



CREATING ADVENTURES

Raising funds to enrich the lives of adults with Autism and learning disabilities

Case For Support 2023



WINNER

Charity Group of the Year 2023
(under 50 volunteers)



www.creatingadventures.org.uk

Registered Charity No. 1167842



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Living with Autism and learning disabilities comes with a much higher risk of physical and mental health problems... We can do something.

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15 How it all began

It's been crazy, but we have come so far, and we would love to go even further. Help us to help more people so we can ensure that happiness is not a luxury, but for everyone.

17 Funding & costs

Your donations directly help to provide hope and freedom to the adults who need our support and their carers.

18 Testimonials

Don't just take our word for it, we have some testimonials from our community.

"I DO NOT HAVE A DISABILITY, I HAVE A GIFT! OTHERS MAY SEE IT AS A DISABILITY, BUT I SEE IT AS A CHALLENGE. THIS CHALLENGE IS A GIFT BECAUSE I HAVE TO BECOME STRONGER TO GET AROUND IT, AND SMARTER TO FIGURE OUT HOW TO USE IT; OTHERS SHOULD BE SO LUCKY."

SHANE E. BRYAN



Robert M. Hensel

Life without barriers

Learning disabilities and Autism. They're not things we talk about as a society. We don't have conversations about how these conditions affect people's lives. We never consider the fact that changes need to be made so that people with additional needs feel valued, motivated and excited about life.

The channels of support and the freedom to experience everyday pleasures are simply much more limited for people with additional needs. All too often, they are cruelly denied opportunities to exercise, a chance to enjoy a social life in a safe and supported environment, as well as learning new skills and developing themselves as human beings.

Just because finding employment is not always an option, it does not mean they should not be able to find fulfilment in life. There is a spark inside every individual who comes to our charity, a desire to embrace all that life has to offer, and all we do is light the flame. We see a light turn on inside our members and we believe this light should not be put out, but continue to shine.



SOCIAL ISOLATION IS NOT SAD, IT'S DANGEROUS.

People who have Autism and learning disabilities are a widely diverse group within society. Each individual lives with a unique set of challenges, strengths and talents, gifts that have often yet to be discovered. Despite their differences, one of the things they have in common is a hugely increased risk of loneliness and social isolation. Sadly, this community is far more vulnerable than any other social group.

There are two factors which work together to perpetuate this loneliness. Firstly, there is a gaping hole in the amount of support available to adults with Autism and learning disabilities and their carers. For many, as soon as they leave education, they are faced with many challenges. There are fewer places for them to socialise safely with others in their position, which can lead to them feeling extremely lonely and cut off from the world.



When stigma and discrimination are internalised, it results in psychological distress and low self-esteem

The second factor which causes this chronic isolation is the attitudes of others. The misconceptions about people living with autism and learning disabilities are a huge barrier to their acceptance in society. The disability charity 'Scope' calls this barrier the "disability perception gap" (Dixon et al., 2018). When members of this community begin to internalise these harmful perceptions, it can lower mental and physical wellbeing. This needs to stop.

Lack of stimulation and interaction with the outside world can also result in people with a disability or Autism self-harming. This behaviour can include head slapping or pulling of the hair, and may not always be deliberate, but instead serve as a cry for help or attention. Although this does not occur in all cases, the development of verbal communication and stimulation via creative activity is incredibly beneficial in preventing this behaviour.

Let me shine and feel personal fulfilment

Our members who benefit from the wonderful array of activities and experiences provided by Creating Adventures are given the opportunity to embark upon a journey. This journey starts with inspiration. Creating Adventures seeks to INSPIRE the members to reach new heights, to broaden their horizons, to learn new skills; and in turn to learn new things about themselves. Creating Adventures seeks to cast aside these assumptions, and replace them with a vision in which all people with Autism and learning disabilities can live life to the fullest.

After the adults and their carers have felt the inspiration to experience new things, the next stage of the journey is the ignition of change.

Creating Adventures aims to IGNITE the interest and potential of the members who benefit from the charity. Becoming excited and passionate about a project or even a new friendship helps to increase their self-esteem and fuel personal development and emotional fulfilment. Bringing warmth and light into the lives of people with learning disabilities is essential for their happiness and overall well-being.

