About the Bloom Awards

The Bloom Awards are presented by Lemos&Crane who are sponsoring a total prize of £1,500 (to be shared between a winner and runners-up). Entries are invited from sheltered housing schemes, care homes, extra care settings, retirement villages, floating support, or other services provided to older people in the community. Entries should be based on work in generating positive outcomes in one or more of the following three areas:

1. **Relationships**: examples might include work to enhance relationships with adult children, relationships with grandchildren, repairing family relationships, friendship, love, community links and volunteering, conversation, or to make use of technology to develop and sustain relationships

2. **Identity and interests**: examples might include work to develop, enhance or sustain fun and hobbies, nature and gardening, pets and animals, faith and spirituality, sport, creativity, learning, memories

3. **Independence**: examples might include work to identify and meet people’s aspirations in relation to money, employment, enterprise, transport, assistive technology, beauty, fitness, shopping

Judging Criteria

- **Originality** – evidence of imagination, ambition and creativity in developing and delivering the work
- **Replicability** – how easily the idea(s) or approach could be applied in another setting.
- **Impact** – evidence of the difference made to the lives of older people.
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Description: Avante Care and Support
Location: Court Regis Care Home
Project Name: Community Gardening (in accordance with the Eden Alternative Philosophy)

Describe your project in one sentence
To encourage the community to become more involved with our care home and in turn for our residents to become more involved within the local community.

Specify the setting/s where your project is delivered (eg care home, day centre etc)
Care Home

What are the project’s objectives?
- To raise awareness of the people and the activities in our care home within the local community.
- To integrate our residents back into the community as part of their therapy and maintenance of their quality of life.
- To encourage the local community to become more involved with the lives of our residents.
- To promote local businesses, help to raise money for our care home and promote a greater sense of local community life in our village.

What are the project’s activities?
- Encouraging our residents to use the local businesses (hairdressers, pub, café, shops, etc.) providing them with more independence and a greater sense of local community life.
- Raising awareness of our home and dementia generally, through fund-raisers and events (Garden fetes, wine and wisdom evenings, and seasonal parties) which encourage the local community to become more involved with the care home.
- Promoting local businesses and encouraging them to hold fundraising evenings for our care home, and for photographs of residents to be shown in venues providing visual evidence of who they are supporting.
- Encouraging local schools, families and friends to visit the home as much as possible and providing them with up to date information on what is happening in the home through newsletters, emails, photo-walls and announcement boards as well as asking for their advice, opinions and ideas.
- To seek the help of local volunteers to help in the daily running of the home, assisting at events and attaining work experience.
- Making the most of the local media and encouraging them to promote us in newspapers and on news websites.
What has been the impact / achievement of the project?
We have been very surprised with the impact that our project has had with the amount of people contributing reaching over-whelming levels. Just recently we held two fundraisers and rose over £1,000 for the home with the majority of funds coming from the local village.

Several small businesses are already quite happy for us to be their main local charity with fundraisers being organized throughout the year, which in turn helps to promote their business through our newsletters, contacts with the local media, etc.

On a more social and therapeutic level, our residents have benefited greatly, with some residents now taking part in community life who haven’t been out of the home in nearly two years. The local community are getting to know our residents and are stopping to talk to them in the street and local café. This in turn is creating a greater awareness of our care home, particularly a better sense of dementia in our society.

In the last 6 months we have had three main volunteers that have helped in the running of the home and have proved to be valuable assets. The residents enjoy their company and benefit from the activities that are provided such as gardening, trips to the local café, bar, etc. which in turn feedback into the running of the project.

The local papers have been very helpful in promoting our home – in the last 6 months we have been featured several times, most recently on being awarded the Eden Alternative Award and the impact that this has had on our home.

We have been able to update our technology to allow us to create newsletters, photo-walls and notice boards providing a more informed approach to families and friends who visit but also to serve as a reminder for all our residents who are involved with daily activity not to mention to increase staff morale within the home.

What has been said in any third party assessment or evaluation? What’s your own advice about how others might approach something similar?
Just recently we were awarded the Eden Alternative Gold Frame Award for our efforts in embracing the Eden Philosophy in which our ‘Community Gardening Project’ is a key element of our approach. Also, we were recently assessed by our own organization and were made a ‘Green’ home, stating that our home had finally reached a required level of excellence.

Our advice to anyone wishing to approach similar is to take a step back in the running of the home and to take in what’s important. Listen to your residents, ask them what they think about the home and what they want to change and you’ll provide them with a better quality of life. Make the most of what resources you already have around you and never be afraid to promote your achievements, no matter how small they may seem.

What are your plans for developing the project further?
We are currently working on developing our mailing list and email facility to keep friends, family and associates informed of our events, achievements and news. We are on the look-out for more new volunteers from the community to help within the home, particularly at events so that we can hold more of them. We are also still talking to more local businesses and encouraging them to be involved with our care home in the similar way that others have. To continue raising money for a mini-bus for the
home so that we can take our residents out more spontaneously in accordance with the Eden Philosophy.

**How would you spend the winner’s prize of £1,000?**
The money would go towards providing a mini-bus for the home and to pay for trips so that we can continue to take our residents out more spontaneously in accordance with the Eden Philosophy and keep developing our project within the local community by putting on bigger and better events to encourage more people to get involved.

**Organisation:** Carmarthenshire County Council  
**Location:** Nantyglo Sheltered Housing Scheme  
**Project Name:** “Clwb Iechyd Da” – Good Health Club

Describe your project in one sentence
To facilitate activities that bring enjoyment and fun for older people, promoting good health and well-being

Specify the setting/s where your project is delivered (eg care home, day centre etc)
Nantyglo Sheltered Housing Scheme

What are the project’s objectives?
The idea for the project came from the modernisation of Social Care services that resulted in the closure of Council-run Luncheon Clubs in the County. The perception by the press of a potential negative action was turned into a positive with the assistance of service users and partners.

Residents of both the scheme and surrounding community wanted to continue with the option of having meals provided (which they were more than willing to pay for) but also saw this as a great opportunity to extend the scope and interest in the Club. From this thinking “Clwb Iechyd Da” emerged. The Club currently has over 50 members.

The overriding objective developed by residents was: Development of more social interaction opportunities that can be enjoyed, that are fun and open to all

More specifically:
- To ensure that activities are developed by members of the club themselves
- To develop activities that help residents maintain independence through developing existing skills and learning new ones in relation to health and well-being and lifelong learning
- To encourage creativity and opportunity
What are the project’s activities?
Based around the above objectives the following activities have been developed by the residents themselves at the club:

Health and Well-Being/Lifelong Learning
- Daily Gardening Club
- Weekly reflexology sessions
- Weekly holistic therapies
- Foot care clinics every 3 weeks
- Breakfast, Lunch and Tea Café on Monday, Wednesday and Friday provided by local restaurant
- Afternoon “high” tea every Thursday
- Monthly housing officer surgeries

Fun, Creativity and Opportunity
- Residents annual “adopt a charity fund” (currently Macmillan Cancer Trust). Target for 2011 was set at £1,500 and to date over £1,000 has already been donated
- Annual Mobility Scooter rally with tabletop sales and carnival atmosphere (next one 12th June 2011)
- Mobile hairdressing in communal lounge
- Voluntary work being carried out by young people coming to the club
- Regular Day Trips

What has been the impact / achievement of the project?
The residents’ involved are very keen that the project should focus on outcomes in terms of impact. A full evaluation of this in currently being undertaken as this concept is now actively being considered for other sheltered schemes in the County.

From the residents perspective they have already informed us of the following:
- It has brought the surrounding community together and allowed them to develop new friendships and build on existing ones. Some residents have stated “it makes them feel good about themselves”
- Forged closer links between young and old e.g. young volunteers help run the café.
- They have seen the benefit of private enterprise and voluntary sector working together
- A negative has been turned into a positive by the hard work of the residents themselves

What has been said in any third party assessment or evaluation? What’s your own advice about how others might approach something similar?
The following are some examples of the feedback that has been received:
- Attached letter from the local member for Pontyberem, Cllr Joy Williams
- Attached letter from resident living in community attending club
- Attached letter from Chair of Gwendraeth Tenant Network, Lady Dena Waterford
- Attached photographic examples of “fun”

Whilst the application has quite rightly focused on the work of the residents themselves my advice to others would be that there is always an opportunity for every threat- you just need the will and humility to succeed.
What are your plans for developing the project further?

Subject to the results of the evaluation we are currently looking at:
- A lottery fund application to purchase a purpose built mini-bus for the use of Clwb Iechyd Da members in order for members of the community to access facilities
- Development of web-site
- Develop further links between young and old
- Build on what we have already achieved

How would you spend the winner’s prize of £1,000?

The residents have decided that they would like to convert the large storeroom at the scheme into a facility that could be used for more intense therapies and accommodate more private consultations in relation to benefit advice. This would further complement the present facilities.

Many thanks for allowing me to submit this application on behalf of the members.

Organisation: Connect Housing Association
Location: Hawthorn Mill Sheltered Housing
Project Name: Achieving Dreams for Mr. O

Describe your project in one sentence
After a lifetime of playing and writing music, Mr O has written a new march to be performed by a brass band, and his friends at Hawthorn Mill Sheltered Housing are helping him achieve his dreams.

Specify the setting/s where your project is delivered (eg care home, day centre etc)
Hawthorn Mill, a sheltered housing scheme in Leeds for people over the age of 55.

What are the project’s objectives?
Since he was nine years old Mr O has been playing the piano, organ and accordion, and he started composing his own music when he was just 20. Seven decades later now, Mr O is 90 years old and looking back on a long life in which he has performed for every sort of social club, sports club and church community. Much of that music has been captured on cassette tapes, but because of their age and the obsolete format they are at risk of being lost forever. Mr O’s friends at Hawthorn Mill – staff and residents alike – wanted to find a way of preserving his life’s work, and at the same time wanted to crown that work by helping him recruit a brass band to play his latest composition, the ‘Hawthorn Mill March’, which he wrote as a tribute to his new home. Hearing one of his pieces arranged and played by a brass band has been one of Mr O’s lifelong dreams – one he has yet to realise.
What are the project’s activities?
In order to preserve Mr O’s cassette recordings, Hawthorn Mill staff recruited the help of a computer whiz – a young man named Leon who first visited Hawthorn Mill when he attending the local infant school. Now in his teens, Leon was able to help by taking along his laptop computer, complete with music transfer software. Working together, Leon and Mr O have successfully preserved these precious recordings.

Meanwhile, Sue Hendry, the Senior Scheme Manager at Hawthorn Mill, has been consulting with the Yorkshire & Humberside Brass Band Association, and Mr O’s ‘Hawthorn Mill March’ is now being transcribed to a score suitable to for a brass band – the next step in helping him achieve his dreams.

What has been the impact / achievement of the project?
Music is central to Mr O’s life, and it provides a wonderful source of motivation for him to think that he’s been able to make a permanent record of his life’s musical work whilst at the same time getting so close to achieving one of his lifelong ambitions – hearing a Yorkshire brass band play one of his own compositions. Coming to grips with the latest technology for preserving his music has of course been a challenge, and Mr O and Leon both gained a lot from the experience of working together. Just as significant, however, has been the impact on the other residents of Hawthorn Mill. Mr O is a quiet, unassuming and much-loved member of the Hawthorn Mill community, and seeing him continuing into his tenth decade to pursue his goals is truly inspiring. He provides a clear example of how motivating and sustaining a hobby can be, and how we are never too old to try new things and reach new heights – an important message for Mr O’s fellow residents.

What has been said in any third party assessment or evaluation? What’s your own advice about how others might approach something similar?
It is important for a sheltered housing scheme like Hawthorn Mill to support and attend to the whole person – not just their physical health, but their mental and social wellbeing as well. Encouraging residents and service users to pursue their interests helps to keep them both personally motivated and socially engaged. It gives them something to talk about with others, something to take pride in, and a chance to reflect on past successes – all of which are important for mental and social health. And, perhaps most vitally, it keeps them looking toward the future, achieving old goals and planning new ones. All of this can be seen in the story of how Mr O has been able, with the help and encouragement of everyone around him, to consolidate and preserve the music of his life – and then to take the next step.

There is nothing too fancy about what it would take for anyone else to do something like this for their residents – the key is to take a genuine interest and provide the practical help they may need, so their goals don’t appear too daunting. The project also demonstrates how it helps for a scheme like Hawthorn Mill to forge and maintain links with the local community, so that people like Leon have the opportunity to be involved with others from outside their age group. The youngsters gain an enriching experience, and the residents feel more connected to the families and communities around them.

What are your plans for developing the project further?
Work continues toward the brass band debut of Mr O’s ‘Hawthorn Mill March’, and we hope that other members of the Hawthorn Mill community are inspired to take up old hobbies and see if they can’t surprise themselves by ticking a few items off of their to-do lists.
How would you spend the winner’s prize of £1,000?
The prize money would help toward having ‘Hawthorn Mill March’ professionally recorded and produced on CD, for Mr O and all of the other residents of Hawthorn Mill to enjoy.

