



**Reachout**  
WITH ARTS IN MIND

*Award Winning Charity*

# A Creative Journey

## 30 Years of Reachout





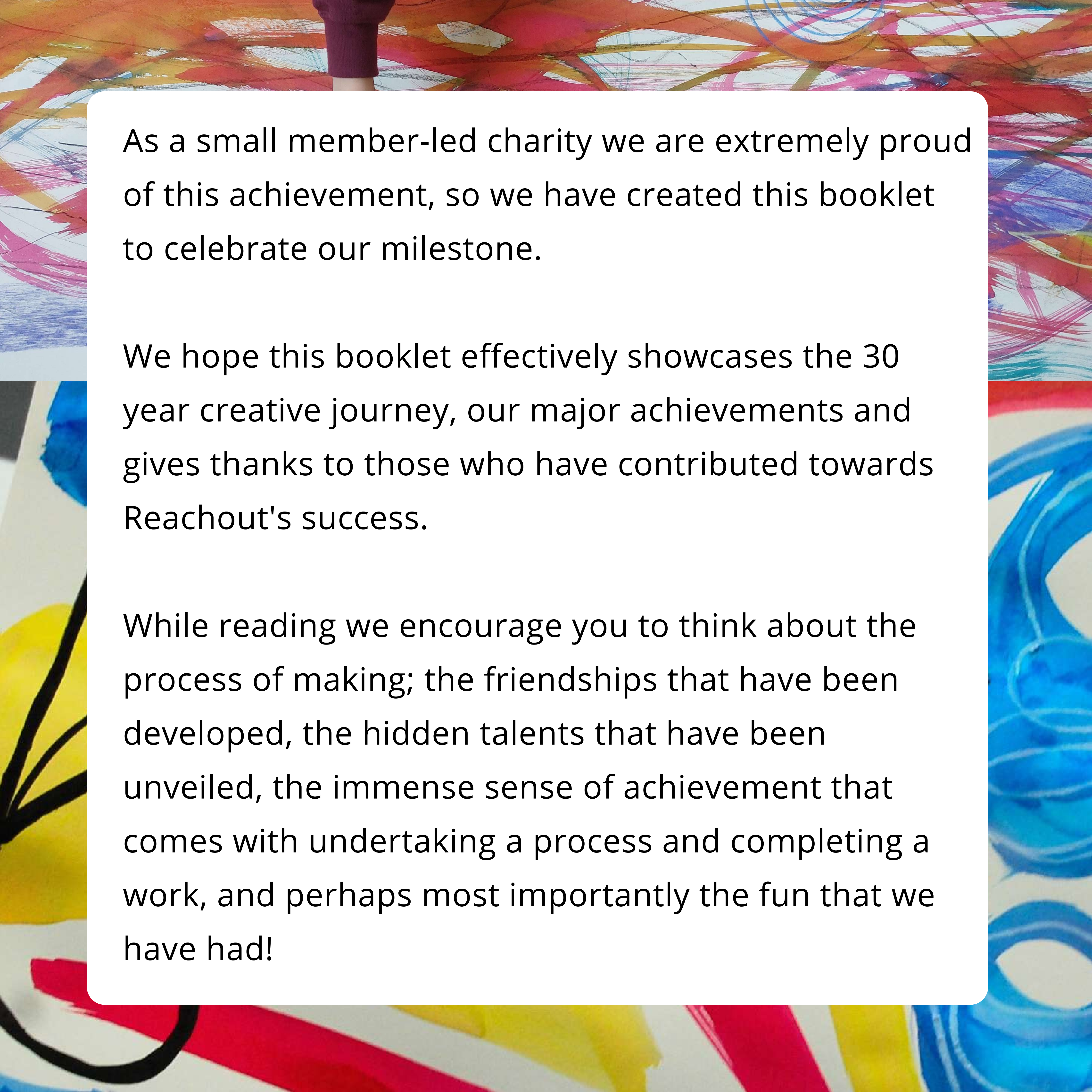


# The Organisation

2023 marked 30 years since the founding of Reachout With Arts In Mind, an innovative, inclusive and award winning charity.

Initially established as a drama group challenging stigma and misconceptions of mental illness while providing a voice to those with experiences of mental ill-health, Reachout has continued to grow in relation to both artistic mediums, audiences and impact.

While embracing change and developments across the past 30 years, Reachout's 3 key values have remained the same; **integrity**, **equality** and **trust**.



As a small member-led charity we are extremely proud of this achievement, so we have created this booklet to celebrate our milestone.

We hope this booklet effectively showcases the 30 year creative journey, our major achievements and gives thanks to those who have contributed towards Reachout's success.

While reading we encourage you to think about the process of making; the friendships that have been developed, the hidden talents that have been unveiled, the immense sense of achievement that comes with undertaking a process and completing a work, and perhaps most importantly the fun that we have had!



# Reachout Foundation Founder

Sandie Luti

In 1992, I became a Mental Health Community Education worker in Alloa and learned of a play at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, called “Mad”. The synopsis was intriguing. Most of the cast are not actors. They are survivors of psychiatric services, and each has their story to tell.