We hope that every individual's life will be illuminated as a direct result of their involvement with the charity. This is the final destination of their journey towards a life that is more vibrant, stimulating and most of all, joyful. The small, everyday adventures that happen to individuals every time they attend the art club, the choir, the disco or one of the many other events organised by Creating Adventures make up to form a life that is transformed and lit up. Through simple fun and laughter, we aim to ILLUMINATE the lives of both the carers and the adults with Autism and learning disabilities who benefit from Creating Adventures.



INSPIRE

IGNITE

ILLUMINATE

How we tackled the lockdown and how it played a huge part in our growth?

When lockdown hit in March 2020, we were faced with a challenge but in our minds, not a choice. Our community were faced with having to shield and therefore this increased loneliness so we just had to adapt, continue and develop more services.

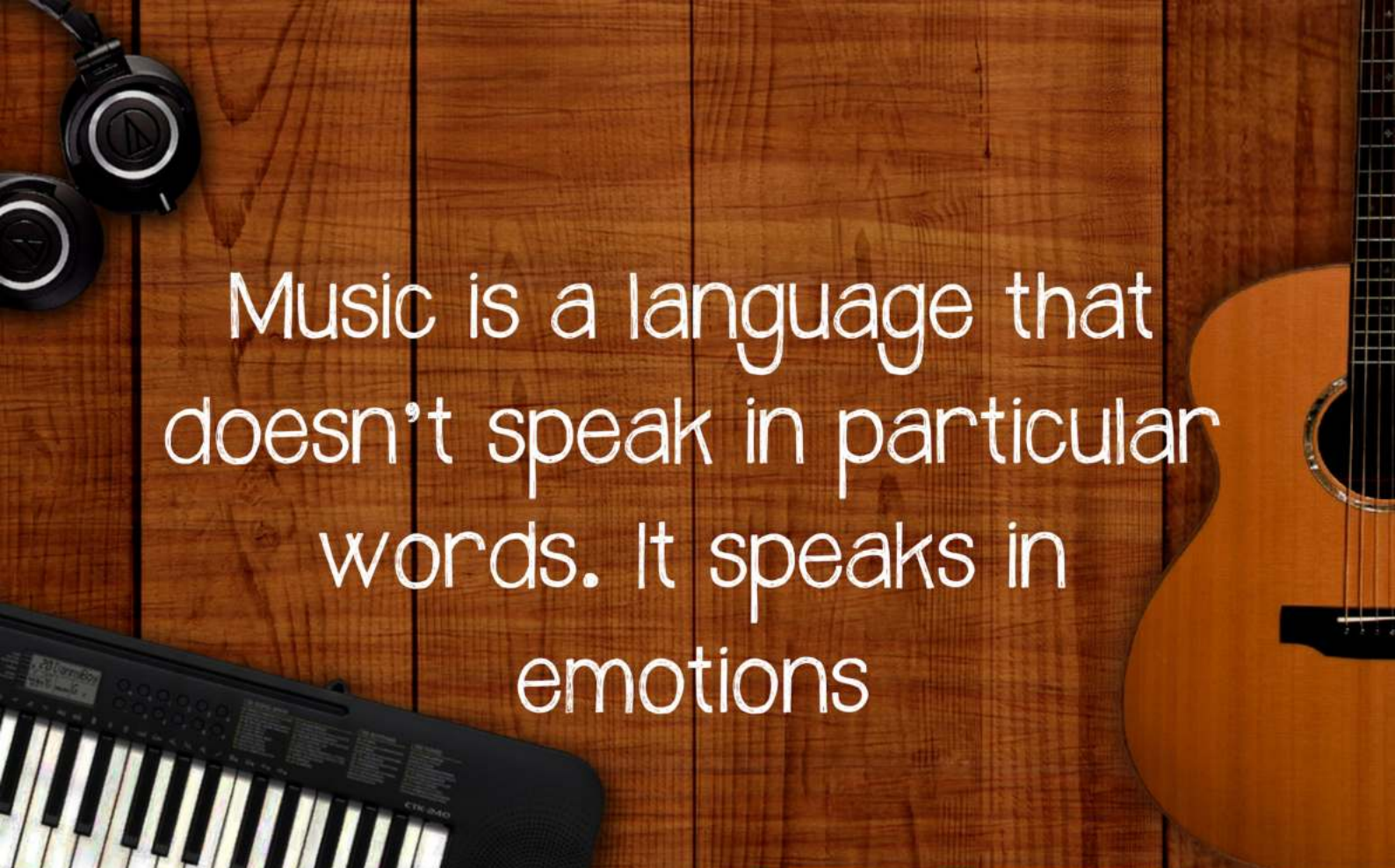
Before March 2020 we had two weekly activities and by July 2020 we had introduced two weekly Zumba classes and continued with our choir and art online. In December 2020 we delivered a Christmas party on Zoom, delivering fancy dress, gifts and party food boxes to the adults joining us online.