Organisation: **Cross Keys Homes**
Location: **27 Sheltered Housing Schemes in Peterborough**
Project Name: **Remain Active – Nintendo Wii Challenge**

Describe your project in one sentence
The project is aimed at older people using Nintendo Wii to remain active while having fun playing sports that they previously thought unlikely and improving their digital skills.

Specify the setting/s where your project is delivered (eg care home, day centre etc)
Sheltered Housing

What are the project’s objectives?
- For seven Cross Keys Homes’ sheltered schemes to receive Nintendo Wii equipment and move into the technology age
- For residents to engage with families in competitions

A minimum of 70 older people will:
- Attend Nintendo Wii events, encouraging social inclusion, reducing loneliness and isolation and encouraging family contact
- Report an increase in physical activity
- Maintain and improve their balance and coordination
- Feel happier and have improved wellbeing

What are the project’s activities?
Project activities:
- Introductory event - Scheme receives the Nintendo Wii equipment, it is set up and an introductory session offered where residents learn how to navigate from game to game and set up their Mii characters.
- Weekly ‘sporting’ event – Residents chose a sport of choice and offer competitions each week for all residents to attend and compete. Promotional material sent to all residents of the sheltered scheme. This is likely to increase as residents get used to the selection of games.
- Monthly ‘family’ event – Residents are encouraged to invite family to attend where family challenges take place, for example, the Smith family Vs the Blogg family.
Annual mini Olympics event – The 27 Cross Keys Homes sheltered schemes come together for an Olympic challenge in time for the 2012 Olympics. Each scheme will nominate the best players for each sport and scores will be compared. Winners will receive gold, silver and bronze medals.

What has been the impact / achievement of the project?
Currently five Cross Keys Homes sheltered schemes have the Wii equipment. It has been very well received by all.

One scheme, Becketts Close, received the equipment and after enjoying the virtual bowling game they have now got a group together to attend a local bowling alley.

De Montfort Court has the equipment and organise regular challenges. One lady who finds it difficult to sleep will often visit the communal centre at night to practice the Wii. It helps her feel less anxious. Pinetree and Loxley sheltered scheme have enjoyed receiving Wii lessons from young people which also offers intergenerational benefits to the residents and involves the wider community, such as youth clubs and students from local schools. One centenarian at Pinetree played the bowling game and scored a strike on her first go.

Another scheme, resident said: ‘Nintendo Wii events would make me come to the community centre more often.’ (Mike).

Other positive feedback received:
- ‘Really interesting, a giggle once you get used to it’ (May)
- ‘It was good, I had a laugh’ (Iris)
- ‘It gets you moving, you use limbs you don’t usually use when you’re just sat there talking’ (Rita)
- ‘I used to enjoy a lot of sports but can’t now, this will help me remain active and lose some weight’ (Ian)
- ‘It helps people come out and exercise and have a laugh, lots of people can do it because if people can’t stand they can sit’ (Doris)
- ‘It’s a great way of getting to know people,’ (Vera)
- ‘It’s brilliant, exercise without over working, keeps the arms moving’ (Gerry)
- ‘I had problems with my elbow, the Wii activities really help with it, after a game I have much more use in my arm. The exercise prevent our joints from seizing up’ (Norah)

What has been said in any third party assessment or evaluation? What’s your own advice about how others might approach something similar?
All feedback received has been positive. We have involved residents that visit the schemes to discuss the maintenance of the communal areas, often at these events residents have discussed their Wii activities with the involved residents expressing their delight in playing the game and boasting of their high scores.

Start small would be my advice. Schemes may need to hold a number of introductory sessions for all residents to get used to the equipment. Some schemes have only needed one introductory session when there are a few strong learners in the group it can help the learning process and these residents can become ‘Wii Champions’ to support others’ learning. Some schemes are still receiving introductory sessions while they get used to the equipment, I admire residents’ persistence in their learning, it is their
dedication and determination that makes it all the more important to support them. Previous Wii events have started with only a few residents present. The positive feedback they pass on to other residents soon increases numbers accessing the Wii events. ‘How to’ sheets are useful and offer support to Wii champions and others using the equipment outside of the dedicated events. Learning Wii skills is a great way to start an intergenerational project. At Loxley sheltered scheme residents teach the young people dominoes and whist in an exchange for the youngsters’ Wii skills.

What are your plans for developing the project further?
The activities coordinator for Cross Keys Homes’ sheltered schemes will support the variety of Wii activities and aims to ensure each of the 27 schemes have the equipment to use it with confidence by the end of the year.

Further developments will involve, family challenges, beat the grandchildren competitions, inter-scheme challenges, mini Olympics, invitations to the wider community.

Once older residents gain confidence in using new technologies uptake in other digital activities are likely to increase, inter-scheme Skype conversations etc.

How would you spend the winner’s prize of £1,000?Seven Nintendo Wii consoles and extra controllers will be purchased. Seven schemes will benefit from the equipment. The extra controllers will allow for competitions among residents, visitors and family.

Organisation: Edinburgh City Council
Location: Clovenstone Care Home
Project Name: Wishing Tree

Describe your project in one sentence
Our project is a tree of diversity that grows a fruit of aspiration, person centred dreams and wishes.

Specify the setting/s where your project is delivered (eg care home, day centre etc)
An Edinburgh City Council care home

What are the project’s objectives?
Objectives are to value the richness of each individual resident and their diversity. We aim to address ways of supporting stimulation by enabling and supporting our residents to be actively involved in creating their own aspirations. Our aims and objectives are to create a sense of hope, and encourage the strengths and capabilities of our residents in choosing their own social preferences and activities of choice. We aim to provide a homely environment that stands out from that of an institutional setting, to one that reflects the real diversity of our residents in a cheerful innovative environment. In doing so we aim to enhance the quality of life of our residents by lifting their spirit and
making them feel happy and uplifted we hope to respect the dignity and self worth of our residents through valuing each individual and encouraging each individuals unique self to be preserved

**What are the project’s activities?**
The projects activities are varied. The activities consist of meeting the social needs that relate to each individual. Every resident has expressed a choice of what they would like to achieve as an activity. The activity stems from a tree, each individual leave on the tree has a personal wish written on it by each resident this wish is unique to the individual resident, it is an activity that represents what makes that person happy, each activity wish has been discussed with individual residents as being achievable, each activity connects with the person who has made the wish. Examples are a trip to the butterfly farm or an evening at the theatre to see a particular show. One resident wished she could see Barry Manilow in concert, unfortunately he is in Las Vegas, so that was a bit out of reach unless he comes to Scotland, but in his place she said she also enjoys Tony Christie who is appearing in Falkirk town hall in June so she is happy to go and see him instead.

**What has been the impact / achievement of the project?**
The impact has been that of the resident being put first as an individual, also a greater insight of what our residents’ actual social capabilities are, enabling residents to have a greater choice and control in their life, with support as required to fulfil their dreams wishes and aspirations. The impact of the project is that activities have been planned which relate to each individual. Encouraging clients to express what makes them unique as individuals and has created an environment of good communication that values a person centred approach.

The achievement of this project has helped residents maintain a sense of well being, relationships with family and friends and staff have strengthened the objective of providing high standards of care through the shared commitment of this project. Residents / staff’s moral has improved and conversation is more meaningful with the organising of individual’s wishes and the excitement this creates, and on their return being able to hold on to and sometimes sharing their achievement with others is a wonderful thing.

**What has been said in any third party assessment or evaluation? What’s your own advice about how others might approach something similar?**
On an activity to the garden centre an agency member of staff observed the body language of a resident who has a high level of dementia. He was aware of the joy expressed by this resident who was in an area of surroundings that brought happiness to her, he said he was overwhelmed by emotion as he realised the joy this resident was absorbing in the simple things in life that we take for granted. My advice to others would be to encourage staff, family and friends to participate in, and take time in ensuring the holistic aspects of care are provided to residents they care for, along with identifying the individuals needs and challenges, this involves planning ahead. Try to look at each activity from the resident’s perspective then support the resident to enjoy the activity from start to finish, supporting them in any way we can to fulfill even the simplest of their very own dreams wishes and aspirations.

**What are your plans for developing the project further?**
We continually aim to promote a social environment that represents who the residents are as individuals. We aim to fund raise throughout the year with various social events having been planned. These include a car boot sale, and BBQ. We plan to continue to encourage the support shown to us as a home from families, friend’s volunteers, and the local community volunteers to enable this project to be
successful. Not all social needs are activity related and may only involve the need for companionship or individual interaction on a one to one basis. To develop the project further we would need to look at further way’s to ensure funding is at hand

How would you spend the winner’s prize of £1,000?
We would spend the winner’s prize to fund our project this would assist us to make our residents wishes on the wish tree come true. The prize money would be of immense value to our residents and the pleasure, and emotional fulfilment this would bring would be a joy to be able to achieve. One individual wish is to go out for lunch somewhere with a nice view and sit outside to enjoy lunch, the prize money would assist this wish of a resident to become a reality.

Organisation: **Genesis Housing Association**
Location: **Waltham Forest**
Project Name: **The Rainbow Project**

Describe your project in one sentence
The Rainbow Project was set up in 2000; the project is specifically designed to tackle the healthy ageing agenda through social inclusion activities, promoting physical well being and by addressing intellectual needs of the residents in sheltered schemes.

Specify the setting/s where your project is delivered (eg care home, day centre etc)
Sheltered Housing and Extra-care Schemes

What are the project’s objectives?
The main aims of the project is to provide community care development, promote health awareness, encourage independence, ensure residents involvement through partnership working with health and social care service and the local voluntary organisations that provide social and care services in the borough.

The idea behind the Rainbow project is to bring together services from a range of local partners to improve the well being of elderly people living in sheltered housing schemes. Also to encourage residents to take a lead role in deciding on activities and services that promotes health well being and social inclusion and skills development within their individual schemes. Residents are encouraged through regular meetings, questionnaires, open day surgeries and by the use of feedback forms.

What are the project’s activities?
- Gardening at various schemes
- Tai-chi and gentle exercise.
- Monthly music session
- Nintendo wii session
- Reminiscence and quiz sessions.
• Monthly film sessions in each scheme.
• Games e.g carpet balls, cards, darts
• Talk on health well being and regular nurse’s health visits.
• Summer day trips to the seaside
• Computer training
• Health eating and cooking programmes
• And good neighbourhood project which encourages the more able residents to befriend the frail ones.

We also have formal partnership with the dementia group and Crest Waltham Forest; the groups provide day care activities in four of sheltered schemes.

**What has been the impact / achievement of the project?**

Improved life in different individuals. Over the years, the project has managed to bring changes in different individual’s lives through a range of activities we provide in various schemes. For example, the project’s weekly Tai-chi sessions has helped residents with mobility problems to gain confidence, reduced muscle pains and improved balance. One of our residents who previously suffered a stroke before being relocated to Gainsfield Court could not move his left hand and leg prior joining the class. This person recently said that he’s now able to move both his hand and leg. He practices daily in his flat all the movements he learns from the class. Another person said ‘I have had one heart attack and four strokes. The last stroke took my speech, I am now aphasic (mute). I have a very great difficult in meeting people because of my speech etc. I have 25% brain damage and I am prisoner in my home and in head. I was reluctant to join this Tai-chi class but I can’t wait to meet for weekly session now. The class has helped me to make new friends and build my confidence in balance and walking independently’ (Barry, Jan 2011). The class offers me the opportunity to share experience with people who have had similar challenges in life. Other participants indicated improvement in balance, confidence, relaxation and alleviation from various body pains and social atmosphere.

In addition to exercise, Rainbow project has been running monthly Afro Caribbean music sessions for the past year that has given opportunity to residents from different extra care schemes to get together for social inclusion and participation. Evidence from participants has proved the effectiveness of music as a therapy for people with dementia and those with mild memory loss. Participants had to learn and retain information from session to session. The music project helped people with dementia and mental health conditions to get more involved in interaction and socially active by taking main roles during the session. The photograph above shows the group performance on which was attended by the mayor of Waltham Forest.

**Case Study:** One of our residents Mrs S suffers from severe dementia, she wonders around most of the time and cannot hold a conversation or remember most things. We encouraged Mrs S to attend the music session but she refused but on one occasion as she was wondering, she entered the room while the other residents were having their session. Within a few minutes, Mrs S face lit up by listening to the drums and the songs. She soon joined in and danced throughout the session. The other residents were happy to see her interacting with them as they haven’t been able to hold any meaningful conversation with her for a long time. Mrs S has been able to remember the musical interest she once had and during the period of the project, she has been able to remember some collaborative movements taught by the director.
What has been said in any third party assessment or evaluation? What's your own advice about how others might approach something similar?