“Mad” does not gloss over the harrowing portrayal of service users and their suffering. As I watched, I was aware of a packed audience listening and watching intently, concerned, sometimes horrified at what they were witnessing. This play had a sustaining effect on me. I had seen something very powerful. It seemed that the telling of real-life experiences to an audience was an incredible platform for giving users a voice. And so, the



seed of an idea for raising awareness of mental health issues was sown.

For several weeks I approached different people with my ideas and was encouraged by their positive response. This led to applying for funds, and I was delighted when £20,000 was the result of the application. Reachout was born! A small group of interested colleagues and mental health service users gathered to bring ideas together. Things moved quickly. We interviewed applicants for posts – admin assistant, drama worker, playwright, drama director – and within a short space of time, had a cast of service users, and production of a play which we called “D’You Mind”.

When the remit of my job eventually changed, after a few years, my commitment to Reachout was phased out, as other responsibilities took over. And throughout the following years, Reachout has continued to thrive. During my involvement it was a drama project, eventually changing its focus by introducing a range of expressive arts to its members. This brought new opportunities, such as art, painting and drawing, craftwork, creative writing, poetry, and music, encouraging self-expression in the supportive, non-threatening, environment of Reachout.

To this day, Reachout continues to be a champion of user-led activity. I am confident that at Lime Tree House it will continue to go from strength to strength.





# Executive Artistic Director

Lesley Arthur

Art offers us a voice, values creators and allows individuals to challenge their self-perception as well as the perception held by others.

30 years of Reachout celebrates the way our membership past and present has found power and learning through their own creative development. By being and becoming artists, people can and do recover. Throughout the years Reachout members have accomplished outstanding personal achievements.

Reachout would like to thank past and present members, staff, volunteers, funders, partners, volunteers and friends who have and continue to support us.



# Our History



## 1993

Reachout was formed, initially as a drama group challenging stigma and misconceptions of mental illness while providing a voice to those with experiences of mental ill-health.

## 1994

A recording of the first play created by Reachout members called 'D'You Mind?' was performed at Lornshill Academy. The original recording can still be watched today!



## 1995

Reachout becomes a registered charity and an organisational constitution is written.

# 1997

Reachout Member Elaine Swift creates Mr White sculpture. Over the following 26 years, Mr White would attend many outreach events, representing Reachout at a multitude of locations around the country, appearing regularly in press articles. Since his creation Mr White has lived in four Reachout premises.



# 2002

Local Artist Peter Russell's 'If the walls could talk' stone carving workshops with Reachout members. Members used reclaimed stone from Bellsdyke Psychiatric Hospital created personal expressions on living with mental illness.



Poem "Bellsdyke Shuffle", by Reachout member Colin Hunter selected for Artworks in Mental Health publication by Poet Laureate Sir Andrew Motion. Scan QR code to hear digital version.



## 2003

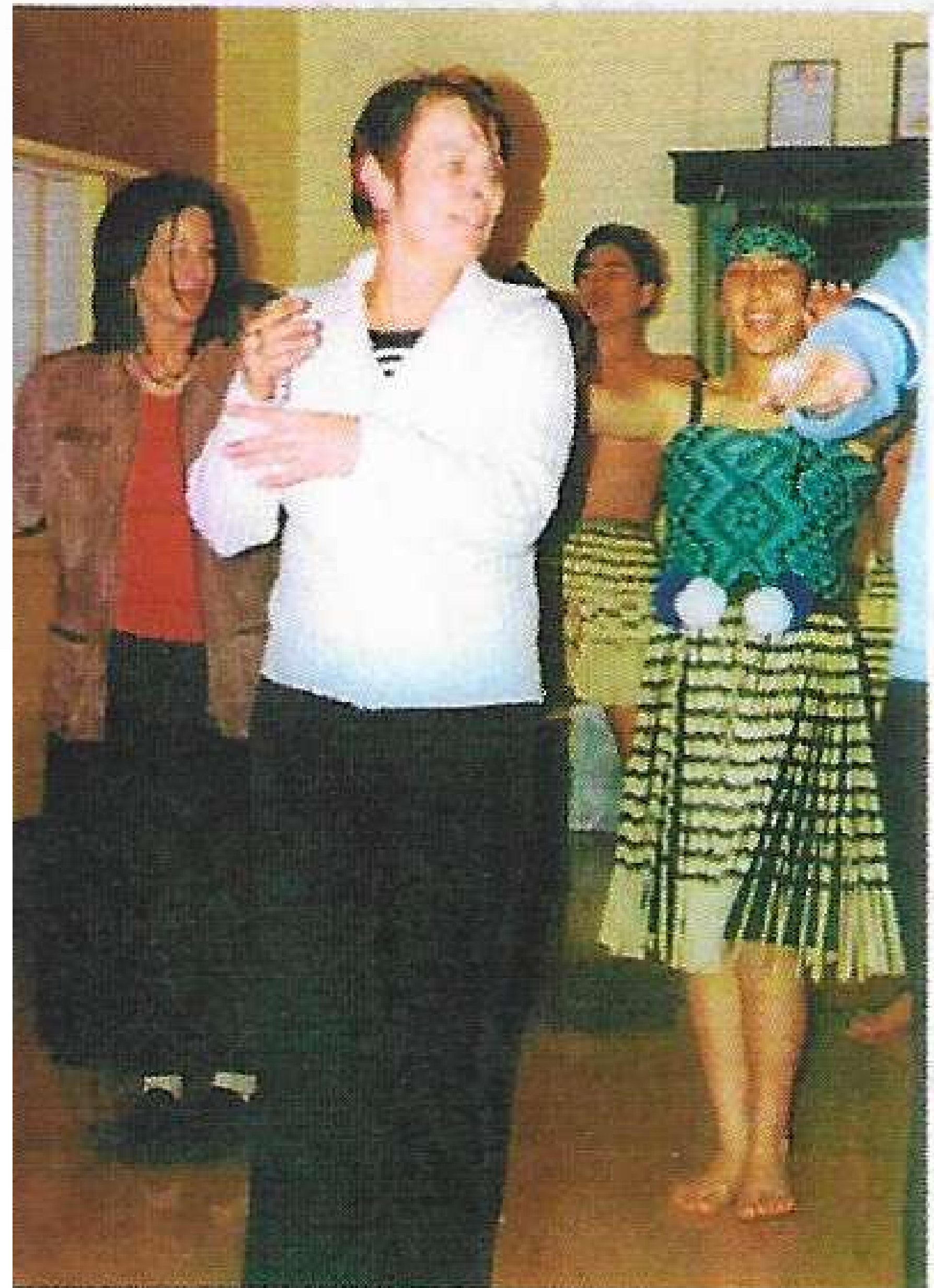
Over 60 people attend Reachout's 10th Anniversary Open Day, where Sandie (founder) and Sir George Reid (MSP) broke down a wall of stigma, made up of blocks containing negative words, to unveil images of Reachout members.

