

MUSICAL MEMORIES IMPACT REPORT 2019-20

Introduction

Musical Memories is a social enterprise created to give older people the opportunity to sing together and enjoy each other's company with the aim of combatting social isolation and loneliness and improving health and wellbeing.

Musical Memories runs inclusive, friendly, singing sessions in accessible, community venues using specially adapted songbooks for those with visual impairments, live music, and songs which are transposed to make them particularly suitable for older voices. Participants range from age 30 to 97, with the majority aged 70 or over, with typically around 25 people attending each session.

Musical Memories delivers a Community Programme of activities throughout the year as well as a number of Special Projects.

Community Programme

A programme of regular singing sessions has taken place throughout 2019 - 2020 in Pickering (Community Library), Kirkbymoorside (Moorside Room), Helmsley (Arts Centre), Malton (Milton Rooms) and Danby (Village Hall) and in the first few weeks of 2020 MM experienced the highest ever monthly average attendance since being founded in 2016.

By Invitation

Musical Memories has also delivered a number of singing sessions to a variety of community groups including Pickering Churches Together Luncheon Club, Ryedale Carer's Support 'Songs and Scones', several Women's Institute groups and local care homes in Malton and Helmsley.

MM has delivered a number of large-scale singing sessions to celebrate key events throughout the year including: Christmas Singalong, Older Person's Day, Desert Island Songs and also the 4th Annual Summer Big Sing and Afternoon Tea, which was held in the main hall of the Milton Rooms in July 2019. All members of Musical Memories singing groups were invited to attend. Transport was provided from Norton

and Pickering and the villages of the North York Moors. Over 150 attendees in the age range 50 to 102 attended and participants sang together some of their favourite songs from a bespoke song book created for the occasion and then enjoyed an afternoon tea together.

Special Projects

'When The Saints...' and Singing With Cauwood Day Centre (for adults with complex needs)

Funded by Ryedale District Council Musical Memories delivered a series of singalong sessions in partnership with the harp/guitar duo The Blow-Ins and The Wesley Centre, to celebrate the patron saints' days of each of the four nations. We also went on to deliver several sessions at Cauwood Day Centre. Such singalong sessions are tailored specifically to the age and interests of the participants that we are serving. Song choices are crucial to this as well as providing bespoke songbooks: we curated a specific collection of songs for use with the group of adults with learning disabilities, to include songs with lots of repetition of simple choruses, actions and the option to use shakers, bells, kazoos and whistles. We called this the 'MM Workout Book'. We use a system of song selection (Bingo Balls) that encourages interaction and participation but is also non-threatening.

'Sing By Your Beds'

Musical Memories worked with the Arts Department at York Hospital Trust to deliver a series of ward-based sessions at Bridlington Hospital. Over the course of 6 weeks we created special songbooks with songs likely to appeal to patients, staff and visitors. For each session we set up a mobile instrument cart which we wheeled around the ward in order to sing with the occupants of each ward bay. A total of 165 patients and visitors attended these sessions.

'Coffee, Cake and Conversation'

Funded by the Aviva Community Fund, Musical Memories worked in partnership with Helmsley Arts Centre and Libby Pearson Creatives to deliver a series of singing and reminiscence sessions that focussed on participants' childhood. This culminated in a script-in-hand production entitled 'Close to Home' in the Autumn of 2019 – a

collection of stories and songs which were personal to all participants, acted by local actors and including audience participation (sung).

Stakeholders

Beneficiaries

The age range of the people who regularly attend Musical Memories singing sessions is between 60 – 96 years. The average age of participants is 79 for women and 75 for men. 60% of participants live alone and 25% are unpaid carers. Many live with long term chronic conditions associated with the older population, a significant proportion live with Dementia and other memory problems, and many have mobility difficulties. One of our participants is registered blind and we supply a weekly playlist which she converts to Braille before each session thus ensuring that she is able to fully participate in the sessions.

Volunteers

Volunteers make refreshments, distribute songbooks, collect weekly contributions from participants and some provide transport to sessions for participants. Many of our volunteers are also service users who enjoy the added experience of being central to the smooth running of each session.

Referrers

Contacts have been established with other local charities and agencies (Ryedale Carer's Support, Carer's Resource, Next Steps, Sight Support) who are aware of the service that is offered and know that they can signpost their own service users to join us if it is thought to be beneficial. Close links have also been established with NYCC Health and Adult Services Directorate in particular the Living Well Team, and the NYCC Stronger Communities Delivery Manager.

Employees

The expansion of our team to include a Digital Marketing Officer meant a new injection of ideas and possibilities and MM invested in training for this employee through the Arts Marketing Association (training course at Weetwood Hall, Leeds) and Coventry University (Social Media training course at Scarborough campus).

