

A CREATIVE LEAP



**BEYOND
DISABILITY**

HOW THE ARTS ARE PROMOTING WELL-BEING FOR PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY



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Published by Arts in Action Inc
101 Halifax Street Adelaide
South Australia 5000

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ISBN 0646 310100

Cover: 'Everything is Possible' photographer
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A Creative Leap: beyond disability was
supported by Living Health, Arts SA and the
Australia Council for the Arts



F O R E W O R D

A Creative Leap: beyond disability is for community health workers; people working in disability services, community services and arts; care providers and importantly, people who live with a disability. It aims to encourage and inspire readers to create opportunities for people with a disability to become involved in community based arts activities. Inside these pages are six examples of how others are creating access for people with a disability to participate in artistic activity and develop their creative potential. More importantly this publication aims to encourage its readers to consider the importance of personal creative expression in developing and maintaining health and well-being.

In researching this publication it became clear that the majority of people working in health, disability, community services and arts professions recognise the immense benefits that flow from community based arts programs. Benefits such as an improved sense of well-being and personal confidence, stronger community networks and less social isolation.

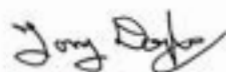
Many people understand that social integration is a process which starts with being accepted into a group, being listened to and respected. It includes meaningful activity in an area of interest to the individual, and allows for friendships and social networks to develop. Making a meaningful contribution to the group and

successful risk taking, bring the extra rewards of self discovery and self affirmation. Once a person has established a range of social networks and developed friendships with other like minded people, they are able to exercise greater self determination in how they lead their life.

People who live with a disability are very likely to agree that how they feel about themselves and their social well-being is as important to them as the functional health care they receive. Few people would dispute the essential need to nurture both a healthy body and state of mind.

The examples detailed inside these pages all occurred during 1996 and illustrate how effective community arts programs can be in facilitating social integration and self determination. And how as a result, people with a disability experience a greater sense of well-being and an improved capacity to contribute to their community.

A Creative Leap: beyond disability, might inform you, re-inspire you or motivate you, but most importantly it can help you to advocate the value of community based arts programs and generate more support for these activities.



Tony Doyle
Arts In Action



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Club C audience. Photo courtesy Arts in Action

1

CLUB CONTAGIOUS

A unique example of a fully integrated arts event offering a creative and social outlet for many people often excluded from arts and social events because of their disability. Operating as a monthly forum for musicians, artists and other performers — with and without a disability, it showcases artistic talents to a diverse audience. It also offers broad opportunities for participation for people of all ages and cultural backgrounds.

■ THE MODEL

Club Contagious, or Club C as it is fondly called, is held on the last Sunday of every month at the Governor Hindmarsh Hotel in Adelaide. It offers performance and cabaret spaces for bands, vocalists, entertainers of all types as well as dancing for those in the mood. Tony Doyle, the program organiser says, 'It's the only place in Adelaide where you'll see people with cerebral palsy, Down Syndrome or people in wheel chairs up dancing among the general community.'

As well as the main cabaret space, there's an acoustic room for unplugged music or readings of poetry, and in a third area you'll find visual arts displays and participatory arts workshops. Add to this mix, an audience of around 300 people on a good Sunday — many with disabilities, and an artistic line-up of excellent performers — many with disabilities, and you have a fine example of a disability friendly arts event.

Club C also supports the development and proud expression of disability culture — showcasing the particular artistic contribution people with a disability can make to the arts, and communicating a more enlightened understanding of human experience. Club C has recently been the venue for the launch of original artworks produced by its participants — from CD's to books.

■ A COMMUNITY NETWORK EMERGES...

Tony is particularly proud of Club C's success in bringing together a community of creative people who live with a physical, mental or intellectual disability, and the professional and social networks that are developed as a result. He believes Club C has become a meeting place for people who frequently experience social or artistic isolation as a result of living with a disability.

'Club C is an example of people with a disability taking the lead,' Tony points out. 'Because this event is organised by people who live with a disability and their aim is to foster integration, it's also an ideal environment for families. The thing is, if you get your event right for people with a disability, it will be right for everyone.' Proof of this point is that Club C appeals to people of all ages and lots of family groups as well.