## 2004

Reachout members visit New Zealand and present to Community Psychology & Mental Health Conference at Bay of Plenty with 200 delegates in attendance.

Later in the year more Reachout members attend a Community Psychology Conference in Exeter to share their experiences of living with poor mental health.

## REACHOUT to New Zealand



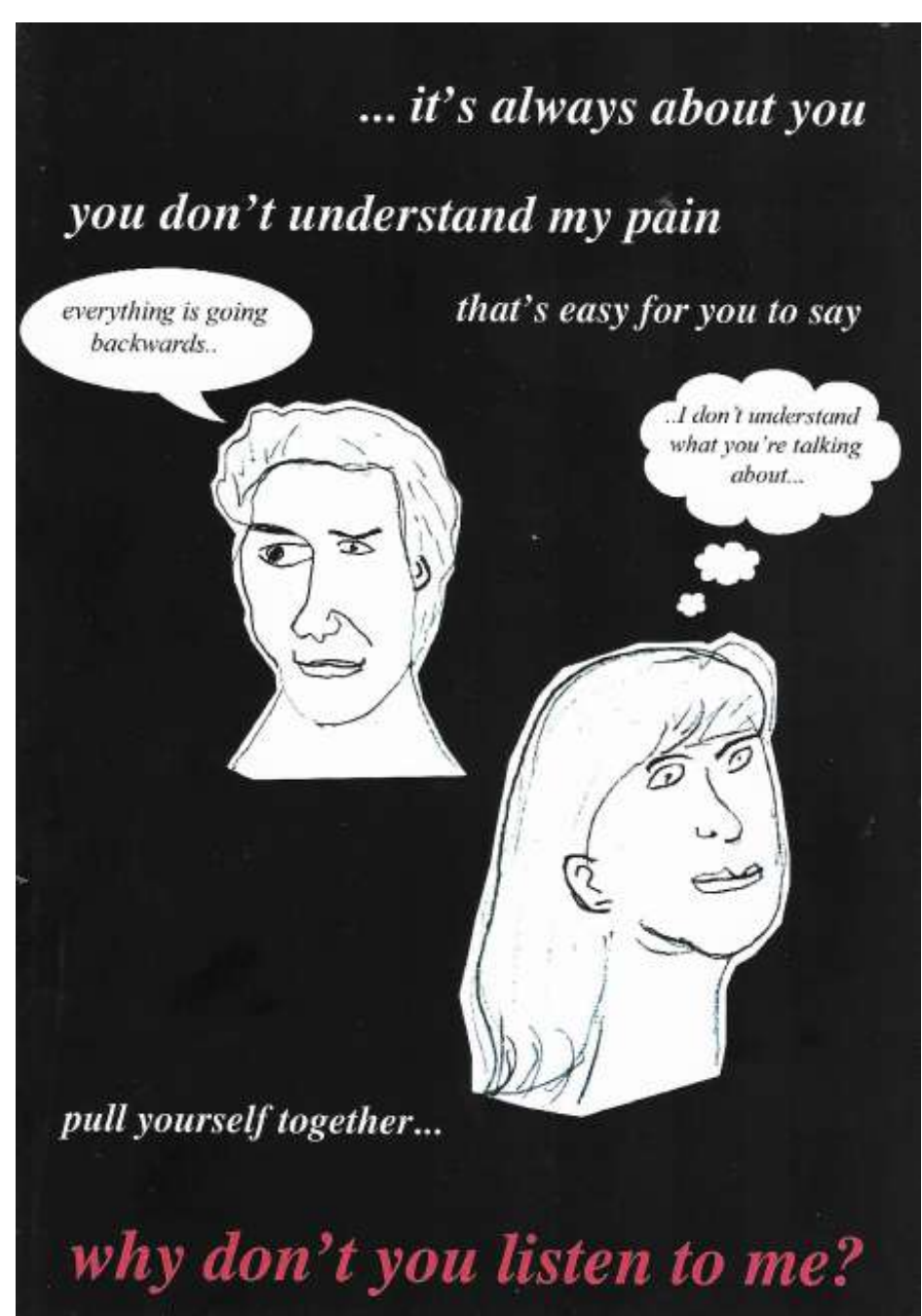


## 2005

We were the winners of Engage Visual Arts Award for Members-led Creative Banner Project and Arts Forum Award in recognition of Reachout's Achievement in the Arts in Clackmannanshire!

## 2006

Reachout members exhibit their artwork in the Scottish Parliament. The exhibition, called Talking Heads was the first art exhibition to be held at the new Holyrood Parliament building. Some might call us "Holyrood Stars" 🌟😊



## 2008

'Why Don't You Listen to Me?' Creative Project was produced as part of an ongoing partnership with Klacksun. A booklet (see left) and short educational film was produced.



# 2011

We established a social enterprise trading arm 'Art'n'Mind – The Makers Gallery & Bistro' in 2011, working with 120 local, national and international artists and makers.

# 2015

The Makers Gallery & Bistro gained a Certificate of Excellence on Trip Advisor, was runner up at Learn Direct Inspiration Business Awards, runner up at Clacks Hospitality and Business Award AND was nominated for 'Best Informal Eating Experience' Visit Scotland's Thistle Awards.





# 2017

The Makers Gallery & Bistro Employability project ended. Creative Communities continued the developments of new Reachout programmes INSPIRE, MAKE and CHANGE utilising creative experiences to improve wellbeing.

# 2018

In 2018 we were a shortlisted finalist in Scotland's Regeneration Forum Creative Regeneration Awards.

And we relocated to our current large flexible studio space in Lime Tree House

to focus on increased delivery of quality arts experiences for the community.





## 2020

2020 was a difficult year and many are still feeling the effects of the global pandemic. Not only did Reachout prove to be Covid resilient, our service continues to help those still affected by the pandemic integrate back into the community.