All the services users and partner agencies gave a positive feedback and as a result the borough offered Rainbow project a grant to continue with the music project for 2011 to March 2012. The Mayor of Waltham Forest praised the project for promoting diversity and cultural awareness and for the social enjoyment it provides to all participants. One resident's praised the music project for the breathing techniques he learnt from session which helped him with breathing. He said that he sleeps well the days he attend the session; he said that 'the project is a breath of fresh air' (Albany Court).

I would advise more organisations to consider organising regular music sessions as music is recommended by scientist as one of the best therapy for people suffering from dementia. The best way to start such a project is; carrying out consultation with the target group and other agents to find out the number of people who might be interested. This could be followed by organising a taster session to give the target group an idea of what to expect, then the organiser should ask for feedback from the perspective participants after taster session to ensure that they would like to go ahead with the proposed project.

What are your plans for developing the project further?

We are planning to expand the music project in all our extra care schemes which are involved in the Rainbow project. Our vision is to combine music therapy with reminiscence and imaginary/ creative art (to encourage the participants to express their feelings on paper of the memories that comes back to them through music). The Co-ordinator has already identified another local group ‘Shape Shifter’ which agreed to partner with the Rainbow project to set up music sessions in all extra care schemes. This will involves making joint funding applications to obtain funds to cover costs for materials, tuition and administration.

How would you spend the winner’s prize of £1,000?

The money will help us to organise monthly music sessions in one of our extra care scheme. The prize of £1000 will help us to cover approx 6 sessions for year 2011/2012.

Organisation: Gentoo Living
Location: Croftside House Sheltered Housing Scheme
Project Name: Croftside House Intergenerational Project

Describe your project in one sentence
To enhance intergenerational relationships whilst cultivating a learning curiosity resulting in a stronger community bond.

Specify the setting/s where your project is delivered (eg care home, day centre etc)
Sheltered Housing Scheme in Sunderland
What are the project’s objectives?
- To support people to increase their skills and knowledge. Using community links, life experiences, knowledge and sharing information, local history can be exchanged between the older and younger generations.
- To support people to increase their confidence. The project enables sheltered housing tenants the opportunity to learn from children with the most popular request being to learn to text from a mobile phone. As a result of this interaction the tenants feel comfortable and more confident in uses today’s technology to communicate with their families.
- To provide support to enhance relationships within and between communities. Mutual respect is gained between the generations and tenants’ spirits are lifted for having shared such important times in their lives with children who are keen to learn firsthand from them. This demonstrates that people of all ages can come together and form lasting relationships.

What are the project’s activities?
The project’s first activity was an intergenerational experience day which was held at Croftside House sheltered Housing Scheme. Tenants of the scheme met with children aged 9/10 from a nearby school to share their memories and thoughts regarding royal weddings. The two generations focused on five core questions:
- What did you do in the run up to the royal wedding?
- What did you do to celebrate the wedding?
- What did you eat?
- What did you think of the dress?
- Do you have any unusual or funny stories that happened on the day?

The contrasted answers were recorded on a DVD which was placed in a time capsule for future generations to find. Local press also covered event to publicise its success.
The tenants and school children are continuing their relationship as both felt that they gained a lot from the intergenerational event. The tenants are visiting the school to see firsthand how a modern school operates and to discuss the differences between current education techniques and techniques used when they went to school. The tenants will also interact with the children to assist with aspects of the current curriculum, for example World Wars and rationing.

What has been the impact / achievement of the project?
- People have increased inspiration. The tenants stated that morale in the scheme has been boosted by this project, and the mood is at an all time high and tenants have felt inspired to maintain the relationship and engage is history projects within the school.
- People have increased motivation. The tenants really feel that they have inspired the children to learn more about their local heritage, their self esteem has risen and the interaction with the children has created a ‘buzz’ in the scheme. The tenants are eager to carry on this relationship and will visit the school to ensure that the learning relationship continues.
- People’s lives are enriched. Both generations are proud of what they have achieved together; the information was stored in a time capsule which has created a lasting bond between the two generations.
- People have increased confidence, skills and knowledge. The tenants will exchange day to day life skills with the children. The favoured lesson is to learn how to text which tenants feel that this has
improved their confidence regarding newer technologies and fell that their contact with their families has improved as a direct result of this.

- People have increased opportunities to get involved in their community by developing and maintaining a relationship with a local school.
- People are empowered to get involved and feel valued as members of the community because of the knowledge and experiences that they have passed on.
- Enhanced relationships within and between communities. The children are fascinated by their local heritage and are eager to learn more from the tenants and will achieve this by participating in regular visits to the school.
- People have an increased sense of belonging. The tenants are proud that they are educating future generations with first hand local knowledge which can’t always be found in history books.
- People have an increased sense of pride. When the tenants discussed the hardships that they endured, it really opened the children’s eyes to how strong the tenants had been and a respect has formed due to this.
- People have a mutual respect for each other. The school and the sheltered housing scheme are continuing their relationship, proving that intergenerational relationships are both rewarding and vital for a healthy minded society.

What has been said in any third party assessment or evaluation? What’s your own advice about how others might approach something similar?

Evaluation has been carried out with all concerned in the event, this information will ensure we organise the most appropriate activities through taking account of everyone’s expectations, it is of great importance to Gentoo Living that we ‘inspire and empower enrich ways of living’. The Royal wedding was a great way of introducing the two generations and the evaluation process will allow us to empower both the children and the older people to decide where they take the next stage of their intergenerational experience.

The tenants, the children, the school teachers and the tenants Support Co-ordinator all took part in some form of evaluation and some typical quotations from the tenants include: “It was lovely to see the children interested in older people”, “it’s surprising how much they knew”, “you think the younger generation don’t care but they do really”, “we’ll look back on today, it’s great to see the children’s faces, it was lovely”, “it made me feel nostalgic – took you back to your younger years”, “the best part for me was when they sang at the end we’ll meet again, it brought a tear to my eye”.

The residents mentioned on more than one occasion that the event was very well organised and that they really enjoyed it.

The children were asked to complete an evaluation with a few simple questions, the results of this are as follows;
- 16 children said that the event was 'great'
- 12 children said 'it was okay'

Some comments about why the day was great include; “we found out more”, “we done loads of fun activities”, “I talked to the old people”, “they were nice and happy”, “I enjoyed seeing the people there and talking”, “I was interested what they said”, “I like learning about our old country and the old people are nice,
Others who thought the day was okay said; “it was fun and the old people were nice”, “they sounded interesting”, “I think we should have had more questions”, “I like sharing memories”, “we got to interact with the older adults”, “all the older people were so greeting”, “it was interesting”

- 19 children said they were 'really interested' and 11 said they were 'a little bit interested'.

Some other information we found out that will help us plan future events include;
- 10 children said the best part of the day was when they showed the older people their work,
- 7 said their favourite bit was when they sang 'we'll meet again',
- 6 enjoyed it best when they sang their own songs and
- 5 enjoyed it best when they talked about the different royal weddings.

And we also asked them what other subjects the children would like to discuss with the older people next;

- 11 said they would like to know more about the WW2,
- 7 were interested in learning more about what life was like for them when they were young and what did they do for fun,
- 5 wanted to know about school life back then,
- 3 wanted to learn about how Moorside had changed and what it looked like before the new houses were built and
- other suggestions included 'what did they eat', and 'what jobs did they have’.

The support co-ordinator and the event organiser, both employees of Gentoo Living, carried out a number of activities in preparation for the event. Personal invites were sent directly to the older people, inviting them, by name, to attend the event and numerous posters were positioned a focal places. In addition the support co-ordinator built the momentum by talking to the older people in the scheme and reminded them that it was not to be missed. Jade, the support co-ordinator said of the event;

“Everything went really well, the old people were given a day to remember and they are still talking about it now”

The class teacher was really enthusiastic about the whole event, she said

“The children had a great day and they have some great ideas for what they want to do next”

The most effective way of generating interest for the event was the personalised invitations - these made the older people feel very special and encouraged them to come along. All of those who were evaluated said the co-ordination of the event was perfect and the idea of using the two generations to decide the subsequent sessions is what has made it different.

***SUPPORTING NEWS ARTICLE
http://www.sunderlandecho.com/community/nostalgia/retro/kids_take_a_walk_down_memory_lane_to_a_royal_wedding_of_yesteryear_1_3379359

What are your plans for developing the project further?
Following the success of this project we are keen to replicate the experience in more of our supported housing schemes. We are keen to develop intergenerational opportunities with a number of schools
within the City and demonstrate the wealth of knowledge and experience that older people have to offer. Older people have significantly contributed to society and would like opportunities to continue to contribute in any way. Their life experiences can be used in the current curriculum, for example World Wars, school life, local heritage. In exchange for their input into the schools, the tenants are also keen to learn from children about modern day life, especially technology. An intergenerational knowledge and skills exchange will be developed throughout the schemes, enhancing relationships within the community and increasing skills and knowledge. Our research shows that the Croftside scheme would like to learn how to text from their mobile phones and the pupils are enthusiastic to demonstrate and teach them how to do it. The pupils would like to learn more about the area they live in and how it has changed since the tenants were children.

The royal wedding was used as a pilot event and we would look to host events of varying sizes and topics such as oral history projects, themed events (VE Day), new earning (texting, computing or using a Wii console).

This will lead to a continuing relationship that can be developed over time within our neighbourhoods to help reduce the barriers between older and younger people, change perceptions of both generations and develop community relationships.

How would you spend the winner’s prize of £1,000?
We would like to produce book of stories made from the memories of the older generation, this would include their memories of previous royal weddings, what their neighbourhoods looked like then, contrasted with what they look like now. It would also include stories from the children – this would be a lasting reminder for the older generation.

Organisation: Greensleeves Homes Trust
Location: Queen Elizabeth House
Project Name: Empowering residents to maintain independence and have a voice, choice and rights

Describe your project in one sentence
The unique way our residents are encouraged and supported consistently to lead individualized lives of their choice

Specify the setting/s where your project is delivered (eg care home, day centre etc)
Residential care home for elderly people

What are the project’s objectives?
- To provide quality care for older people
- Commitment to core values of privacy, dignity, independence, choice rights and fulfilment
Set and maintain the highest standard of good practice within an environment that encourages residents to thrive as individuals and employees to practice as caring professionals.

What are the project’s activities?
I am nominating Queen Elizabeth House because of the unique way our residents are encouraged and supported consistently to lead individualised and fulfilling lives. The whole team are totally committed to residents being in control of their lives. We practice our objectives with creation of a culture which promotes residents’ dignity, choice, independence, fulfilment and empower residents to make their own decisions and lead a fulfilling life. We are not risk averse and accept that risk is part of life, whatever your age, remove all risks and you reduce someone’s quality of life.

Staff work hard at supporting residents to make their own decisions and live the life of their choice. Staff support and involve each and every resident, irrespective of abilities/disabilities in planning their care, and have total say in everything. Our care plans focus on the positives on what resident can and want to do, rather then what they are not able to do.

We get to know our residents including through life stories. Key workers meet up with residents each month to discuss residents’ wishes/needs, this helps us get to know each and every resident, and make informed choices with residents about any risks, especially if they have difficulty in communicating their needs.

Residents are encouraged and supported to get actively involved in daily activities around the home. They make their beds with staff if they want to. Residents take part in staff interviews. Three of our residents take turn to show prospective residents/relatives around the home and inform people what our home is all about. One resident runs the home’s main office and “man” the office/phone at weekends. Two residents have set up a shop and run it weekly, selling the merchandise, budgeting, balancing the takings, stock control etc. Residents manage dining room, set tables. Residents water the garden, one resident has a dedicated patch in the garden and manages it with her daughter, one resident has a computer in his room and manages his and his wife’s affairs as well as providing IT support to the home, he drives his own car, which is parked in front of the home. Another resident carries out surveys on social activities and provides feedback. The residents committee are producing an information pack for all the rooms. everybody who visits the home always tell us that the total involvement of the residents in the running of the home is very rare and not something which happens in any other home they have visited.

We have a wishing tree, where residents express their wishes. Each month two residents’ wishes come true it is our team’s mantra that nothing is beyond reach - it is a matter of “if mountain cannot come to Mohamed, then Mohamed comes to the mountain”.

Recently we changed the way we serve meals, with introduction of buffet breakfast/supper. This enables residents, irrespective of abilities/disabilities to choose their own meals at the time they want it. Relatives are involved and drive the minibus to take residents on outings, produce newsletters, chair meetings etc. These are just some of examples of the way the team support residents to live
independent fulfilling lives where residents are in control. The whole team are totally committed and go out of their way to support residents.

What has been the impact / achievement of the project?

IMPACT ON RESIDENTS
Above mentioned has resulted in residents leading fulfilled lives where they value and feel valued. They are not bored, helpless or lonely – three plagues in care homes. Residents are at the core of all decisions and are totally involved. The home is run for the residents by the residents.