In January 2021 when we faced the third lockdown, we achieved funding through the National Lottery Covid Fund for our 'Tackling Lockdown Loneliness' project to deliver virtual cookery classes, virtual chocolate making classes, deliver Happy Boxes and hold Friday Live disco sessions every Friday until March 2021 when the lockdown lifted.

We offered a lifeline to our community during the pandemic, offering physical, mental and emotional support by continuing connections via Zoom.

Not only did our activities double, but our membership doubled too during this unprecedented time PLUS we had the best time getting to know our members and their families.



Music is a language that
doesn't speak in particular
words. It speaks in
emotions



Our choir, which was named 'Beautiful Noise' by the members, was first formed in October 2019. The choir meets every Wednesday and is a wonderful way for the adults to grow in confidence and develop a network of friends. They sing a variety of music from The Beatles to Ed Sheeran, and it has truly become a highlight of their week.

The joy the members get from singing and performing is heartwarming to see. and the confidence they have got from performing is amazing to witness. The members really feel as though they belong to something amazing, and the inclusivity of the group is wonderful as members are all welcoming and accepting of each other. They encourage and support each other.

"I enjoy choir because I love to sing pop songs and making new friends. It makes me feel more confident singing every single Wednesday"

Musical experience strengthens many aspects of brain function, such as the neural timing precision which allows differentiation between speech syllables

The restorative power of music is used all over the world for people with Autism and learning disabilities as a means of encouraging verbal, aural and physical stimulation, as well as to function as a source of self-expression and self-identification.

One study in particular focused solely on individuals with learning disabilities, and stressed the importance of music therapy for their psychological and emotional development, concluding that it was vital in the "expression of thoughts and emotions" (Music therapy, a description of process: engagement and avoidance in five people with learning disabilities, P. G. Toolan and S. Y. Coleman, 1994).

Kraus, N. and B. Chandrasekaran, Music training for the development of auditory skills. Nature Reviews Neuroscience, 2010.11: p. 599-605.



As well as sparking joy for the people who sing in our choir, it is also helping them to realise their own potential and connect with others. Stable mental health and music are intrinsically linked, and that is what makes our choir so transformative for both the attendees and their carers, who love to see the amazing results.



Ignite Dance & Musical Theatre



Our Ignite Dance & Musical Theatre currently brings together 17 adults with various abilities and levels of Autism. To encourage expression they create routines for songs and musicals, learn lines and perform short scenes.



People with Autism and learning disabilities are at a much greater risk of obesity and other related health issues due to the lack of opportunities available to them. This lack of exercise perpetuates poor mental health, meaning it is vital to tackle the issue of poor physical health in order to improve overall emotional well-being.

In the UK, 1 in 5 people have a disability; yet disabled adults are twice as likely as non-disabled adults to be physically inactive.

Dance is particularly accessible as it transcends language, promotes self-expression and brings people together. The benefits that our dance participants report include improved confidence, coordination, concentration, creativity, and communication, as well as a reduced sense of isolation and increased independence.

Many people we work with have communication difficulties, but the sensory experience of dance – the physical movement, the rhythm and pulses of the music, the connection with others, and the use of sensory props – enables people to communicate through dance.



Bold as Brass

5 benefits of playing in a brass band

- Confident learning
- Developing social skills
- Teamwork collaboration
- Healthy competition
- Lifelong benefits - creating memories with your peers

Our brass band started during Summer 2022 with a small number of workshops to introduce instruments as a possible new interest to our community. The members loved it and asked if it could continue.