## 2022

Throughout 2022 we widened the impact of our service with significant increases in our outreach projects. Our creative programmes now engage with pre-school children through to older people in the community.



# 2023

## 30 Years of Thriving Through Trying



2023 marks Reachout's 30th anniversary - as a small member-led charity we are extremely proud of this achievement. To mark the occasion we held an exhibition in Scion House, Stirling University Innovation Park.

The exhibition featured a wide variety of mediums to reflect works created across our 30 years. To compliment the physical exhibition we also showcased a digital exhibition.



Scan to visit online  
exhibition



Audience feedback that reported past and present members, their friends and families visited the exhibition, as well as schools and external organisations.





# Reachout Beneficiaries

1993 - 2023





***“Reachout has given me confidence in myself”***

- Reachout member feedback (1998)

***“... being connected once again to a creative side of ourselves that seemed unreachable or even lost.”***

- Reachout member feedback (1999)



***“I find it totally inspiring and it is just a joy to come here on a Wednesday. It does a lot for my self-confidence as well.”***

- Reachout member feedback (2000)



***“As a fairly new member of Reachout, I was surprised by the warmth and support I recieved from all the group. I only wish I had found it long ago.”***

- Reachout member feedback (2001)

***“G'day Reachout members, your work is inspiring and stories are powerful. Your story needs to be told so we can all appreciate the strength. Maybe one day a group such as yours will form in Australia and empower people here in the same way.”***

- Reachout fan from Australia (2002)



***“I learned much more from my placement than I set out to achieve and it has changed my life profoundly.”***

- Reachout work placement feedback (2003)





***“The enthusiasm of Lesley and the workshop leaders for art has encouraged me to take a more serious look at art theory. I really value Reachout. It has improved my life and happiness considerably.”***

***- Reachout member feedback (2004)***

***“For 10 years I wasn't capable of expressing myself. Being empowered enough to actually express how you feel - now that's power! Once you've learned how to help yourself it's harder to go back - you can't unlearn these methods.”***