Through building social contacts and personal confidence, Club C supports a community of people with disabilities to break down social isolation and share their creative talents.

'It's the only place in Adelaide where you'll see people with cerebral palsy, Down Syndrome or people in wheel chairs up dancing among the general community.'

'At Club C there's so much untapped potential, people can come to see others who have reached out and done something. It presents a role model for them.'



Vibooti the clown. Photo: Kim Mawell

JANE

A PERSONAL VIEW

Jane is a young woman who lives with a physical co-ordination impairment, caused when hit by a car as a child. Being an outgoing and creative person who thrives on a challenge, she decided to study clowning with the ambition to perform and entertain others. The decision to develop her skills in clowning was a challenging direction for Jane to take. Not because of the considerable social skills that are required, but because of the high levels of co-ordination needed for clowning.

She explains, 'What is challenging for me [in clowning] is doing juggling, balancing and magic tricks and to have the confidence to pull it off. Juggling for me is really hard because I've got co-ordination problems. It's taken me six years to learn how to do it.'

After returning to Adelaide from studying clowning in Sydney, a friend told her about Club C, and before she knew it, she had the offer to perform as Vibooti — Jane's clowning persona. Club C offered two important opportunities for Jane, monthly employment doing what she loved best — performing, and an introduction to a new and interesting social and professional network. Since then Jane has continued to gain income from performing as Vibooti at children's parties and other events.

Jane describes her first introduction to Club C, 'I didn't know what to expect, but I thought, 'This is a job, and it's working with people with impairments.' So I asked myself, 'Why am I doing this?' Not out of pity for people with disabilities! When I was in a wheelchair I hated people doing things for me out of pity. I'm doing it for me!'

■ OPENING THE DOOR TO OPPORTUNITY...

Club C quickly became an important part of Jane's social life and a focus for her personal and professional development. Club C provides a monthly opportunity to perform as Vibooti and an ongoing motivation for honing her performance abilities and confidence to perform. She believes her abilities have grown considerably over the two years or so she has performed there. Jane feels that she is a valued part of what makes Club C happen, and believes that Club C is important for her and the many other people with impairments who make up Club C's community for several reasons. She explains, 'At Club C there's so much untapped potential, people can come to see others who have reached out and done something. It presents a role model for them, it's through role modelling and lots of encouragement that people break through to new achievements.'

■ EVERYBODY NEEDS TO PLAY A LITTLE...

Jane's personal philosophy is influenced by years of Yoga which assisted in her rehabilitation, plus an understanding of the importance of creative play in maintaining health and inspiring personal development. Vibooti means 'essence of my soul', in Hindi. She explains, 'Clowning is all about giving love, giving life. I've got a child inside me called Vibooti the Clown, and Club C is a regular outlet of expression for this child. I really believe in play as a form of therapy and creation...Club C is really important...It provides the opportunity to play, even though it's only once a month. If Club C wasn't here, those people with impairments who come along, wouldn't get that play, and society doesn't provide an alternative because it's not concerned with this need.'

HOW THE PROGRAM IS RESOURCED

Club C is sponsored by the proprietors of the Governor Hindmarsh Hotel who provide a well appointed venue and technical assistance at no charge. Club C covers its other costs through door charges plus occasional small project funds from SPARC Disability Foundation and local government councils for special activities.

Publicity relies on word of mouth, the Common Ground electronic bulletin board which lists disability friendly events, and flyers distributed through a wide network of co-operative organisations and individuals. Arts In Action provides resources in the form of coordination, publicity and administrative support. Arts In Action is funded by the State arts funding body ArtSA and the Community Cultural Development Fund of the Australia Council for the Arts.

Further Information
Contact: Arts In Action
Tel (08) 8224 0799



The dragon. Photo courtesy Julia Farr Centre

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JULIA FARR COMMUNITY ARTS PROJECTS

A series of community arts projects which were organised through an innovative approach to the recreation program for residents of Julia Farr Centre in Adelaide.

