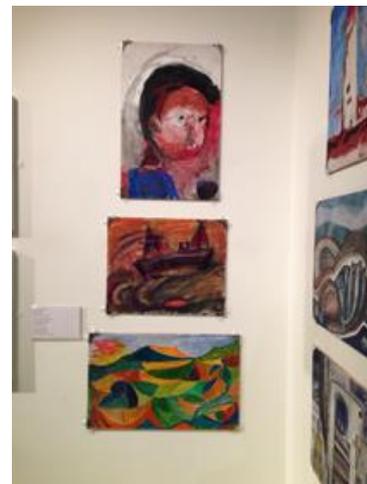




Arts for Health Project Penlee House Gallery & Museum

Arts & Health South West Prize 2016 Shortlisted Case Study



Name of organisation: Penlee House Gallery & Museum

Title of project/programme: Arts for Health Project

Dates of project/programme: September - November 2015

Summary

Working with Arts for Health Cornwall and Isles of Scilly (AFHC), Penlee House Gallery & Museum in Penzance organised a 10-week project aimed at adults living in the community who may be experiencing isolation, low mood, anxiety, or suffering from long-term chronic health problems. The group of adults and their friends/carers spent one afternoon session a week at the Gallery learning art skills based on an understanding and appreciation of the artworks on display. They were supported by an artist/facilitator who helped the participants learn new, often challenging technical skills, such as printmaking. Outcomes for this project were for participants to have developed new skills and knowledge, gained a sense of achievement, increased their social networks and had an enjoyable and positive experience. The culmination of the project was an exhibition of work produced during the workshops in the Gallery.

Overview

Through talking to Jayne Howard at Arts for Health, the Director at Penlee House Gallery & Museum, Louise Connell, identified a lack of art/creative workshops for adults living in the Penzance area who may be experiencing isolation, low mood, anxiety, or suffering from long-term chronic health problems. We felt that the art gallery was a neutral, social space where people could experience a variety of different art forms. At his time, the Gallery was showing an exhibition of 20th century Modernist art from St Ives, 'The Bigger Picture' as well as the 19th century 'Newlyn School' paintings for which the area is famous. This gave us lots of ideas about the form the workshops could take and the sources of inspiration that the participants could draw on.

Arts for Health was a charity based in Penryn near Falmouth that supported adults who have faced emotional or physical challenges. They offered high quality and stimulating art experiences led by professional artists. The sessions would be for up to 10 participants from the local community invited by Arts for Health. Outcomes for this project were for participants to have developed new skills and knowledge, gained a sense of achievement and wellbeing, increased their social networks and had an enjoyable and positive experience.

Artist Melanie Young was selected from a field of six candidates at interview. Melanie led the regular weekly sessions which ran from early September to late November 2015. Each one lasted from 2pm – 4.30pm and took place in the Coach House Learning Centre at Penlee House. In addition, the group visited the Gallery and exhibitions to learn about artists' techniques and to draw inspiration. The participants learnt printing techniques, painting on board, drawing and other skills. Director Louise Connell gave the group an illustrated talk on artists of the Newlyn School and the group were given a guided walk of the exhibitions. They also studied 'Time Moveth Not' by Walter Langley, and other works by Newlyn artists on display in the art gallery.

The art produced in the sessions was professionally framed, mounted and exhibited at Penlee House alongside the winter exhibition. All the participants were invited to the Private View for both exhibitions on 27 November 2015. The exhibition is still on display. The exhibition element was very important as it aimed to increase the self-esteem and pride felt by the workshop participants for their work, and to share their work with a wider audience. Although it was not stated that any of the work was for sale, Penlee received an enquiry about one of the pictures, the artist was informed and put in touch with the potential purchaser.

Innovation

This was a new venture for Penlee House Gallery & Museum. The project was a crucial step towards widening participation at Penlee: a notable shift away from traditional 'collections-based' work towards developing and engaging new audiences. The staff had rarely worked with vulnerable adults before, except for the occasional tour around the Gallery by a booked group. This was also the first time that we had worked with Arts for Health and we hoped to learn from their innovative and inclusive approach to arts-based learning. Their approach was developmental, meaning that the workshop participants had access to quality materials, teaching and sources of inspiration, whilst learning new skills.