***- Reachout member feedback (2005)***



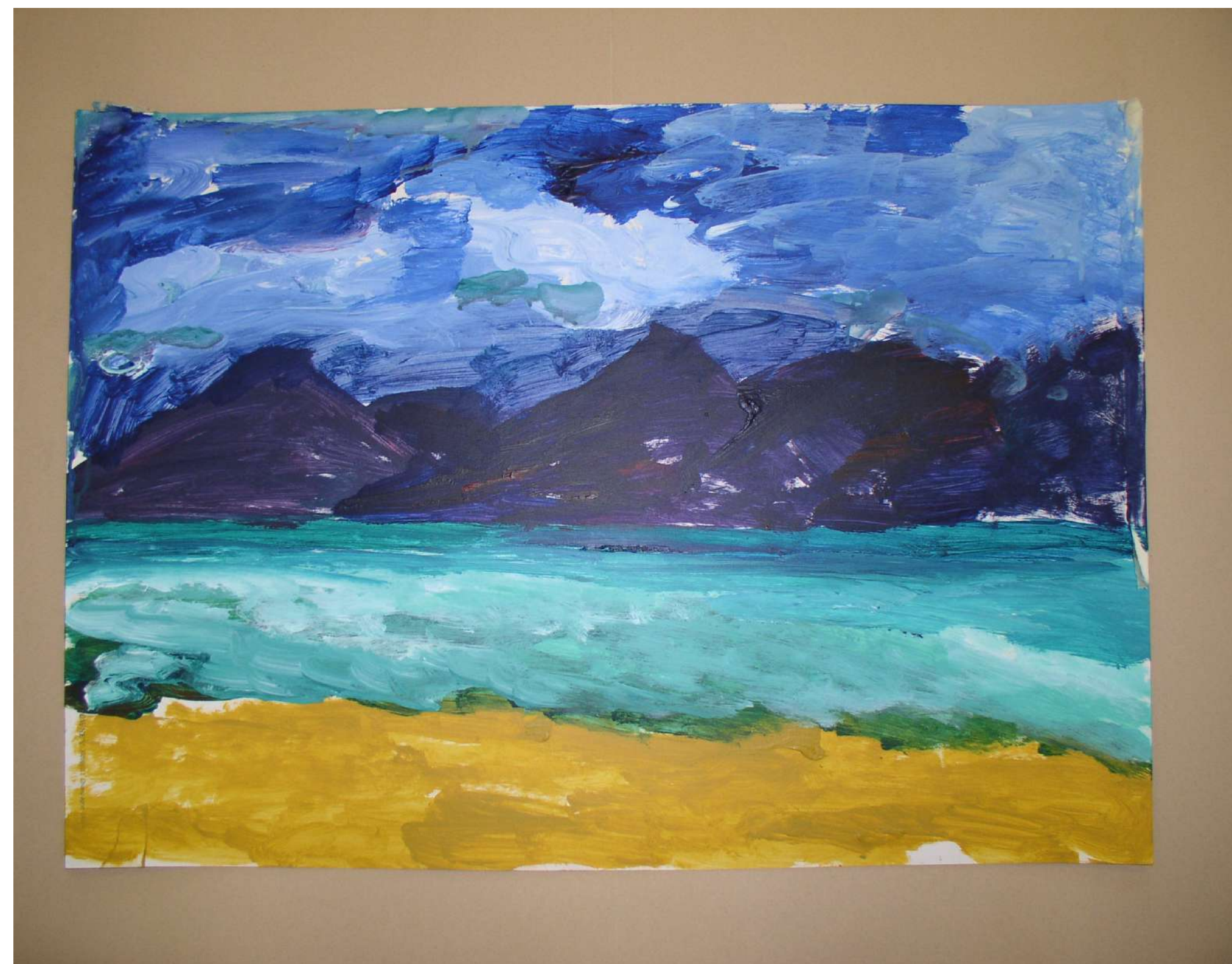


***“One of the highlights of my time as a writer in residence so far has been working with Reachout staff, and members.”***

- Sessional artist feedback (2007)

***“I didn’t realise I could do it until I tried - it had never occurred to me to paint. I couldn’t believe I was good at it when I first came here.”***

- Reachout member feedback (2008)



***“It has inspired me to move on... it’s the most alive I’ve felt in years!”***

- Reachout work placement feedback (2009)



***“I have grown very passionate about the project, probably because I have seen how much it has helped me and I want others to benefit as much as I have.”***

- Reachout volunteer feedback (2010)

***“The support I have had and the confidence boost from achieving what I have so far, has opened my eyes to what I can achieve. The sky is the limit!”***

- Reachout member feedback (2011)



***“Reachout is an essential part of my life and gives me the reason to leave my house.”***

- Reachout work placement feedback (2014)



***“This is a most dynamic organisation with a team of spirited, visionary and generous people. The gift of art to the spirit of human beings is well documented. Art is for all, at whatever age or level of development. It inspires and enriches the inner consciousness. There is nothing so exciting as the discovery of the self and the expression that can flourish and flower with encouragement. We are here on this wonderful Earth to help and to care for one another, whether this is on a personal level or on a community level. Reachout is making a wonderful contribution to those who are in need. May the splendid work continue.”***

***Lys Hansen Patron Reachout trading arm  
Art’n’Mind - The Makers Gallery & Bistro***







***“One of the highlights of my time as a writer in residence so far has been working with Reachout staff, and members.”***

- Sessional artist feedback (2015)