The aim of the brass band is to teach the members how to play a brass instrument of their choice, read music and play in time with each other. The members have spoken about performances after working closely with Helsby Community Brass Band who have encouraged the members to give it a try.

Members Lounge

Disco with DJ Funky Monkey



We deliver a supervised monthly nightclub experience with DJ Funky Monkey providing the tunes. This activity provides adults with Autism and learning disabilities a chance to dance, unwind and laugh with friends in a safe, supportive environment. The nights are organised once a month and include a DJ and a bar so that the adults can have a drink and truly experience a party atmosphere. This activity brings immeasurable joy and excitement to those who attend, and we have had huge success so far, especially with the theme nights with around 38 members coming along every month.

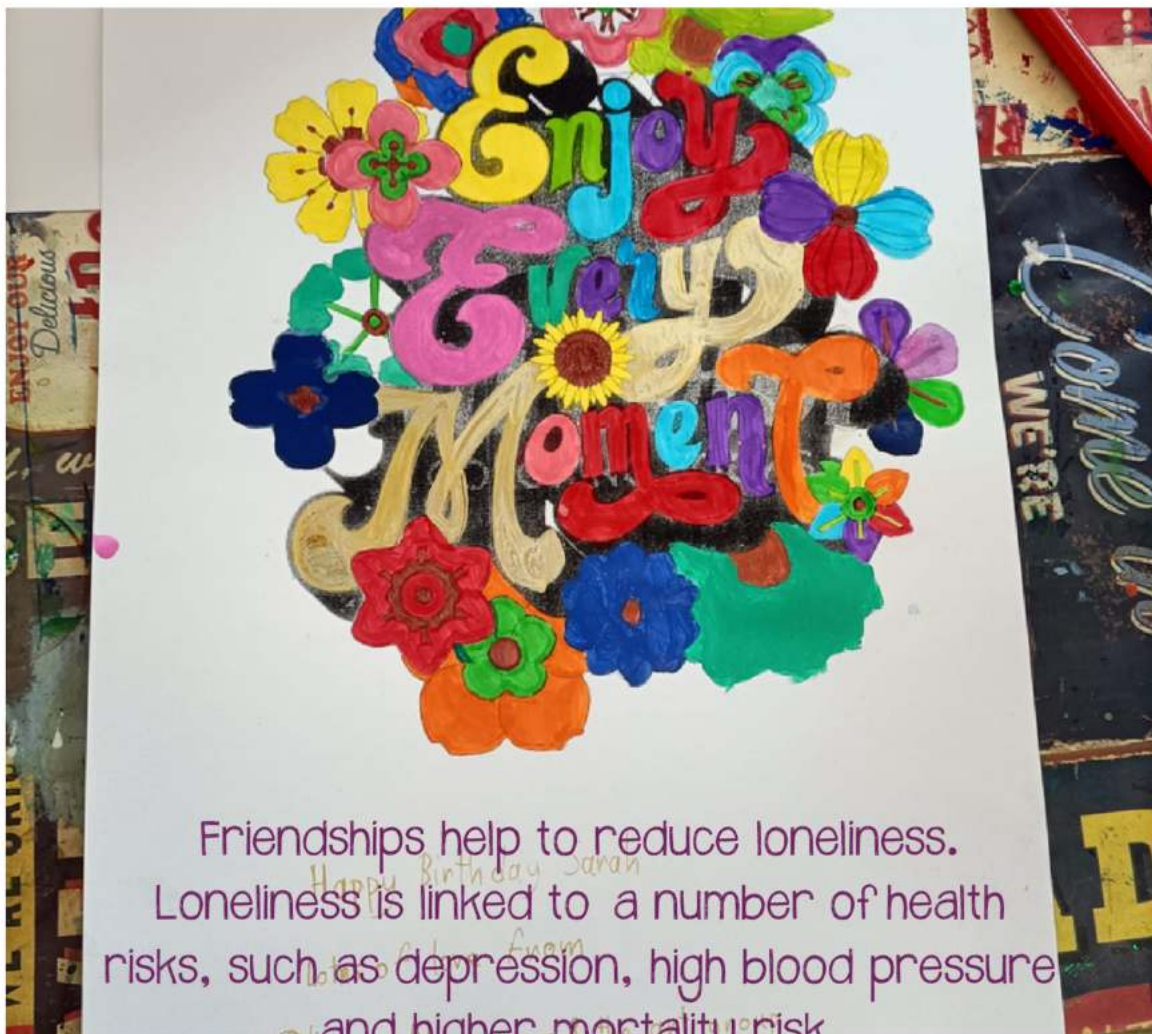
While many people with Autism or a learning disability have the desire to make friends and create emotional bonds with others in the same way that everyone else does, many of them struggle with spoken communication as a means of establishing a connection. This can lead to behavioural problems, anxiety, and frustration.