We have used the experience of running these workshops to inform our Audience Development Plan and embed adult learning into our education offer. For example, we are planning to run the workshops again in September 2016, working with Jayne Howard, formerly of Arts for Health. We are also working with an organisation called 'Vocal-Eyes' to deliver training to our volunteers in audio description and we plan to run a series of art workshops for blind and visually impaired people from May 2016 using this project as a model.

The 'added value' to existing services is the step-change that it made to how we deliver learning and approach inclusivity. We would like to use projects such as these to diversify our pool of volunteers and we are hoping that participants at these workshops and future will become familiar with the Gallery and wish to give their time to volunteering.

Participation

Ten participants were enrolled on the course, although the number varied from week to week, there was a core group of seven who stayed the course and whose work was exhibited in the gallery from 27 November 2015 to 15 January 2016. The workshops were supported by the Penlee staff, namely Louise Connell the Director, who gave an illustrated talk on the artists of the Newlyn School, and Zoe Burkett, Education and Outreach Officer, who was present at every session and helped the artist/facilitator. Two Penlee volunteers also helped out at each session.

Outcomes

Outcomes for this project were for participants to have developed new skills and knowledge, gained a sense of achievement, increased their social networks and had an enjoyable and positive experience. The outcome of the evaluation is that we are looking at ways of running the project again, in spite of the fact that Arts for Health is no longer operating.

One lady, with motor neurone disease, made a special effort to write her comment on her own. Hers is the first one, below.

I was happy to come here xxxx

I have thoroughly enjoyed this course, Melanie the tutor is excellent at facilitating us all to enjoy our abilities and enhance confidence. I believe that art is paramount to promote in the community, for the good of all. Thank you. PS Please can we have another course?

We have learnt so much in a wonderful relaxed atmosphere – Mel fantastic. Please can we have many more. We will miss our weekly sessions.

Thank you! Excellent course (learnt a lot) and great people to work with.

The Art Classes at the Penlee Gallery/Museum has been amazing. For me, being a full-time carer, it has been a light of pure enjoyment, learning skills & gently being encouraged to explore creative ventures and getting to know the staff and other students has been a real joy and focus of my week. Wonderful tutor and great staff. As for my mum who I care for and bring, it has brought new life to her, she has met a lovely couple and they have befriended her (mum lives alone, so this has been life-changing. The tutor and staff have been excellent with her and gently encouraged her to learn new skills. At home she won't engage but at the session she has produced some great pieces of work. We are all very keen for it to continue and a very big Thank You to all the staff, helpers and tutor.

Learning

We would have liked to have been able to offer it to a bigger group, to allow more people to enjoy and benefit from this project. The core group of 10 did fluctuate from week to week, due to health issues. The seven who stayed the course responded really positively in the evaluation and wished that we could repeat the programme again. Subject to funding, this is something that we are considering running again in September 2016. In the future, we would offer it to up to 20 participants, as we have the space and resources to involve more people.

Critical success factors

- Participation in the Gallery activities by an under-represented group of people.
- For the participants, a sense of achievement and improvement in self-esteem as well as knowledge.
- For Penlee, a potential new group of volunteers to help steward the gallery and help with activities

Funding and Resources

Arts for Health Artist/Facilitator

Structured course for 10 Arts for Health clients based on the historic art of Newlyn with art activities and 2 guest speakers. 10 weekly sessions @ £100 per session plus resources, materials & print costs, plus contribution to Arts and Health admin @ £320

The workshops were funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund as part of the 'Time Moveth - Not! A Fresh Perspective' Project.

Total cost £1900

Image Credits

Title: Arts for Health workshop

Date: September - November 2015

copyright/credit: Penlee House Gallery & Museum

Title: Arts for Health workshop

Date: September - November 2015

copyright/credit: Penlee House Gallery & Museum

Title: Display of work

Date: September - November 2015

copyright/credit: Penlee House Gallery & Museum