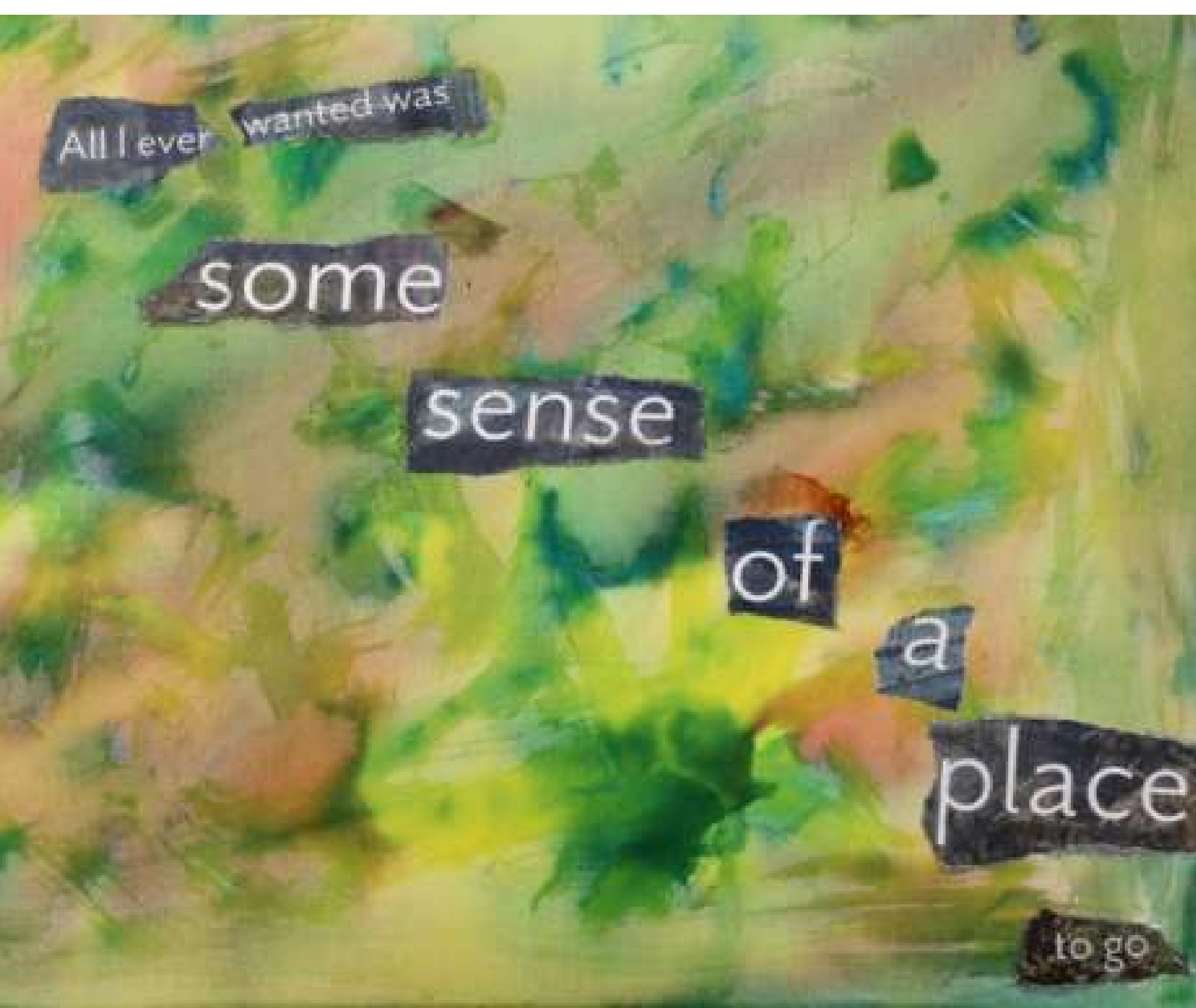
***“I feel that Reachout is a sanctuary for people with mental health conditions. I feel I can have a laugh with others on my wave length without being judged and it's so much fun.”***

- Reachout member feedback (2016)



***“In a nutshell, Reachout helps lift stress and anxiety and it gives you a sense of belonging to a place where folk have got positive ideas and positive outlooks.***

- Reachout work placement feedback (2018)





***“This was also a great opportunity for our Young Carers to experience working in an art studio and using different art materials. All the Young Carers enjoyed the sessions and loved watching their films at the end.”***