CREATIVE CREW ART CLUB

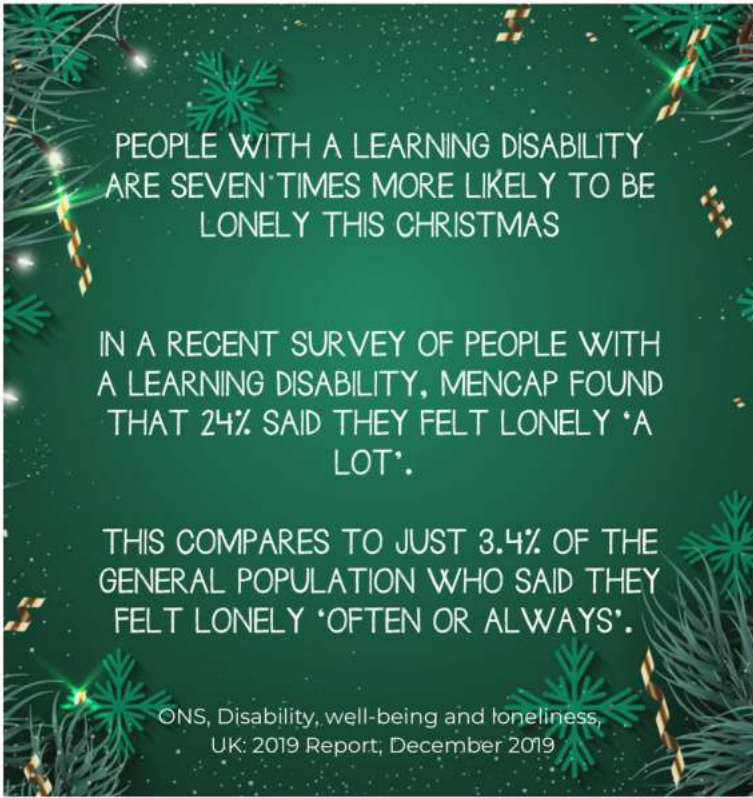
Artistic therapy is widely regarded as a safe and insightful way of understanding and expressing feelings for Autistic and intellectually disabled people. These small personal accomplishments massively boost the individual's self-confidence.

Our Monday art club has a regular attendance of around 16 people who love all aspects of the club and feel a huge sense of pride and achievement at their art.

It is a peaceful accepting group which makes you feel relaxed as soon as you enter the room.



Holt-Lunstad et al., 2010; Gilmore and Cuskelly 2014; Valtorta et al., 2016



CHRISTMAS Ball!

People with additional needs love Christmas just as much as everyone else! But, sadly, there are limited opportunities for them to participate in the festive events we take for granted.

Our Christmas Ball is one for the diary. It is an event that incorporates everything we all want in a Christmas Party; delicious food, dance floor tunes, gifts, snowball fights, Christmas crackers and more.

We also use this opportunity for our activity groups to perform in our 'showcase' in front of an encouraging audience.

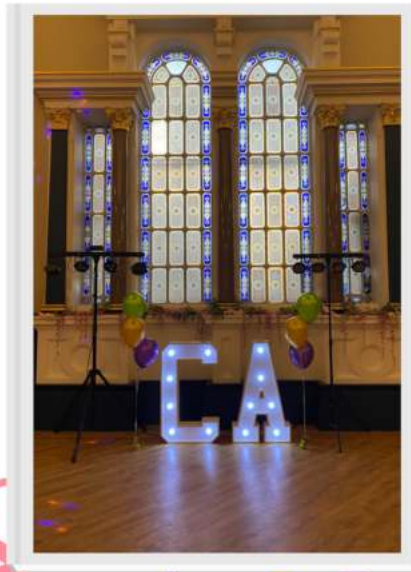
Parents and carers join us but sit separately to allow the members some time with friends.