The atmosphere is vibrant, happy with high satisfaction levels from residents/relatives/stakeholders. Some real life situations is of one resident who was constantly finding things were “not right, could be better” since she has taken over the management of the main office at weekends, as well as running the weekly shop, this lady now is a happy smiling lady who tells prospective residents about how nice life is.

This is just one example of how residents in our home are supported to lead fulfilling independent lives. I believe Queen Elizabeth House should win this award as recognition of the excellent way residents are cared for with respect, dignity, in a happy vibrant environment, and supported to lead a lifestyle of their choice.

What has been said in any third party assessment or evaluation? What’s your own advice about how others might approach something similar?

Prospective residents/relatives satisfaction surveys also inform us that what Queen Elizabeth House team have achieved is beyond what is the norm in other residential care homes. Prospective residents/relatives always tell us that the atmosphere at Queen Elizabeth House is unique, with residents so involved and happy, something they have not seen in other homes. Recent Laing and Buisson survey carried out by Greens leaves Homes trust showed extremely high satisfaction levels and amongst the highest of the 10000 relatives surveyed in the country.

What are your plans for developing the project further?
We are continuing with our aim of involving residents to have voice, choice and control. Residents continue to run the home for the residents.

How would you spend the winner’s prize of £1,000?
Buy and install computer which is specially designed for people with sight problems/arthritis in the hands etc, and training for the residents on IT. This will give residents greater access to their families and friends and also to information through the internet. (The laptop we have is not designed for people with sight problems, or people with arthritis in the hands)
Describe your project in one sentence
Residents of Llys Dewi Sant put the world to rights and learn about the digital age.

Specify the setting/s where your project is delivered (eg care home, day centre etc)
Sheltered Housing

What are the project’s objectives?
The project focused on tackling digital exclusion faced by older people and other priority groups. This was achieved through engagement with the following activities:
- ICT- Computer Skills- from using word-processing to uploading videos
- Film Productions skills- camera, sound, editing
- Digital Photography
- Intergenerational work
- Having a platform to “Have a voice”

Our outcome was to:
- Enable older people to engage with technology through, Film Production and access to an online TV station. This would bring about increased engagement in online community leading to greater involvement in living community.
- The channel gave all the priority groups identified “a voice” whilst enabling them to access ITC Skills, Film Production Skills and aiding social inclusion through digital inclusion.
- The workshops promoted teamwork and collaborative working, giving the beneficiaries an opportunity to report on issues important to them.

It gave people at risk of social exclusion an opportunity to meet new people, work with professional teams and utilise a service that they would not have been able to access without this project.

What are the project’s activities?
Spill Media provided three, 3-4 hour workshops per month. As well as the training workshops there was a one day a month post-production day (where Spill Media edited and refined content), which was carried out on the last week of each month and by the editor at Spill Media.

Workshop 1- Film Production
This workshop covered all aspects of camera and sound basics. It enabled the group to get comfortable with camera and sound settings, and also basics such as using a tripod, white balance, focus, zoom etc. This workshop also covered different camera angles and setting up shots for different situations. The group then learnt the different techniques and styles that are incorporated into news/documentary style programmes - i.e voxpops, voiceover, interviews on and off camera. Simple editing techniques will also be covered. The group carried out numerous exercises to put their new found knowledge to the test.
Workshop 2- Script Writing and Pre-production
In this workshop the group created short news/documentary type scripts on the issues of their choice incorporating interviews, voice over, voxpops, visuals etc. They also learnt basic production research and pre-production methods.

Workshop 3- Filming Day
This workshop implemented the group’s scripts and put all the workshop training into action. The group members prepared all content for this Workshop and arranged any interviewees, locations etc that made up the film.

During the Workshop
Residents talked about life when they were young and how different things are today. Residents discussed varied topics from working in the docks to the food they ate. They remembered life during the World War II, the celebrations during VE day and the impact on their friends and family. Residents also produced a “Welcome to Llys Dewi Sant” DVD so that newcomers to the scheme can hear about activities that take place and hear some testimonials from some of the residents.

What has been the impact / achievement of the project?
Residents were apprehensive about using the camera equipment and were keener to lead on the content and the style of the film rather than handling the equipment. Although the residents didn’t learn as much technical skill as intended it has exposed them to digital equipment and they have developed this further by starting a photography class. We are researching the possibility for internet access and a Skype facility for residents to use. We are also keen to encourage a Facebook page for the scheme to encourage residents to upload their experiences of living in sheltered housing and to dispel some of the myths surrounding communal living.

What has been said in any third party assessment or evaluation? What’s your own advice about how others might approach something similar?
A comment posted on the Swansea Telly website reads:
“This is the best video on the site! I love these women!”

Resident enthusiasm was key to the project, if residents didn’t want to engage we weren’t going to insist on participation. Thankfully Llys Dewi Sant residents were extremely passionate and once they had met with Spill Media they arranged the workshops with the assistance of their scheme manager. They planned when and where the workshops took place and with the use of more sessions, more content could be produced. The shorter videos showcased a variety of stories and memories that the residents clearly were keen to do.
Funding for the project came from Communities 2.0 meaning the workshop was free. I would recommend securing funding to begin with, once people are interested they will be more prepared to contribute their own funds to keep an activity going.

What are your plans for developing the project further?
Funding for the Swansea Telly project was only available for the group once however, the residents really enjoyed the team work and reminiscing about growing up in Swansea. Llys Dewi Sant has started a photography class and it encourages residents to get out and about together. We to eventually hope
to be able to share any photographs via the internet, continuing the digital inclusion element of the project. Residents are also keen on local history and have invited local historians to give talks.

**How would you spend the winner’s prize of £1,000?**
Residents in Llys Dewi Sant have numerous activities such as art classes and gardening classes. We hope to further encourage engagement with digital equipment by inviting Spill Media to do a digital camcorder workshop with the residents. We are also researching improving the computer facilities so that the residents could share their work via e-mail with family and display their work via social networking sites.

**Organisation:** Health In Mind  
**Project Name:** Communities Connecting

**Describe your project in one sentence**
Communities Connecting supports older people with a range of needs, who are socially isolated, to build social networks and links with community resources, through being matched with a volunteer.

**Specify the setting/s where your project is delivered (e.g. care home, day centre etc)**
Communities Connecting currently operates in Western and South Central Edinburgh.

**What are the project’s objectives?**
Community Connecting is an exciting pilot service which began in September 2010. Social isolation in older people adversely affects both their physical and mental health. Social isolation is the ‘new killer’ for many older people with estimates of 1 in 7 people over the age of 65 being affected by it.
Communities Connecting combats high levels of social isolation experienced by older people. It also fits very closely with the concept of reablement and co production. Communities Connecting is a personalised service and we focus on supporting older people to set and work towards their own goals. Communities Connecting helps older people to regain skills and confidence by supporting them to link with local community activities and classes, and by using public transport/self travel which is something other Day Services cannot offer.
Communities Connecting provides support through involving volunteers, who are local people living in Edinburgh. Some of our volunteers come to the service with their own experience of receiving service, some volunteers are older people and others are young people offering a diverse team.

**What are the project’s activities?**
We recruit volunteers from across Edinburgh and provide them with full training for their role as Community Connectors. All volunteers are members of the PVG scheme.
Volunteers are then matched with an older person based on shared interest, availability and personal traits. We can support up to 30 people at any one time, a total of up to 90 people in a year.
When matched, Communities Connecting volunteers visit the older person on a regular basis, and over a period of time work with them to look at the kind of things they would like to do. Once ‘goals’ have been
identified the volunteer works with the person to support them to achieve their ‘goals’. Volunteers have knowledge of ‘what’s on’ in the local community through our service directory and this enables them to link in and connect people using the service.

Goals vary greatly with each individual. For example, one person’s goal is to be able to get out of her flat to the communal lounge in her Sheltered Accommodation enabling her to enjoy the company of other residents; another person’s goal is to join a local Tai Chi group offering both social contact and increased physical activity.

In addition we offer regular social get togethers for people using our service. During the get togethers, older people have the opportunity to build relationships with other people both using and volunteering within Communities Connecting. In addition, we use this as an opportunity to ask people to feedback on their experience of Communities Connecting and let us know any changes/developments they would suggest.

At present volunteers will work with the person for up to 4 months. Within Edinburgh, there are currently there are no other services that will work intensely over this period of time to support older people to achieve independence.

We review support offered to people using the service on a regular basis and also offer ongoing support and supervision to volunteers.

**What has been the impact / achievement of the project?**

**Examples of Personal Outcomes for Older People Currently using the Service:**

- Increased confidence after diagnosis/after a fall
- Support to find out ‘what’s on’ after a recent move to the area; finding creative writing groups.
- Support with depression and anxiety
- Support to find exercise classes and routes to get to the class. Volunteer attending with the person using the service until confidence increases
- Reduced isolation which has resulted in fortnightly visits to a hairdresser and enrolling at local bowling club.
- One service user had considered moving to a nursing home prior to engaging with the project, she now feels she is more able than she had thought.
- Support to attend local community centre
- Support to meet with a friend at bingo.
- Support to travel independently to enable service user to return to attending groups.
- Support to join a men’s group

**Examples of Personal Outcomes for People Volunteering with the Service:**

- Increased confidence and self esteem
- Increased skills and knowledge
- Greater understanding of the challenges faced by older people within our community
- Moved from passive recipient to active contributor within society thanks to volunteering
- Giving something back after receiving services

**How the above Personal Outcomes have impacted on the Whole System:**

- Reduction in waiting lists for day care services.
- Positive impact on mental and physical health and wellbeing
- Reablement approach to social isolation by encouraging independence by short term intensive support.
- Reablement approach to social isolation by encouraging independence through use of community groups and classes that will further enhance the older person’s mobility and practical skills e.g. cookery classes, bowling, using public transport/self travel.
- Using a co production approach by encouraging the older person to use and contribute skills to community activities, for example time banking volunteering
- Opportunity to engage in local intergenerational activities.
- Regain skills that they cannot regain through attending existing Day Services
- Added value for older person that would enhance other areas of their lives e.g. being able to use public transport
- Personalised solutions for older people who are socially isolated/at risk of becoming socially isolated.
- More engaged/connected socially and to local community.
- Additional support for carers (this is an alternative service for older people who do not want a day service at present)

Community Connecting also ensures that centre based and non centre based Day Services are targeted for those older people with complex care needs who would have difficulty being “connected” to their local community.

What has been said in any third party assessment or evaluation? What’s your own advice about how others might approach something similar?
City of Edinburgh Council Reablement teams have commented that it is a great service and is something which enhances the service they provide at present. (Reablement Teams work with older people supporting them to achieve daily living tasks such as showering and preparing meals) However the teams do not have the resources to work with older people to build up confidence to use public transport and link them to community resources. Community Connecting has been able to fill this gap.

We have worked closely with City of Edinburgh Council to ensure the service has been able to ensure we are supporting those most in need. This has also enabled us to have greater awareness of the wider impact of the service as noted above. (Information for the impact on the wider system was written by our lead officer Doreen Copeland). I believe these links, and a positive partnership approach to the service is vital in ensuring its success.
It is also important in approaching a service such as Communities Connecting that older people using the service are seen and are valued as assets both within the service and the local community- people with a lot to give.
We have received positive feedback from a variety of people involved with Communities Connecting including local councillors, Head of Health and Social Care, NHS Lothian, carers and other voluntary organisations.

What are your plans for developing the project further?
We are continually developing the service through feedback from our partners including people using and volunteering within our service. Health in Mind forms part of the City of Edinburgh Change Fund Reference Group, exploring how funding will be allocated for Community Capacity, Co Production and Carers strand of work. We are hopeful that Communities Connecting will be funded through the Change
Fund enabling Communities Connecting to be available to older people across the city. Although there will be a commissioning/procurement process, we are hopeful to continue with this work. Change Fund funding is initially for 1 year, and then a following 4 years is available. (Further information about the Change Fund is available on the Scottish Government website)

**How would you spend the winner’s prize of £1,000?**
If we were awarded the winner’s prize, we would use the money to have a special social event for people using and volunteering within our service. Currently we are able to offer social get togethers in local community centres. Older people have told us they would be interested in going on a barge trip on the Forth Clyde Canal or a day tour to local attractions. We would consult with service users and volunteers to find the most popular choice. Any remaining monies would enable us to further develop our directory of what’s on in the local areas which is vital in helping us link in with community activities and resources.

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**Organisation:** Living Lively  
**Project Name:** Living Lively Choirs – Silver Birch Singers, Sing @ Boughton, One Voice and the Whitstable Warblers

Describe your project in one sentence  
Community choirs for older people

Specify the setting/s where your project is delivered (eg care home, day centre etc)  
Our activities take place in the community using centrally located, accessible venues

What are the project’s objectives?  
Living Lively choirs aim to improve the health, wellbeing and quality of life for older people living in the community. Older people who join our groups benefit from participation in the arts and from the opportunities for social interaction, fun and friendship.