Musical Memories also employed a musical theatre student as a summer intern over the period May – September 2019

Connections

Over the past year we have also employed other musical groups to deliver sessions on our behalf (Sweet Martinis, Rewind, Blow-Ins) we have worked with numerous solo vocalists, instrumentalists and creatives, and larger organisations including Leeds University Department of Music, York Hospital Arts Team, Libby Pearson Creatives, Revival North Yorkshire CIC, Next Steps, NYCC teams (Stronger Communities and Living Well) which has led to the development of new and exciting initiatives. We have worked in partnership with Ryedale Community Transport to ensure that participants can get to our sessions by providing a minibus pick-up service throughout the winter months. These partnerships are strong and new ones with other organisations are developing all the time. In early 2020 Musical Memories started to gain traction in the York area and was listed in the top 100 business in the York area.

MM has attended a number of conferences on Arts and Health (Leeds University and National Centre for Early Music) and has also been involved in research into the impact of music on the health and wellbeing of older people.

Our community programme is published in the local press (Gazette and Herald, Scarborough Post, York and Malton HandyMag) and there have been several articles and editorials on MM included in these publications. We have also been interviewed many times on Radio York and 'That's TV' North Yorkshire.

Impact

Inputs

Funding has been received from The National Lottery, NYCC Stronger Communities Fund, Ryedale District Council, Pickering, Norton, Helmsley, Kirkbymoorside Town Councils, Ryedale Lions. We have been commissioned to provide services for The Milton Rooms (Arts for Change TRCF) and Revival North Yorkshire (Stronger Communities Fund) and Helmsley Arts Centre (Aviva).

Beneficiary contributions are in the region of £92 per session. Volunteer contribution is worth approximately £47 per session.

Outputs

In January 2020 Musical Memories engaged with Coast and Vale Community Action in a series of visioning workshops and as a result developed a Theory of Change and a strategy document for the organisation's future development.

In this period Musical Memories has delivered 127 sessions with over 2,900 attendances reaching over 1000 individuals. The number of volunteer hours was 710.

Conclusion

Loneliness and social isolation are harmful to our health and research shows that lacking social connections is as damaging to our health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day (Holt-Lunstad, 2010). Our beneficiaries tell us they feel that they feel they 'belong' in our sessions and whilst singing great vintage songs is a major part of what Musical Memories is about, it is only a **part** of it. We really do feel that the fellowship that is fostered in our sessions helps to reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness, helps to make and strengthen friendships, and all this in turn gives rise to feelings of increased well-being amongst beneficiaries.

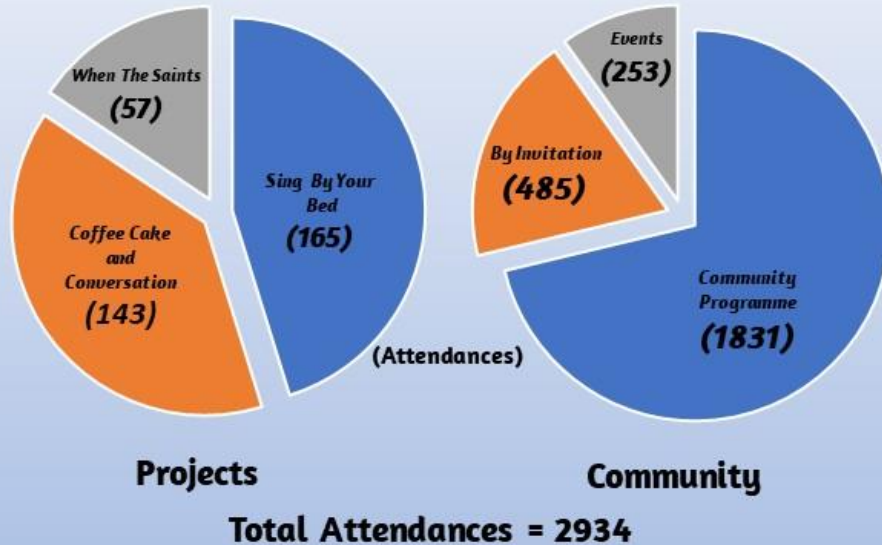
We are proud of the fact that we have created a community that is alive and thriving, and which clearly means so much to so many people. We are proud that we have a good reputational value as a 'go-to' organisation that is well managed, resourced, reliable and creative.

Neil & Ruth Hannah
October 2020

Musical Memories

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At a glance...



Volunteers gave over **700** hours



We sang with over **1000** people



We worked with **25** partners



“ That was much better than the telly. When are you coming back? ”

“ What fantastic sessions, we really enjoyed them. Ruth and Neil are great to work with and keep the sessions light-hearted and fun. The songs are chosen with thought and are suitable for a wide age range. There is always something for everyone. ”