In 2022, there were 58 members and 40 carers/parents attending our Christmas Ball.



Summer Ball!

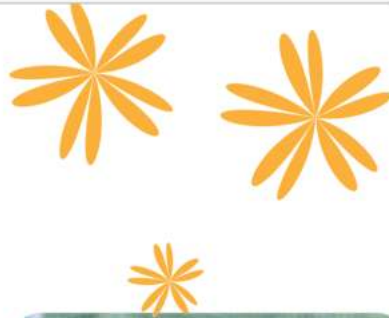
We all love to dress up every now and again for a special gathering with friends, this is something that we should all be able to do. Well our Summer Ball is exactly that- a special party giving our members the chance to dress to impress, hit the dance floor and spend a special night with their friends.



SUMMER FESTIVAL



In 2019 and 2022 we delivered a Sports & Wellbeing Festival but in response to our members' wishes, this will be changed to a Summer Music Festival in future.



How we started our journey - from a moment of clarity, to a vision of equality...

Jenny Allcock, Founder of Creating Adventures, was made aware of the heartbreaking scarcity of support for adults with Autism and learning disabilities in society, and the shocking lack of opportunities they could access in order to gain basic human needs that the rest of us take for granted, such as friendships, weekly routines, and finding happiness and excitement in everyday life.



"Whilst working as a fundraiser at a children's charity, it was brought to my attention that there was very little available for adults with Autism and learning disabilities. After some research, it was found that opportunities were so different for adults than they are for children with additional needs, it started to play on my mind.

I spoke with carers and organisations working in this area and again it was highlighted that once children with additional needs leave school, many of the services, activities and opportunities drop off the radar and leave many adults feeling isolated, causing mental health problems further down the line.

After months of creating and submitting the application to the Charity Commission, on 24th June 2016 I received the amazing news that Creating Adventures had become a registered charity.

In August 2017 we started our first project, 'Music & Songwriting', which was partly funded by the Big Lottery Fund. This project supported 38 adults to write and record their own song.

Then in September 2018 we achieved funding from Cheshire Community Foundation to deliver a weekly Art Club.

Through Cheshire Connect, I met with Sam at UBC Offices who donated us an office in Rutherford House, Birchwood in October 2018. The office donated by UBC has been of huge benefit to us, giving us our professional base to develop the charity from. Our bigger vision is to have a centre of our own to run our activities and develop more opportunities for the adults we believe in and support."

"My belief in what was vital and what was possible kept me focused" - Jenny Allcock, Founder



Our vision - a safe space to talk, laugh, learn and meet with friends.

We are working towards a base of our own where people with Autism and learning disabilities can meet with friends whilst also inviting people from the local community to come and join us, therefore breaking down perceptions about disability. We would love to open a cafe that they themselves help to run. This would be a wonderful, thriving hub for people with additional needs to feel supported and connected to others in their situation. Feeling a sense of belonging in life is vital for overall happiness and well-being. We care deeply about the adults' physical and mental health, and a centre would help us to cater to all their needs whilst also opening up opportunities for more activities.



MONEY, MONEY, MONEY

Everything you give has the power to inspire, ignite and illuminate the lives of people with Autism and learning disabilities

ITEM	DETAILS	Annual	Monthly
Wages/staff costs	1 x FTE Founding Chief Officer, 1 x FTE Community Engagement Co	£ 60,852.00	£ 5,071.00
Office costs/premises costs	Rent & utilities	£ 7,200.00	£ 600.00
Office equipment	General supplies	£ 360.00	£ 30.00
Insurance	Public, employee & trustee liability	£ 792.00	£ 40.00
Mail, phones and internet	Stamps, phone calls and internet	£ 360.00	£ 30.00
Website & IT support	Domain name and hosting	£ 540.00	£ 45.00
Travel Costs (staff)	.40p per mile	£ 120.00	£ 10.00
Training/Conferences etc.	Social care tv, Safeguarding and other certificates	£ 240.00	£ 20.00
Volunteer expenses	Training, travel, misc	£ 120.00	£ 10.00
DBS checks		£ 240.00	£ 12.00
		£70,824	£ 5,868.00
Total monthly cost	£	5,868.00	
Total weekly cost	£	1,467.00	
Total hourly cost	£	38.61	