What are the project’s activities?  
Our groups meet weekly in terms for a total of 36 sessions per year. Anyone over 50 is welcome to attend and we have an open access policy.

Our sessions are led by musicians who have considerable experience in delivering community based music initiatives with older people.

We do not provide sing-a-longs. Each of our 90 minute sessions includes breathing and singing exercises, songs in multiple parts and challenging new material. Our participants are always surprised to discover that they are capable of producing results beyond their expectations. In addition to our regular groups, we have designed an initiative called ‘Discover Your Voice’ which offers 6 weekly group singing lessons to older people who have not previously had the opportunity to participate in vocal activities. We have secured lottery funding to run this in 5 locations in East Kent during the next year.
What has been the impact / achievement of the project?
Over 135 older people attend our groups each week.

We do not treat the older people we work with as passive recipients but actively involve them in all aspects of our work.

They volunteer to assist with all the week-by-week tasks that ensure the groups run smoothly (venues, registers, refreshments etc.) and have played a pivotal role in attracting new members to the groups.

Many of them have also volunteered to assist us with identifying and accessing sources of funding or running local fundraising activities. This builds their self esteem and helps them to feel valued.

We do not impose a centrally branded name on our groups. Each group chooses a name that reflects the character of that group and this builds a strong sense of ownership and identity.

What has been said in any third party assessment or evaluation? What’s your own advice about how others might approach something similar?
We have collected a wealth of anecdotal feedback from older people who take part in our groups. As well as enjoying the challenge and sense of achievement linked to learning to sing as part of a group they talk about the strong social and emotional benefits they feel.

Our groups grew out of a research project which examined the health and social care benefits related to participation in singing, the results of this are due for publication later this year.

We would advise anyone considering something similar to choose the group leader carefully, consult with the older people you plan to work with so that it meets their needs and make sure it is fun but focused and challenging but enjoyable.

What are your plans for developing the project further?
We have already been contacted by older people in other areas who have heard about our work and would like to work with us and have ambitious plans to open a further 4 groups during the coming year.

Later this year we will be running a Sing Lively day for our existing groups and to attract additional older people.

We are also sourcing funding to produce a CD featuring all our groups.

How would you spend the winner’s prize of £1,000?
We would spend the prize on running a series of pilot sessions for older people in areas where we do not currently operate. This could lead to the creation of new Living Lively Choirs to provide older people with much needed activities.
Describe your project in one sentence
Magic Moments supports older people to make friends and retain their independence through activity based social events and outdoor activities.

Specify the setting/s where your project is delivered (eg care home, day centre etc)
Magic Moments events are offered to every older person across all Midland Heart’s extra care and sheltered schemes.

What are the project’s objectives?
The objectives of the Magic Moments project are:
- To provide activity based events to enable customers to stay independent for longer
- Empower our customers to achieve their dreams and fulfil their aspirations
- To encourage older people to socialise with others and develop supportive friendships
- Organise stimulating indoor and outdoor events which fulfil older peoples’ physical, intellectual, emotional and social needs
- Provide exciting opportunities for customers to have fun and share a laugh together

What are the project’s activities?
Whether it’s a long lost hobby or a life time aspiration, Magic Moments make dreams come true. They give people the freedom to get involved in the activities they have always wanted to do, keeping them fit and active at the same time. Events are tailored to ensure that resident’s aspirations are met whilst providing the little bit of extra support that older people might need when they are out and about. If our customers express a desire, our experienced magic moments teams will organise just about anything whilst making sure the day is enjoyable and sociable for everyone attending.

The events ignite a person’s sense of freedom through scuba diving, abseiling, looping the loop in an aeroplane or speeding round a car racing track, to name just a few.
Social day trips are organised to give people the opportunity to form close friendships- aimed particularly at those at risk of becoming lonely or depressed. These include fishing for carp, tours of landscaped gardens, playing croquet and picnicking. Longer summer trips together include canal boat trips, cruising to the Norwegian Fjords and travelling on Orient Express’ Northern Belle.

Many enjoy regular trips to the west end to sing along to shows including Mama Mia, The Sound of Music and Oliver and well as regional visits to Dreamboats and Petticoats, Evita and Lord of the Dance. As well as the larger events, every scheme organises smaller Magic Moments through the week including darts and dominoes tournaments, snooker, bowling as well as art and craft classes, thai chi, line dancing, Nintendo Wii, garden parties and playing ‘Deal or No Deal’.
What has been the impact / achievement of the project?
Magic Moments has proved that leisure pursuits, exercise and hobbies help immeasurably in older peoples’ wellbeing; helping people stay fitter and happier for longer. By removing the barriers which can sometimes be associated with retirement, older people can forget about their ailments and have the freedom to embrace challenges and socialise with their friends.
The events provide great enjoyment and shared laughter amongst their friends as they relish in re-enacting every moment with their neighbours and families.
As a result of Magic Moments, our customers feel far more confident in themselves and able to socialise with others. After spending most of their time in their flats, getting out and about can feel like a daunting prospect. Our team build their confidence slowly so that they are eventually able walk down the busy Strand on the way to an evening performance of the Oliver theatre production. After this, a trip to the local post office never poses too much of a problem.

Midland Heart has also benefitted from Magic Moments. By engaging with customers in a fun, challenging and social way it has been far easier to recruit volunteers to get involved in shaping the service provided to them in their schemes. People feel more confident to speak out and shape our service so that it meets their needs and we are able to maintain their interest for longer.

What has been said in any third party assessment or evaluation? What’s your own advice about how others might approach something similar?
Our dedication to Magic Moments activities has contributed to Midland Heart’s achievement of the CHS code of practice in housing for older people. We use our customers as the main forms of evaluation. The popularity of events has meant we have had to double our team, as when one person experiences a Magic Moment, at least 5 of their friends will want to get involved.

What our customers say:
- “That was absolutely wonderful, it was excitement personified” – Marie Birch from Elmcroft Court after a racing track experience.
- “It was a life-time dream come true, amazing!”- Rose Havasi from St Matthew Place after her helicopter ride.

The advice we would give to others in setting up a program similar to Magic Moments would be:
- Don’t be inhibited by assumptions about older people, any barriers can be removed providing there is a thorough risk assessment carried out.
- Be as courageous and creative as possible- aspirations of older people are often the same as those much younger.
- Let the customers lead the program of events so they are tailored to their needs. We have a team of over 250 customers that specify what should happen and when.

What are your plans for developing the project further?
Due to Magic Moment’s popularity and success within Midland Heart’s extra care housing schemes and sheltered housing schemes, we now plan to roll out opportunities to the wider community. We are planning to target older people, who may be able to live independently, but are isolated and would benefit from the social interaction and enjoyment that Magic Moments provides. This would begin with targeting those over 60, which live nearby one of our existing housing schemes.
How would you spend the winner’s prize of £1,000?
We would take 12 older people for a trip to the Calvert Trust where they would experience a wide range of enjoyable outdoor activity adventures in the countryside.
This would enable each person to:

- Enrich their life through adventure and personal achievement with like minded friends
- The chance to enjoy countryside of exceptional natural beauty
- Enjoy recreational opportunities that can be transferred into everyday living

Organisation: National Youth Theatre of Great Britain
Project Name: Ghost Office

Describe your project in one sentence
National Youth Theatre delivered an excellent community production in summer 2010 that engaged older and younger people from Dudley in the West Midlands with young NYT members from across the country in a reflection on unemployment by creating a brilliant intergenerational performance over four floors of a redundant Barclays office in the town.

Specify the setting/s where your project is delivered (eg care home, day centre etc)
Our initial contact with older people was at Age UK Dudley’s Merry Hill Activity & Wellbeing Centre, located in the Merry Hill Shopping Centre in Brierley Hill.

What are the project’s objectives?
- To use the creative reminiscence process as a vehicle for cultural exchange between community members, tackling isolation amongst our older participants and social exclusion amongst the younger ones
- To use local memories and stories to create site-specific performances, showcasing our participants’ creativity and performance skills to a wide local audience
- To provide a fulfilling learning experience in a non-formal setting to all participants which promotes intergenerational research and creative collaboration
- To reinforce our existing partnerships and develop new ones with heritage, cultural and community organisations such as Dudley Archives & Local History Service and Age UK to create exciting opportunities for all partners to raise their profiles and reach new users. National Youth Theatre has staff based in Brierley Hill, one of whom (Kane Husbands) is a member of Dudley Community Partnership’s Heritage, Culture and Leisure Partnership Board. This gives us the ability to develop and strengthen our partnership working quickly and effectively.

What are the project’s activities?
National Youth Theatre established a base in the West Midlands in 2007 at the invitation of the Brierley Hill Regeneration Partnership and Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council. Brierley Hill is still suffering from the effects of the industrial collapse in the late 70s/early 80s when the Round Oak Steel Works and the Marsh & Baxter Pie Factory its major employers were closed. Three decades later, parts of the town (situated in the borough of Dudley) are amongst the 10% most deprived neighbourhoods in the country. It is also a place with a very limited cultural offer.
Our summer community project has quickly become a highlight in the borough’s cultural calendar. In 2010, Ghost Office was a devised site-specific piece of interactive theatre that took its audience on a journey through redundant spaces to bring them and their stories to life. Ghost Office discovered and presented true stories of individuals who had worked in local offices and why they are no longer there. It commented on the impact that recession has had on a community.

Kane Husbands from National Youth Theatre made contact with Fran Cartwright of Age UK Dudley who was very keen to take part, following our successful partnership on our previous show in summer 2009.

Age UK Dudley had set up a drama group at its Merry Hill Activity & Wellbeing Centre following the 2009 project. For Ghost Office, Fran invited Kane to run reminiscence workshops with group members. Kane worked with participants to collect stories that they recalled about their working lives. These stories were used as important source material during the devising and rehearsing of Ghost Office. Kane invited group members to take part in the devising, rehearsal and performance – and we were delighted that nine people took up this offer.

Ghost Office was created in three weeks with Age UK Dudley participants, NYT members and local young people. The piece was rehearsed and performed in Custom House; a disused office block on the Waterfront in Brierley Hill, formerly occupied by Barclays Bank as a phone centre. 350 people watched Ghost Office over the 3 performances – our largest audience in Brierley Hill to date.

What has been the impact / achievement of the project?
We are committed to continuing the intergenerational element of our summer community projects in the West Midlands. This has become an important feature of our summer activity and our approach has been welcomed not only by Age UK but also by the local Council. This year, we’re delighted to be partnering with the Black Country Living Museum, one of the borough’s major cultural and heritage attractions. We’ll continue to work with Age UK to recruit local older participants but we’ll also benefit from working with the Museum and its strong group of Friends and with the Black Country Society.

The success of what we’ve been doing in the West Midlands will have a direct impact on our new work in Glasgow. We’re launching a summer community drama project there this year which will also have an intergenerational flavour. We’re hoping to work at Govanhill Baths in the south of the city. Local people are working for the redevelopment and reopening of the Georgian swimming pool and wash house. The aim is for the refurbished baths to reopen as a Wellbeing Centre to support the local community in many more ways than physical health. The Govanhill Baths Community Trust is well-placed to put us in contact with local older and younger people who will want to take part.

What has been said in any third party assessment or evaluation? What’s your own advice about how others might approach something similar?
Last year’s project gained high praise from younger and older participants alike:

- “This summer I have been involved in the NYT production Ghost Office and I can honestly say that of the 14 summers I have been on this earth, this is certainly the BEST. I have really enjoyed meeting the older participants with all their experience and knowledge.” – James Stockton from Brierley Hill
- “It has been a real privilege to work with the young people. They have been so kind and considerate to us. It was lovely to find no generation gap between us and to be accepted as we are – just a bit older young people.” – Margaret Stones from Dudley
“I have enjoyed being with NYT. The young people are so good to be with for us older folk. The age from 13-75 is remarkable, and it works!” – Ellen Darby from Dudley

“There was no age difference between us. I never felt old. I only had a small walk-on part but I was made to feel like a star. The young people were so kind, thoughtful, well mannered and ambitious; it was a pleasure to be in their company. I do hope this work continues.” – June Hill from Dudley

“Everyone has been so kind to us. I feel 18 again. Can I do it again please?” – Linda Nash from Dudley

What are your plans for developing the project further?

We’re hard at work on our next project, White City, Black Country, that will look at the role that the Black Country has played in the British Olympic Games. We’ll engage younger and older local participants in a programme of creative research and learning about the region’s rich cultural, social, industrial and sporting heritage with specific reference to the 1908 and 1948 London Games (the latter popularly referred to as "the Austerity Olympics").