***- Reachout partner feedback (2020)***

***“All I can say is thank goodness for Reachout and all the work they do.”***

***- Reachout partner feedback (2022)***



***“There’s a space for everyone in Reachout.”***

***- Reachout member feedback (2023)***





# Member Spotlight

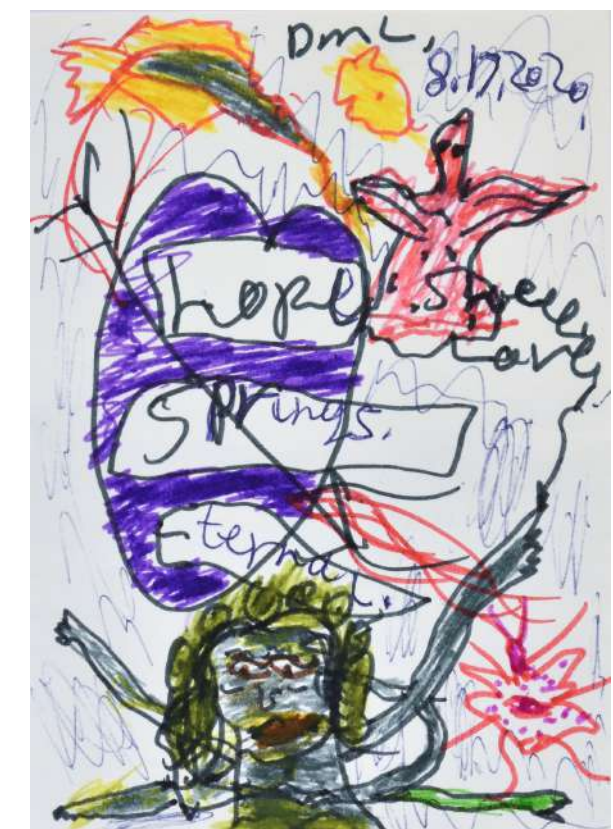
Derek

# Members Spotlight: Derek



## How long you been coming to Reachout?

October 1998 approximately.



## What do you think has changed about Reachout across those years?

Not too sure, I know it started as a theatre group before I joined and was quite a small group. I suppose it's got bigger and more accessible. The original premises was upstairs so anyone in a wheelchair couldn't go.

# Members Spotlight: Derek



**Any moments stand out across those 25 amount of years?**

Probably quite a few I suppose, but probably an invite to the Queens Garden Party and an event in Scottish Parliament.



Scan to watch one of Derek's animations.

**What would you like the future of Reachout to look like?**

Just to stay like it is I suppose. Would be good to coordinate with other places to work on projects, like the University, or any other big facilities, maybe for animation or music.

# Members Spotlight: Derek



## Exhibitions include:

- Alloa Tower 2002
- The Scottish Parliament 2006
- The Make Room June 2010
- Big Draw Stirling Castle October 2011
- 'Conception' Exhibition June 2011
- SMHAFF 'Passion & Light' Exhibition Atrium , The Makers Village Oct 15
- 'Passion & Light' Exhibition The Smith Art Gallery Stirling, Nov 15



# Member Spotlight

Steven

# Members Spotlight:

## Steven



I joined Reachout in September 2019 after receiving a late diagnosis of Autism, OCD, Anxiety and Mild Learning Difficulties at 23 years old. The year before my diagnosis I lost my one true friend, my grandfather, so it was a difficult time for me. I attended several other community groups, however none of them worked out, but then I found Reachout. At first, I wasn't sure about attending Reachout



but thought I can always give this place a try and if I don't like it I'll just say I'm sorry, thanks for the opportunity but it's not for me. But it turned out to be the exact opposite. Things have got better for me since coming to Reachout and some of my emotional pain has gone away. I feel more appreciated at Reachout and have a sense of life at Reachout.





the  
**makers**  
GALLERY & BISTRO



# Trainee Spotlight

Kay



# Trainee Spotlight:

## Kay



### **Trainee to Relief Front of House Supervisor**

Being one of the Maker's Gallery & Bistro's earliest trainees Kay demonstrated to new trainees how far they could go and how much they could achieve if they apply themselves with determination, motivation and hard work.

I began as a Front of House trainee in March 2013. On my first day, I was very nervous and a little scared after having been out of work for a while and I had no self-esteem or confidence. After only a few months of training I was told of a job opportunity as a catering assistant and that I should apply.

# Trainee Spotlight:

## Kay



**“The Makers Gallery and Bistro has had a large impact on me and in turn my home life. The support and encouragement from other staff members throughout my placement and employment has made me feel more valued as a person. I feel confident taking on new challenges and feel proud with every new accomplishment I achieve. It was with this support and encouragement I felt brave enough to apply for college and hope to get the chance to work in a field that I support.”**

During her employment Kay was promoted to Relief Front of House Supervisor. As well as customer service Kay trained and supported project trainees, and went on to graduate with a HNC Social Services in 2018.



# Beneficiary Spotlight

Maddy

# Beneficiary Spotlight:

## Maddy



### **Reachout Member to Trainee to Arts Resource Worker & Professional Illustrator to University**

I came along to Reachout to become a member and access the Reachout studio and was introduced to The Makers Gallery & Bistro. I started this journey as a gallery trainee with The Makers Gallery and Bistro because I wanted to improve my confidence and learn new skills in September 2013.

# Beneficiary Spotlight:

## Maddy



As a Gallery trainee Maddy learned about stock control, exhibition and events management and hosted workshops for children as part of Easter play schemes. Maddy was given more and more responsibility until she felt confident enough to apply for the position of Arts Resource Worker, initially via Community Jobs Scotland Sept 2014.

**“Since becoming a trainee my confidence has grown a lot. I have reached goals and aims that I didn’t think I could, which has made me feel a lot better about myself. I decided to become self-employed as an illustrator and I have now achieved this goal.”** Maddy aims to be able to work from home full time on her illustrations and graphic novel, and is using this experience as a stepping stone to commence to Stirling University in August 2017.”

