey on the impact of Coronavirus on young carers and young adult carers’

<https://carers.org/what-we-do/our-survey-on-the-impact-of-coronavirus-on-young-carers-and-young-adult-carers->

*Names have been changed to protect the privacy of the participants.

03. Craig*



“There was a moment around week 9 in which Craig volunteered himself during a game. For Craig, I feel this was a huge step in terms of engagement and confidence, and not only to volunteer himself but to give a suggestion too, really brought me joy to see.” - Tales of The Sea Project Facilitator.

Craig underwent a notable transformation throughout Tales of The Sea, a drama & storytelling project, in partnership with Project 49 with adults with learning disabilities.

Providing creative activities for people with profound and multiple learning disabilities is incredibly important, as adults with a disability were found to have lower engagement in the arts⁴, and this is only compounded by social isolation due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Elevator Arts set out to combat this access gap with Tales of the Sea .

Although Craig is electively non-verbal he is able to form relationships, making choices and communicating with others through touch and non-verbal behaviours such as facial expression and gestures⁵. This was explored through the activities within the project, putting more focus on movement and mime which allowed participants like Craig to express themselves through their body.

A Project 49 staff member added that, “A number of individuals stepped out of their comfort zones to participate - Craig being one - who looked to really enjoy himself.”

“**ALL THE GROUP REALLY BECAME ENERGISED BY SESSIONS AFTER 18 MONTHS OF RESTRICTED ACTIVITIES DUE TO COVID.**”

”

⁴ DCMS (2018). Taking Part Survey: England. Adult Report (2017/18) Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport. Available as PDF online [here](#)

⁵ Mansell, J. (2010) Raising Our Sights: Services for Adults with Profound Intellectual and Multiple Disabilities. Available as a PDF online [here](#)

*Names have been changed to protect the privacy of the participants.



PARTNERS & FUNDERS



04

03. Partners and Funders

Elevator Arts is proud to have worked with:



Metal



SAVS



Elevator Arts projects have been gratefully supported by:



Supported using public funding by
ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND



Supported using public funding by
ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND



SAVS



Since October 2020 Alison Garner, founder director of Elevator Arts, has been a beneficiary of Mercury Creatives, a professional development programme for the cultural sector. Included in our engagement on this programme, Alison has undergone 24 hours of mentoring support, alongside attending a series of business development, showcasing and networking events with fellow Mercury Creative beneficiaries. The Mercury Creatives programme is funded by the European Regional Development Fund and is being delivered by the Mercury Theatre, Colchester.



Beneficiary of the Mercury Creatives Programme 2020-2021

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CONTACT US



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04. Contact Us



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