We’ll focus on local stories to give participants the opportunity to celebrate and share their heritage and to highlight the part the region played as a manufacturer and as a home to veteran Olympic medallists. Initial research by a small group of National Youth Theatre staff and young members led to the emergence of the theme “From Makers to Winners”. We discovered that:

- The 1908 medals were cast by Vaughtons, a Birmingham firm (still in existence) whose workforce at the time lived mainly in the Black Country
- In 1908, Dudley resident Victor Johnson, an employee of Rover Bicycles won gold in the 660 yards cycling event before returning to the factory to continue making bicycles. In 1948, Tommy Godwin and Bob Maitland, employees at the same factory, followed Johnson’s journey to London to win cycling medals for Britain.
- The 1948 Olympics saw the first and only entry of a British basketball team, which included three sets of brothers from the Black Country. Unfortunately the team finished 20th (out of 23), winning only one match. Team members returned to the Black Country to resume their lives and work.

An underlying theme will be to explore the beginnings of the social welfare state in 1948 and the impact of post war austerity on the local industry and community. We expect this to stimulate debate about the parallels with today’s social and economic references to austerity.

White City, Black Country will engage the local community with their heritage through intergenerational research using visits from local heritage experts, oral history and creative reminiscence; cultural exchange; residency at the Black County Living Museum; and ultimately developing site-specific public performances at the Museum to present and celebrate the participants’ heritage learning.

How would you spend the winner’s prize of £1,000?

We would use the prize for White City, Black Country. Specifically, it would contribute towards the costs of our Reminiscence Workshop Leader Susanna Howard of [www.livingwords.org.uk](http://www.livingwords.org.uk) whose skill will enable us to find great stories from local people to inspire our writer Peter Cann and the rest of the creative team. We will continue to work with Fran Cartwright and Age UK Dudley, and Susanna is planning a mailshot to the Friends of the Black Country Living Museum, the Black Country Society and others to encourage more older people to take part. We particularly keen to find members of the 1948 basketball team and their families.
Describe your project in one sentence
Sheltered Scheme based intergenerational activities and games, utilising the Nintendo Wii.

Specify the setting/s where your project is delivered (eg care home, day centre etc)
A series of Nintendo Wii and intergenerational events are delivered across 7 sheltered schemes.

What are the project’s objectives?
Wii with Mii events aim to deliver residents led activities meeting objectives of promoting independence, social inclusion within their scheme and the wider community, health and wellbeing and IT literacy.

What are the project’s activities?
One of the first activities to take place was an inter-scheme Nintendo Wii bowling competition.
Residents across 7 Sheltered Schemes in the Bexley area met on a number of afternoons for fun and games in order to build their confidence in using new technologies.
Once residents were confident with the controls and appearance of the computer games, local scout groups held evening events. The scouts introduced residents to their favourite games such as ‘Mario and Sonic at the Olympic Winter Games‘ and ‘Wii Party‘. Scouts and residents formed mixed teams to battle against each other in figure skating, cross country skiing and snowball fights.

What has been the impact / achievement of the project?
Residents are more familiar with using technology for fun and competition. Residents are developing new skills and interests in computer games.
Residents and scouts have discovered that the have enjoyed spending time together and can enjoy common interests, despite the generation gap. Residents have found new ways to stay physically and mentally active as well as feeling more included in their local community.
Residents and scouts are now planning further events together and scout groups are independently approaching residents for assistance and advice on other scouting projects.

What has been said in any third party assessment or evaluation? What’s your own advice about how others might approach something similar?
After the first evening with the scouts, residents soon asked when they would be revisiting. This was shared by the scouts and leaders who were keen to arrange the second event.
It was difficult at first to engage with groups of younger people. A dialogue developed between the group leaders and scheme staff in order to discuss what the events would entail and the expectations of the young people. The first event was very structured and formal. Scheme staff were initially hands on in
organising teams and games. By the second event it was decided to have a less structured event which allowed for the residents and scouts to build up a relationship for themselves.

**What are your plans for developing the project further?**
We would like to further develop the project by continuing to arrange Wii with Mii events with the scouts and extend to other youth groups. We are also encouraging and supporting residents or scout lead activities such as reminiscent events, campfire sing-a-longs and computer training.

**How would you spend the winner’s prize of £1,000?**
Residents have really enjoyed using the Nintendo Wiis and have asked for a range of equipment to enhance game playing including additional remotes, Wii balance boards and building up a library of Wii games. All of the equipment can be used for the inter scheme events and also shared by the 7 sheltered schemes.

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**Organisation:** PSS  
**Location:** Adult Placement Scheme  
**Project Name:** Trio

**Describe your project in one sentence**
Trio provides innovative, exciting and person centred sessions of day care to people who have dementia in a flexible way, provided by PSS and commissioned by Conwy County Borough Council.

**Specify the setting/s where your project is delivered (eg care home, day centre etc)**
Trio is a service that works to the Shared Lives/Adult Placement model and it is provided in the homes of specially recruited and trained carers and in the community.

**What are the project’s objectives?**
- To match service users and carers well  
- To provide relief for informal carers  
- To develop and promote Quality of Life to all Service Users.  
- To provide flexible sessions of day support for adults who have a form of dementia  
- To recruit carers to provide this service in their own homes

**What are the project’s activities?**
Activities are dependent on service user interests and preferences, as such are wide ranging and diverse. Times of sessions are equally varied to match service user need.

Activities facilitated by an Adult Placement Carer in their home include cooking, sewing, painting, drawing, puzzles, board games, listening to music, reading, singing, dancing, poetry,

Activities facilitated by an Adult Placement Carer in their community include swimming, walking, bird watching, cinema, fishing, visiting family and friends, visiting garden centres, coffee mornings,
gardening, pet therapy, photography, shopping, drives in the country, Train and bus rides, visiting places of interest such as Bodnant Gardens, Conwy Water Gardens and Conwy Bird Sanctuary.

Our Adult Placement Carer’s support local facilities and resources to promote inclusion reduce isolation and stigma through engagement in the wider community.

What has been the impact / achievement of the project?
The Trio project has succeeded in improving the cognition of people who have a form of dementia, and this has been recognised by a Psychiatrist.

The project has enabled service users to remain in their own homes for longer as their partner gets a break from caring. This has a direct positive impact on quality of life for the service user and their family. Service users are able to take a lead on what they would like to spend the session. Carers are encouraged to be flexible to their needs, which may include letter writing, shopping, picking up prescriptions, visiting an attraction or simply reminiscing over a pot of tea.

Most sessions have two service users placed with a carer and this has led to service users widening their social networks, which in turn reduces feelings of isolation. Many of our carers have been recruited from health and social care staff who wanted a change of career. Trio has given these carers a new lease of life and hassled to their retention within care and support services instead of their expertise being lost to other sectors e.g. retail sector.

We have also developed an opening for volunteers to support them into careers in Health and Social Care. PSS works with North East Wales Carer Information Service (NEWCIS) to provide support to informal carers, who are looking to get back to work, but often lack confidence and formal training.

What has been said in any third party assessment or evaluation? What’s your own advice about how others might approach something similar?
PSS has received feedback through a focus group, by monitoring placements and in letters of support provided by families on how the service has improved their quality of life. Many of the informal carers providing 24 care to their loved ones have felt reassured by the person-centred service provided by our Adult Placement Carers:
- ‘It is really good to know that mam is in safe hands and that I can enjoy my day without any worries’ (Service user’s daughter).
- ‘To have a day in the week when I can be myself and enjoy things I like to do knowing he is also enjoying himself is such a relief’ (Service user’s partner).
- ‘It gives me surety that he is happy to ‘be’ where he is and I get relief from the guilt I feel to be free of his demands for a while’ (Service user’s partner).
- ‘For my part it is a much needed break from worry, as I know he is in safe hands, and I can get on with tasks at home and have some time to myself’ (Service user’s partner).
- ‘As a family, we know that without the Trio Service her quality of life would be much impoverished, my mother feels absolutely safe in the company of the Adult Placement Carer’ (Service user’s son).

What are your plans for developing the project further?
As with many other services, our main challenge is to sustain funding to the scheme. However with appropriate funding we would like to begin work on a number of projects.
As this is a very flexible and adaptable service we would like to open the service to people who have other specific needs, for example Parkinson’s Disease and Stroke survivors. To continue to respond and adapt to changes in individual need beyond the model of support provided nine to five.

An allotment project to provide gardening experiences and a shared space for people accessing Trio.

An Arts, Crafts and photography project to support services users to document their Trio activities stimulating conversation with family and friends on their return.

To establish a resource centre, providing information to carers and service users to develop their understanding of Dementia.

Work with Alzheimer’s Society to strengthen community ties and widening support networks by providing information and developing support groups in local areas.

Work with NEWCIS to support those back into work and into Social Care, promoting intergenerational work with young carers to increase awareness.

Continue to develop training, supporting Adult Placement Carers in their role to provide a proactive and preventative approach to intermediate care.

To further develop innovative approaches to service delivery to support those living with cognitive impairment and Dementia.

To take on a student from a local college to conduct research into Trio’s perceived impact on reducing hospital admission.

Continue to develop innovative methods of evaluation and monitoring with clear and measurable outcomes led by the service user and their families.

How would you spend the winner’s prize of £1,000?
We would like the £1,000 in order to pay for equipment to enhance the service, this includes;

- Gardening equipment for the allotment project
- Arts and crafts resources
- Books/shelving, providing an information corner to carers and service users to develop their understanding of Dementia, available to loan.

Organisation: **Relationships Scotland, Family Mediation South Lanarkshire. Project supported by Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation**
Project Name: **Connecting Generations – Grandparents Matter Too**

Describe your project in one sentence
Reconnecting grandparents with their grandchildren through family mediation, child contact centres and via IT communication.

Specify the setting/s where your project is delivered (eg care home, day centre etc)
Floating support.

What are the project’s objectives?
Connecting Generations aims to:

- Reconnect grandparents and grandchildren where contact has broken down.
• Promote the importance of intergenerational kin networks.
• If needed, provide additional support for parents, grandparents and grandchildren via our
counselling service, parenting workshops and child contact centres.
• Make our services accessible for all, through engaging volunteers in active outreach work.
• Bridge the increasing gap between younger and older people.
• Build on the positive resources that young and old have to offer each other.
• Promote greater understanding and respect between generations.
• Bring generations together in meaningful and purposeful ways.
• Reduce levels of loneliness and isolation within the older adult community.

**What are the project’s activities?**
Connecting Generations supports grandparents who have lost contact with their grandchildren as a
result of family conflict. We have outreach workers delivering information about this project within the
heart of the community and we have secured a variety locations to deliver services throughout urban
and rural areas, to ensure our project is accessible by all.

We work with families, providing family mediation, child contact centres, counselling and parenting
workshops to support meaningful and on-going relationships between grandparents and grandchildren
where relationships have broken down.
We are in the process of making an educational DVD to promote the importance of grandparent’s
relationships within families. We are also working directly with grandparents, parents and grandchildren
producing artwork for an exhibition celebrating the differing roles of grandparents within families.

**What has been the impact / achievement of the project?**
The project has successfully reconnected grandparents with their grandchildren. This has positively
impacted on the overall wellbeing of grandparents, parents and grandchildren. Reducing levels of
loneliness and isolation experienced by older adults.
Grandparents Apart UK have reported that they feel Connecting Generations has significantly increased
representation of grandparents within Scotland.
Through this project we have raised awareness of the positive impact grandparents have within families.
We did this through press articles, direct consultation with other public/voluntary organisations and
outreach work within the community. We are looking at innovative ways to deliver services to people
who have difficulties in travelling to service providers.

**What has been said in any third party assessment or evaluation? What’s your own advice about how
others might approach something similar?**
Our project is in the early stages, we have had very positive feedback from other professionals and
service users. This feedback highlights that there are no other family support services within Scotland
who are specifically working towards supporting grandparents who have lost contact with their
grandchildren. The project has been well supported by Grandparents Apart UK – they feel that
mediation and counselling are vital in supporting grandparents who have lost contact with their
grandchildren.

We would advise anyone working with intergenerational groups to make strong links with other
organisations working directly with families, make services accessible and straightforward – complicated
processes can be off putting for clients and other professionals referring clients. It is important to
continually evaluate the work you are doing and listen to your service users – be prepared to develop your project in relation to evolving client needs. For example, we are developing our counselling services to include grandparents; this is in response to feedback from service users who have asked for help in coping with their situations, regardless of whether contact is successfully re-established with their grandchildren.

**What are your plans for developing the project further?**
We are in the process of developing new procedures to deliver our services via video conferencing. This will allow us to offer mediation and child contact online. This will be useful in a number of situations, such as, for families who live far apart or where disability presents a barrier to accessing services.

In response to client feedback, one to one counselling is now available to support grandparents who are finding it difficult to cope with their situation. Again this service will be available to clients via line communication.

**How would you spend the winner’s prize of £1,000?**
If we were fortunate enough to win the prize, we would spend the money on IT equipment. This would allow us to purchase 2 computers for use directly within older people’s community groups – day centres, sheltered housing, lunch clubs. This will increase our potential to engage clients with our service who we may otherwise not reach, removing the need for clients to have IT equipment available.