Summer Festival	£	1,500.00	£ 125.00
Recipe for Success Cookery	£	5,760.00	£ 480.00
Dance & Musical Theatre	£	2,400.00	£ 200.00
Creative Crew Art	£	3,360.00	£ 280.00
Bold as Brass	£	2,700.00	£ 225.00
Beautiful Noise Choir	£	3,000.00	£ 250.00
Members Lounge Disco	£	720.00	£ 60.00
Christmas Ball	£	2,100.00	£ 175.00
Summer Ball	£	1,200.00	£ 100.00

Total Cost
 Per Year = £93,564.00
 Per Month = £7797.00
 Per Hour - £49.98

Plus:
 3 annual events
 2 annual theatre trips
 6 annual workshops covering various skills and topics
 + Summer Holiday Programme

Our Timetable

Monday Art club 10am-11:30am	Tuesday Cookery 2:30pm-5:30pm
Wednesday Brass Band 1pm - 2:30pm	Wednesday Beautiful Noise Choir 3:00pm-4:30pm
Thursday Dance & Musical Theatre 5:30pm-7pm	Monthly Members Lounge Disco 7pm-9pm 2nd Friday of every month

Testimonials...

Although we are proud of the bigger impact we have had on our local community, the smaller stories of each individual's journey towards confidence, fulfilment and happiness truly show that everything we do means so much to the people we support.

We have seen such a massive difference in Jess' mental health this year from attending all the fabulous weekly activities together with the special events. She is so upbeat and positive and excited to join in with things.

It's also taught me to believe that I can do things even when I don't believe I can. (Digital Music)

That's what ca is about supporting people too and helping them - Frankie

The dance class is lovely and kind. Lots of fun and having fun. I love to dance. So good and nice and warm. Beautiful - Fliss

Catherine has really enjoyed this and been the most engaged I've seen her for ages. - Eleanor, Catherine's mum

Thank you Alison & the dream team ... for 4 weeks of beautiful chocolate making. Fabulous results from super talented budding chocolatiers. Amazing results. Can't wait to try them. Thanks again xx - Mary, Laura's mum & volunteer

What a wonderful time all the people we support have had this year with yourselves. From cooking dancing, disco's and summer and Christmas balls. We can't thank you and the team at creating adventures enough for all the hard work you have put in to make these memorable moments happen. Regards Lynn. - Lynn, Service Manager, Autism Initiatives

For the last 7 months I've been involved in this amazing charity. The difference the activities make to members of CA are awesome, they are delivered in a professional and fun way which has resulted in members , gaining greater confidence , self worth self esteem and social inclusion. It's been a brilliant experience seeing members thrive and reach their full potential. (Volunteer)

STRATEGIC PLAN



OUR 3 YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN



Programme

Place of Our Own

People



Pounds

Promotion



www.creatingadventures.org.uk
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Place of Our Own



What will it look like?

Our Base
at least 4 rooms
2 activity spaces,
kitchen, storage, offices
Safe place

Garden / allotment



People



Target Membership 150

Links with other charities

CSR with local co. supporters

6 Trustees -
skills audit refreshed annually.

Parental support

20 Volunteers

Workforce Core team - 3 "Staff" plus freelance team x 10
25hr Fundraising Assistant & 38hrs Community Engagement Coordinator



Pounds



Enough Funding to provide support for all programmed activities plus 6 - 12 months in hand

Monthly donation scheme through Go Cardless in next 12 months

Fundraising through trusts/foundations, events/sponsored events, corporate support & individual donations



Promotion



CSR opportunities

Christmas events

Volunteer interaction button on website

Asset needs wishlist eg IT equipment, furniture,

Will week / other products

www.creatingadventures.org.uk





And finally...

Contact our Founder Jenny at:
jenny.allcock@creatingadventures.org.uk
or call 07736 473550

Visit our website
www.creatingadventures.org.uk



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