# Beneficiary Spotlight:

## Maddy



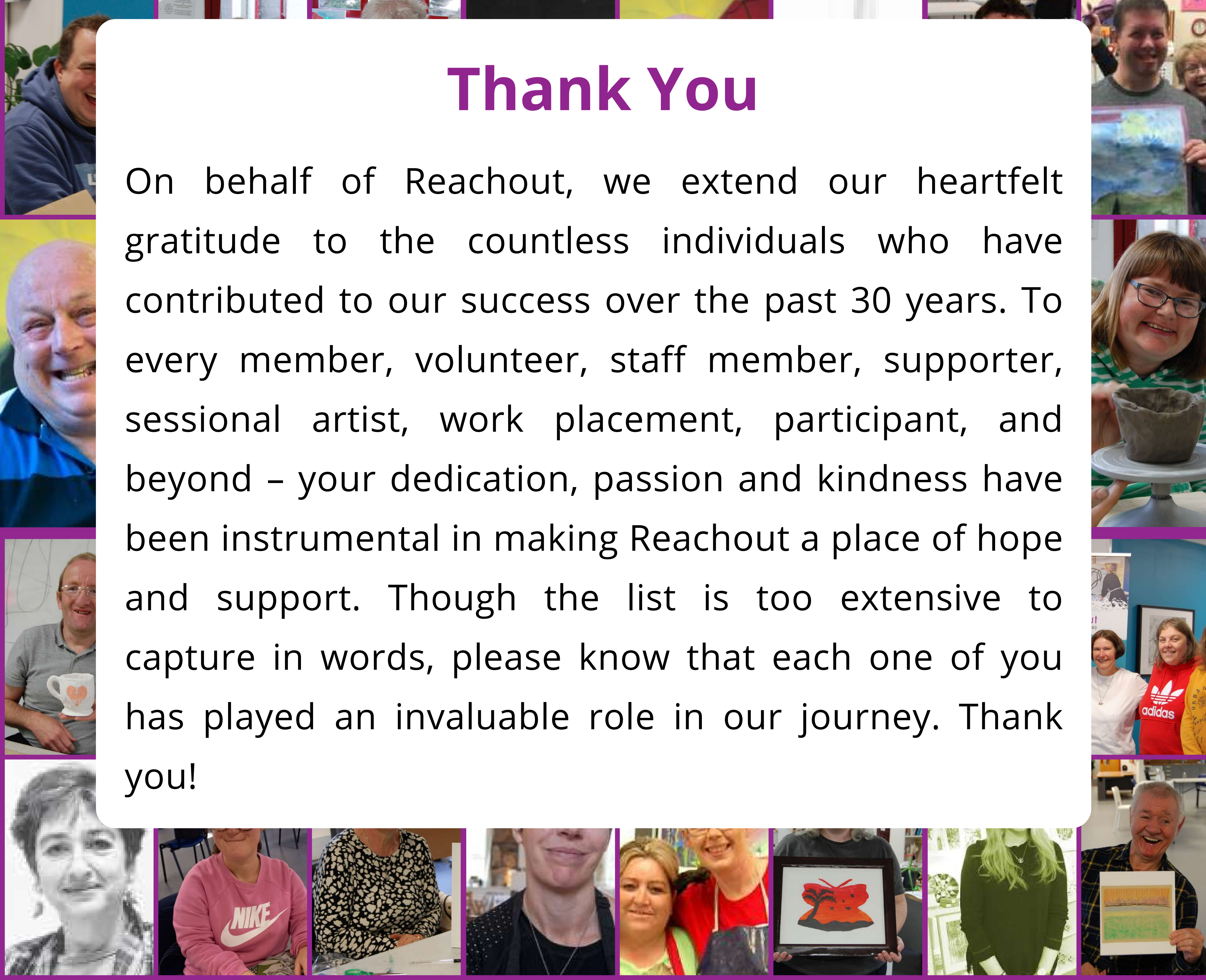
“Since leaving Reachout a lot of exciting things have happened! Most prominently I have started my journey of University! Not a big deal to most but this was something I never thought was for me or that I could actually do. With some gentle encouragement from family and friends I decided I would give it a go! I have still been accepting both Manga and portraiture illustration commissions on the side and have tried to keep active with being creative even if it is just small projects, it’s something I’ll always do!





# Thank You

On behalf of Reachout, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to the countless individuals who have contributed to our success over the past 30 years. To every member, volunteer, staff member, supporter, sessional artist, work placement, participant, and beyond – your dedication, passion and kindness have been instrumental in making Reachout a place of hope and support. Though the list is too extensive to capture in words, please know that each one of you has played an invaluable role in our journey. Thank you!





✉ [info@reachoutwithartsinmind.org.uk](mailto:info@reachoutwithartsinmind.org.uk)    🌐 [reachoutwithartsinmind.org.uk](http://reachoutwithartsinmind.org.uk)  
☎ 01259 214 951

📍 Lime Tree House, North Castle Street, Alloa. FK10 1EX

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Designed by Engagement Manager Leanne Dewar

*Reachout is a registered charity: SC023779*

*Company number: SC373771*