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**Organisation:** Riverside ECHG  
**Project Name:** The “Get Digital” Campaign

**Describe your project in one sentence**
A campaign to encourage older people to embrace the vast range of social, leisure and creative opportunities offered by computers and the digital age.

**Specify the setting/s where your project is delivered (eg care home, day centre etc)**
Sheltered Housing

**What are the project’s objectives?**
To teach residents computer skills and introduce them to the benefits of modern technology. Through this, the scheme offers the chance for older people to get involved in new, exciting, creative and fun projects. It helps stimulate, enthuse and entertain them, giving them the chance to pursue their interests and develop new skills, boosting confidence, reducing isolation and increasing their independence. The project also presents them with more opportunities to socialise and meet people with similar interests, through the workshops and by using the internet to find out about local events and facilities, as well as linking with people further afield. As well as building new relationships, the initiative aims to help residents enhance family ties through the use of e-mail, Skype and social media. It
also allows them to relate better to their children and grandchildren by opening the door on the digital age. In addition, by involving young computer-literate volunteer mentors to help residents at the workshops, the project aims to improve links with the local community.

**What are the project’s activities?**
Following consultation with residents, the project got under way with £12,000 (spread over 3 schemes) of funding under the government’s “Get Digital” drive. “Get enthused” sessions were held at Bethany House and neighbouring schemes to build on residents’ initial positive response to the idea.

A computer room was set up in Bethany House and NIACE (the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education) provided nine initial – very popular - weekly training sessions to introduce residents to computers, followed by several shorter sessions concentrating on their particular areas of interest. Regular workshops now take place on a range of subjects but residents can use the computers and practise their new-found skills whenever they want.

Activities include word processing, using the internet, e-mail, buying and selling sites such as Amazon and e-bay, Skype, downloading music and film, making greetings cards on computer and playing games on Wii consoles.

The success of the scheme has led to a Digital Camera Club being set up, where members go out into the garden and the wider community to take photographs before being able to view them on a television, edit them on computer and use them to make items such as calendars or cards.

There was a further drive to involve more residents in the project during Silver Surfers Week in May.

**What has been the impact / achievement of the project?**
The workshops have enhanced and transformed the lives of many of the scheme’s residents, giving them a focus and opening up a new world of entertainment and fun. It has encouraged them to mix, interact, help each other to become computer-savvy, learn new skills and pursue interests and hobbies.

Some are improving their links with family and friends via e-mail, skype and social media, while others are enjoying increased choice, freedom and independence by exploring the possibilities of shopping online.

Participants have made new friends and become “pen pals” with residents taking part in similar programmes at other sheltered schemes. Some now contact Riverside with their tenancy queries by e-mail and look up information on services via our website. Many have enjoyed the gentle exercise of Wii bowling, golf and tennis and others have found a new lease of life by investigating the art of photography through the new camera club.

Two neighbours at the scheme – Jim Saunders and Connie Howell – have thoroughly embraced the 21st century learning package. Jim, aged 91, had never used a computer before when he started going along to the training sessions. Having fought as a Desert Rat in North Africa during the Second World War, he began by using the internet to look up information about his old regiment. This inspired him to use a computer to write about his experiences during the war. He has now published his memoirs and is hoping to post them on the net, complete with old photos.
Jim said: “I think this Get Digital scheme has been excellent and I’m thoroughly enjoying it. It’s a brilliant idea and it’s a shame more older people don’t get involved with something like this. It opens up a whole new world. “I would never have written down my memories if it wasn’t for doing this course. It just got me thinking that I should write them down for future generations – otherwise they’re lost forever. It was a good experience and very therapeutic.”

The Digital Camera Club has proved extremely popular, with lots of residents enjoying getting out and about to take some snaps. 93-year-old Connie said: “It’s something different for us to do and makes a nice change. It keeps us busy and entertained – and it seemed like magic when we came back the first time and were able to immediately see our pictures on the TV screen.”

Jeanette Kelsey, Team Leader for Older People’s Services at Riverside ECHG, said: “Jim and Connie are shining examples of the difference computers and technology can make to older people’s lives. “It has been fantastic to see so many residents get so enthusiastic and excited – it has created a real buzz. This is a very positive and important project, enhancing residents’ lives and giving them a sense of achievement.”

The initiative has encouraged links with the local community, with the recruitment of a young IT whiz kid who has become the scheme’s volunteer “computer doctor”. Volunteers are also getting involved from local schools, churches and businesses to help residents develop their computer skills further. These recently included staff from IBM who visited the scheme to share some of their knowledge and experience, helping to further assist and inspire residents in their IT endeavours.

What has been said in any third party assessment or evaluation? What’s your own advice about how others might approach something similar?
This project won the silver award in the National Housing for Older People Awards 2011, which are run by the Elderly Accommodation Council to showcase successful developments and their achievements. The win, in the Digital Inclusion category, was all the more impressive as the scheme was nominated by NIACE (the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education) and the awards attracted more than 400 submissions from 140 housing providers. Bethany House residents were the key to Riverside’s success in the awards as, for the project to secure a place in the finals, they took part in a workshop to share their thoughts and feelings about the initiative. Judges praised Riverside for the “excellent” services and facilities Bethany House offered, which prompted “positive and wide-ranging feedback” from its residents. The positive impact of the Get Digital campaign at Bethany House has also featured in national and local media, from the Romford Recorder to Radio London.

For others developing a similar project, we would advise an approach which concentrates on engaging residents and persuading them of the benefits and fun of the uses of technology - such as an interest in digital photography or researching a particular subject - before introducing computers as a means to an end. Such initiatives can also start small, with minimal capital outlay – perhaps by purchasing an inexpensive digital camera, then fundraising for a second-hand computer before looking into establishing broadband access or buying a Wii console.

What are your plans for developing the project further?
There is so much scope to build on the initiative’s achievements so far in improving residents’ quality of life and well-being. Participants are planning to interview each other to produce a Memory Book on
Members of the Digital Camera Club will soon be working on a project to make calendars which feature a selection of their photographs. We also hope to introduce an exciting new element to the campaign, an innovative programme which uses animation software to bring residents’ memories to life, helping those whose communication and memory skills are affected by dementia.

**How would you spend the winner’s prize of £1,000?**

We would buy the software which would enable us to set up the animation project mentioned above, which would have a positive benefit for many of our residents.

Any remaining money would be spent on keeping the project up and running by helping to cover costs such as our broadband connection, paper and printer cartridges as well as buying more cameras and equipment so that more residents can enjoy the experience.

**Organisation:** Sanctuary Housing  
**Location:** Sheltered schemes in Brighton - Silver Birches, Holt Lodge, Clare Walk  
**Project Name:** Sanctuary’s Got Talent

**Describe your project in one sentence**  
A talent show for the residents of each sheltered scheme with an inter-scheme celebratory event.

**Specify the setting/s where your project is delivered**  
Sheltered Housing

**What are the project’s objectives?**  
To encourage residents to use and revive the talents they once had and also explore undiscovered talents. Thus building confidence and self esteem and giving them an adrenaline rush from performing which really convinces them that they are actively alive. It was also designed to build community spirit on the schemes and support and loyalty among residents.

**What are the project’s activities?**  
On each scheme I advertised Sanctuary’s Got Talent. I spent quite a lot of coffee mornings encouraging people to take part and also finding out what skills and talents they each possess. I then put together backing track CDs and also found an accompanist to help the singers. Each scheme had a competitive event with judging being carried out by peers. Each member of the audience had to give the act a mark between 1 - 5, the scores were then added to find 1st, 2nd and 3rd place. The acts varied from singing, a drag act, an assisted wheelchair dance with audience singing, classical guitar and even the dance of the seven veils performed by an 84 year old. The winners (1st, 2nd and 3rd place) from each scheme were invited to perform at a joint event. They were supported by friends from their scheme and it was a wonderful afternoon celebrating the skills our elders possess.
What has been the impact / achievement of the project?
The residents are still talking about the event six months later. The whole event gave the performers a real boost and many of them were extremely proud of their achievements. I still hear them telling visitors that they won, came second etc. It also helped to build team spirit on the individual schemes. On one scheme with only 25 residents there were only 3 performers but 19 of the residents gathered in the lounge for the competition element of the event. I have not seen that number together in the lounge before or since.

What has been said in any third party assessment or evaluation? What’s your own advice about how others might approach something similar?
Stephanie Killer our regional director was invited to the show case and she was impressed that residents (many in their 80’s) were challenging the typical stereotyping of people in their senior years. If anyone else does such an event I would say be very persistent encouraging and gently pushing people to take part. They might be low in confidence to begin with but by the end they will be on top of the world.

What are your plans for developing the project further?
This year we are planning to do min pantos/sketches on each scheme. They will be devised so that residents can use their particular skills and make references to schemes jokes. There will be a common thread running through them so we can join together and have a joint event and a good old sing along. I am now working on six schemes rather than three so it will be a much bigger event. We will adapt well know tunes and put our own words to them and learn them on all schemes so everyone can join in at the celebration event.

How would you spend the winner’s prize of £1,000?
I would use this to fund the panto project and towards transport between schemes for other collaborative and social events. It is so important for residents to get out into the world and meet new people. Their world does not need or be allowed to shrink just because they are in Sheltered Housing.

Describe your project in one sentence
A craft afternoon has been in place on the scheme for over 12 years, it involves the wider community as well as the scheme a former project exposed all the skills that were used on the craft afternoon and this project evolved to showcase these skills

Specify the setting/s where your project is delivered (eg care home, day centre etc)
Sheltered Housing
What are the project’s objectives?
The project wants to involve as many skills as possible. We want to involve as many as possible while using the core group of people using the Craft afternoon. This is a community project involving older people to tell the story of Macklands House Sheltered Scheme and all that is important to it using skills available and different mediums and a visiting artist. One of the first tasks was to discover what Macklands House meant to people; the ideas were collected and stuck on the windows and stayed there throughout the project. It is a ‘sharing project’ people must work together to decide what is to be included using the expertise available. To introduce innovation to the Craft afternoon; to stretch capabilities and imagination; to share skills and knowledge; to discover what is possible by researching patterns and methods from other cultures and transferring them to the project; to work as a team, trusting each other as each piece is vastly different but complements the story.

What are the project’s activities?
A regular meeting of craft inspired older people, digging deep to discover old & new crafts, sharing skills and of conversation, many are disabled and some have mental illness. The skills range from knitting, needle work, tatting, crochet, paper craft, poetry and drawing. Some people act as support providing the tea and just being a part of the event and adding ideas. Ages range from 65 -90 years.

What has been the impact / achievement of the project?
The first week local artist Lorri Thomas joined the group and introduced the project. She received comments like: ‘I don’t understand’, ‘this is too complicated’, ‘we will never do this’, ‘it’s far too ambitious.’ The next week one or two people had made small efforts or made suggestions, the suggestions began to flow as did the creative juices. One lady suffering from mental illness finds the afternoons very therapeutic and has like many others found the craft afternoon an introduction to Sheltered Housing leading to some actually moving in.

Over the weeks people really got into it building and layering, drawing on old skills and welcoming new ideas to apply them for different effects – a knitted sky, downloading images from the Internet to provide inspiration, looking at things a different way a BBQ for instance represent by flames and the letters. Opportunities to devise ways of depicting something or symbolising something. People contributed many items to use thus inspiring interesting conversations over a previous life of a button, or fabric remnant. Ideas and resources have been shared; as were many cups of tea! The Triptych Wall Hanging is to be assembled as all the pieces come together, a day of celebration will launch the work, with invitations to friends, families, the Mayor, Press and a local Hindu group who are contributing to the art work. It will be displayed at the library & Health Centre, and visit other homes and communities where members of our group are invited to speak.

The hard work and love that has been woven into this piece of work will be celebrated and shared and enjoyed by many.

‘Isn’t it amazing what we can do together with a few odds and ends’ - Eleanor, group member.

What has been said in any third party assessment or evaluation? What’s your own advice about how others might approach something similar?
There has been much appreciation of this project, especially as it has involved older people. ‘Stunning’ has been mentioned as well as ‘inviting’ and ‘innovative’.
Local funding was found for this project enabling it to be co-ordinated by a local artist. The idea was originally the Scheme Managers and a previous project introduced the artist to the craft afternoon. People’s skills were identified and they were encouraged to work with others less skilled, everyone was listened to and empowered to create or contribute to a piece of work, however humble. A document will follow the completion of the Triptych following the progress up until its completion and its impact.

What are your plans for developing the project further?
Confidence is high and a multicultural art event leading on to a creation depicting multicultural stories (possibly nursery rhymes for local contribution), once again using skills available.

How would you spend the winner’s prize of £1,000?
There would be consultation with those involved but it would contribute to the completion of the multicultural work.

Organisation: Sanctuary Care
Location: Rosary Nursing Home
Project Name: Identity and Interests / Relationships

Describe your project in one sentence
To encourage friendship and interaction between residents using animals and fresh air and volunteers and families to help towards having fun enjoying themselves and creating a better standard of life

Specify the setting/s where your project is delivered (eg care home, day centre etc)
Rosary Nursing Home and gardens

What are the project’s objectives?
To help towards a better standard of life for residents within the home, by giving them enjoyment and a reason to get up in the morning. To help the residents to feel that they matter and their feelings matter. By using outside fresh air, animals and pets, also volunteers / students and relatives to bring in new information and conversation into the home also themed evenings and afternoons. To help our residents feel wanted, to feel important.

What are the project’s activities?
Socializing with volunteers, work experience students and families, to enjoy the outside with fun and stimulation to help towards a better standard of life and a happy fun one. To have in house café and create an in house pub for the residents to socialize in a relaxed mutual environment. Using the sensory garden with its beach area and the bigger improved pets corner where residents can actually go into the rabbit run and have the rabbits on their knees and running around them, with large rabbit run, guinea pigs, chicken and also large pot animals like a pig and donkey that although are not real they encourage conversation and put smiles on the residents faces. We also take the animals into the home for residents that are less able. We have painted murals on the walls in the dementia unit of flowers and trees with birds and butterflies, this creates an entrance to the garden, therefore giving it a feel of leading out into a beer garden when we hold the in house pub.
What has been the impact / achievement of the project?
Residents are happier in their environment and much brighter, which helps towards them feeling healthier and more relaxed. More friendships have been formed by introducing residents to new faces and new conversations. Our in house pub and café have been a great success for residents to have fresh conversation and make new bonds with people that they have more in common with. The time in the garden spent with the animals in the pets corner have been great, they always bring a smile to the residents faces which on its own counts for a lot.

What has been said in any third party assessment or evaluation? What’s your own advice about how others might approach something similar?
We have had several relatives and residents expressing their appreciation for the things that we have been doing and have put in place. To start gradual not to run before they can walk, introduce things slowly, it is always good to encourage relatives to get involved as well as residents as this creates an even better atmosphere, a family atmosphere.

What are your plans for developing the project further?
- To expand on the sensory garden, outdoor equipment to encourage stimulation and a better standard of life.
- This is particularly important for residents with dementia, for despite memory deprivation the senses remain intact.
- To organise more activities and trips away from the home, for a change of scenery, which can also help towards a better standard of life.

How would you spend the winner’s prize of £1,000?
We would spend the money on more outside equipment i.e. Gazebos, garden furniture and parasols. Also more outside games to encourage the residents to have fun and enjoy themselves. More sensory items for the garden i.e. plants, wind chimes and ornaments. As our residents enjoy being outside and it is good for their health and wellbeing.

Organisation: St Helen’s Council – Arts Service
Project Name: Art of the Unexpected

Describe your project in one sentence
This project engages older and homebound people in the Four Acre Neighbourhood area in St Helens in Arts/Poetry and Reminiscence activity.

Specify the setting/s where your project is delivered (eg care home, day centre etc)
This project takes place in a variety of settings in the Four Acre area – including;
- The Local Library
- GP’s Surgery
What are the project’s objectives?

• To increase the arts offer to older and homebound people in the Four Acre area
• To create innovative arts engagement activities
• To encourage participants in the scheme to move on after the project to participate in broader arts activity
• Use the arts as a tool for decreasing social isolation
• To create a new commission/piece of artwork to be exhibited to a wide audience as part of St Helens town centre programme 2011
• To encourage intergenerational activity
• To improve people’s health and well-being through engaging in arts activity

What are the project’s activities?

This project is part of a wider arts engagement initiative being delivered by St Helens council and funded by Arts Council England. In February, the Council’s Arts Service commissioned arts organisation – Arthur and Martha to deliver a series of workshops encouraging older and homebound people to participate in various visual arts, poetry and reminiscence activity. The overarching aim of the work is to increase adult engagement in the arts (in this case with older and homebound participants) that otherwise wouldn’t engage with arts and cultural experiences. Arthur and Martha are a fantastic socially engaged arts organisation who always approach their sessions/workshops by putting the participants who they work with at the centre of activity – meaning that no two workshop/sessions are the same.

Workshop activity to date has included:

• Creating poetry around people’s life experiences on cakes and plates.
• Working with the local bingo group to create group poems.
• Training school children to become journalists to interview their grandparents/older people in the community about their life experiences
• Working with homebound people in reminiscence, poetry and arts activity in their own homes.

For more information on the exact details of the sessions please visit the project blog; - [bit.ly/k17wKe](http://bit.ly/k17wKe)

We decided to target Four Acre for this work in particular because there is no sheltered housing, care home or extra care settings within the area and as such meant that we have had to be more creative in the way in which we engage with older and homebound participants.

What has been the impact / achievement of the project?

In order to reach these isolated members of the community we have held workshops in places where older people will attend and venues where you wouldn’t expect to see arts activity –the library, GP surgeries etc which has led to some interesting and unexpected results in terms of the work being created and subsequently resulted in us reaching 54 older people (17% of the overall population of older people in the area) who would never have thought to participate in arts activity in their normal day to day lives.
This work has led to several positive outcomes to date – including:

- Noticeable improvement in confidence of a number of participants engaging with the programme
- Workshops have given people a voice who often get missed for one reason or another
- An extremely isolated and homebound older person taking the decision to attend a local visual arts class on a regular basis
- Participants from an older person’s group who meet on a regular basis booking arts activities into their meetings more often
- We have been able to foster a sense of community cohesion into the area by instigating a series of Inter-Generational activity through training 60 schoolchildren to work with older people in their community and interview them about their history and lives

*The one-to-one sessions let us open dialogue with people who get missed, not just the immobile, or ill - but people who’re shy, those whose experiences put them outside the norm, people with over-protective relatives; there are many reasons why voices don’t get heard. These unheard, possibly isolated, people often have been desperately starved of human connection. To tell their stories and to be acknowledged is an opportunity to stand outside their own life narrative and think about the shape of it, perhaps even rewrite it.

In the course of today, we talked with a woman who told us she’s so short of company she rides the bus to town everyday simply to be among people. Another person was overwhelmed by their (very vocal) partner. Another was piecing together confidence after a nervous breakdown and marriage split. As he talked, we heard him tentatively shift from a depressive cast to celebratory. It was, as they say, the sun coming out*

- Observation from Lois Blackburn/Phil Davenport Lead artists of Arthur and Martha.

What has been said in any third party assessment or evaluation? What’s your own advice about how others might approach something similar?

This project is only a few months old and as such no third party assessments or evaluations of have been undertaken, however we have been able to ascertain attendees - thoughts, feelings and experiences of attending the sessions. Some positive comments we have received thus far have included;

“I was never really any good at art at school, I had an awful arts teacher and never thought I could draw, being involved in this has given me an opportunity to re-explore a creative side I never thought I had”

“It has been really great to be involved in this project, I never used to think that art was for me – However being involved in this has been fantastic – it hasn’t really felt like art at all”

“Telling my life story and having read back to me has been a really cathartic experience, it has made me feel like I have had a rich life, a good life, it’s been good to get it off my chest”

What are your plans for developing the project further?

Following on from the workshop stage of this programme, participants will be given the opportunity to see their work exhibited as part of a large-scale event – the high-profile 3D pavement art event taking place in St Helens Town centre in September. We feel that giving the participants the opportunity to display their work is a crucial part of the process of the project – giving the older people engaged in the scheme an opportunity to feel a sense of pride about the work they have created is essential for the confidence and well-being of the participants and feeling that they are part of a wider civic programme is essential to encouraging them to engage in activity in the future.
How would you spend the winner’s prize of £1,000?
The funding for this scheme is currently time limited and restricted to 17 days of engagement with participants. We would use the additional funding for this programme to use the skills of Arthur and Martha to train local volunteers and participants in skills that they would need to be able to deliver ongoing activity in Four Acre, which would encourage more workshop sessions and ensure sustainability and a legacy for the project which lives beyond the life on the current funding.

Organisation: The Abbeyfield Society
Project Name: Identity and Interests
Video Link: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jXV2hZnA6yc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jXV2hZnA6yc)

Describe your project in one sentence
A unique person centered environment, which engages, validates and enhances effective communication between all relationships, within any special moment in time.

Specify the setting/s where your project is delivered (eg care home, day centre etc)
Residential care home for older people with Dementia

What are the project’s objectives?
- To enhance the quality of lives of all residents living with Dementia at BFH
- Using the environment at BFH to develop and sustain relationships within families
- To generate positive outcomes whilst establishing good community links which supports our ethos of volunteering
- Using the environment to validate residents’ emotions, feelings and actions, in order for carers, families and friends to understand what is being expressed/communicated from the resident.
- To understand that behind every action of behaviour – there is a reason for this – and by using the immediate environment it supports just how ones is feeling.

What are the project’s activities?
Browns Field House is a 26 bed residential care for older people who have some form of Dementia – the whole house is packed with themes areas of interest with bags of reminisce items or themed corridors. All areas around the home are person centered, there is something for everyone to see or work within. The home has been designed by the carers and from fundraising events from volunteers and family members – all works have been carried out by volunteers – with a massive impact, no area around the home is institutionalised – but indeed feels and looks like a home from home as you will see from our video clip.

The projects activity is to use these themed areas around the house as a great prompt for families and friends to sustain and engage with their relative or friend in meaningful conversations and indeed sustaining good relationships. Family and friends of all ages visit BFH, and some people use to find it hard to maintain in good conversations with the person with Dementia, because they would see the loss of this individual person and only see the Dementia. With the ongoing themed corridors and themed rooms around the home – relationships can flourish and often repair. There’s so much for the families
and friends to engage in – those awkward conversations are limited now ‘I’ve got to go now, I’ve got to go to work now!’ – often family’s would find this difficult to answer, often getting themselves plus the resident upset – but now with the themed areas they are empowered to fully support and validate ones feelings, which then leads into more effective sustainable relationships.

From the video you will see a fully working post office; with the above example, the family member would walk their father around to the post office (as this was their previous occupation) and say oh look Dad – do you need stamps etc – and validate his feelings in the here and now. – Great grandchildren now visit more often and stay longer with all our themed areas around the house, from buying sweets from our fully functioning shop to feeding the animals or collecting eggs from the chickens or ducks.

**What has been the impact / achievement of the project?**
The impact of our project has been absolutely massive something we are all very proud of. on-going, families, friends of all ages are much more relaxed, visits are longer + more meaningful whilst being more frequent – strained relationships are being rebuilt all the time and family/friends are losing the sight of Dementia but regaining and valuing the role and identity of their loved one, they now through the homes environment+ all of its personhood of peoples interests and lives – the resident is being seen first as a unique person and their Dementia comes second place now.

Although at times some of my residents – don’t always recognise their family and friends which can be distressing for all parties the areas around the home defuses and diverts away from ‘who are you’ - nobody could ask for a better positive outcome, one which validates and supports effective communication and sustains relationships.

Since our environment has changed and the whole home has become totally person centered offering a naturally calming and therapeutic experience helping people with dementia, tap more easily into memories from their past, giving them grounding & inner peace, when they may be feeling dazed & confused, many residents are now less dependent on the usage of Anti-Psychotic Drugs.

**What has been said in any third party assessment or evaluation? What’s your own advice about how others might approach something similar?**
The feedback from family and friends has been amazing – as well as seeing much more calmer relaxed residents. But last December, word of all our works within the home spread – via GP’s and CPN’s – and Professor Alistair Burns, The National Clinical Director for Dementia from the Department of Health came and visited BFH – he was amazed by all our achievements and how all the areas around our home aided communication and how we were able to reduce the usage of medication, by validating people’s feelings by knowing ones personhood. I think its brilliant if others could adapt their homes with themed areas - as we have seen such greatness from our areas, already some other Abbeyfield homes are implementing such areas – as they visited us at BFH, so they can see the benefits.

**What are your plans for developing the project further?**
At BFH we have 4 sections of garden, 3 areas are developed and used all the time. The last piece of garden which has been un-used long before I started at BFH, and I have been at this home for 15 years now, needs developing. Through fund raising with volunteers and families, we have commenced work on this last section of garden, we have been able to have it all fenced around in order for it to be safe for residents to use and have brought some plants and flowers for this area – but I would love to have more seats in this garden and a workshop/ shed – so everyone can potter around in the shed, especially
for some of my residents who use to be engineers, they would love to create and reminisces in this new area, and to have an old car in the courtyard, so one can wash and polish a car. Families could engage with reminiscing in this new themed area – “Dad do you remember me and you use to wash our old car every Sunday morning etc!!!”

How would you spend the winner’s prize of £1,000?
£1,000 would go a long way in supporting us with this new project, it could either be used for buying an old car – or a shed with lots of equipment in it, or seating for this new area. Winning would help us to achieve our goal so much quicker – and would mean such a lot to me, my team, family, friends and most of all, my residents!!! Thank you.