Residents were involved in creating large 3D puppets, performing in annual creative arts events and participated in the 1996 Adelaide Fringe opening parade. These projects helped participants develop skills and confidence and provided the opportunity to form new friendships while exploring their creative abilities.

THE MODEL

Julia Farr provides a range of rehabilitation services plus residential care for people with acquired brain injury and degenerative neurological conditions. Through its recreation services, it offers an arts and craft program for residents. It was through this program that three Recreation Officers Andrew Noble, Lynne Radcliffe and Andrea Fox, decided to collaborate and experiment with some group developed arts projects. With the idea of bringing in an artist to work with the residents, they attracted some sponsorship from a local Rotary Club, to create large 3D puppets.

FROM PUPPET WORKSHOPS TO PERFORMANCE...

Andrew describes the flow-on in the following way, 'The participants in the puppet project picked a poem about a bird from the [Julia Farr] Writers' Group book, which became the theme for the puppet performance. The final event which also incorporated music, was performed by residents of Julia Farr, for residents, and told the story of a bird breaking out of an egg, co-ordinating all its essential parts and flying free. Unley Youth Theatre members also joined in the theatre workshops and performance. Lynne remembers the feeling on the night, 'It was so theatrical on the night, the atmosphere, the music, and the fact that it was the residents' own words.

The bird was so spectacular that we needed to go on, it inspired us all, the residents, the volunteers and the staff.'

ONE GOOD RESULT LEADS TO ANOTHER...

They subsequently began work on a second project for the following year. After discussion within the group of participants, they developed a medieval theme for a performance event which featured a 5 metre dragon constructed over a wheelchair. Assisted by an interested group called The Society for Creative Anachronism, the final event included the slaying of the dragon amongst much theatricality.

By this stage there were a lot of volunteers who were quite loyal to these projects. Next time the group decided to branch out and create an entry for the Adelaide Fringe opening night street parade. Andrew explains, 'We developed a concept of the four natural elements, [earth, air, water and fire], and created structures that attached to four wheelchairs.' The dragon, the four elements and other large puppets made up their contribution to the Fringe parade and involved 22 people on the night.

EVERYBODY WINS...

Although these projects represent a lot of work, Andrew, Lynne and Andrea see much merit in this approach to their work. Lynne explains, 'It's a challenge, the group work is very different, you've got to get creative ideas bouncing off each other. But one to one working with people can be very hard— sort of separate — and you can't involve as many people in a day. Group project work is good for [the participants]

'Coming together as a team was the highlight of the week...it's so creative and invigorating.'

'When I am doing art
I feel like I'm free, I can
do anything; do it any
way I want.'



Gail in 'Free' Photo courtesy Julia Farr Centre

and good for us. We can be very isolated working in individual areas, so for us, coming together as a team was the highlight of the week. It's so creative, it turns our wheels and it's such a learning curve. I find it very invigorating.'

Making observations about the broader benefits in this work approach, Andrew adds, 'Living in an institution, creates an environment where you can start to internalise and there's always that risk of going more into yourself. These projects are about going in the opposite direction, and working in a group environment, having to think about what everybody else is doing and working in a team. And then branching out of the four walls of the institution — into the community — it's all about that.'

'There have been friendships developed between the residents and between residents and particular volunteers. It was such a great thing for Unley Youth to come in here and it's opened their eyes to a whole different environment — it's an educational thing working both ways.'

GAIL

A PERSONAL VIEW

Gail is a resident at the Julia Farr Centre. She lives with an acquired brain injury as a result of a road accident. The arts component of the recreation program opened up a whole world of new experiences for Gail. She explained:

'[In the beginning] I was nervous when I was going to the craft room because it was a new experience. I thought it was a real challenge but I was ready to accept it and I was really happy doing some art. In the craft room we made all the bits of the bird, a head, feet, wings, and I had a bird wing on my chair. All of us came out and bits of the bird were dropped by people. Then this person came out and put the head on and took the wings and looked like a bird. And he went around the audience so they could see him, then he flew away.'

■ THE BIRD WAS REPRESENTING OUR LIVES...

'When a bird is in the cage it hasn't got any where to go and it can only hear other birds sing. Sometimes I felt like a bird in a cage because, before I got this chair I was in a push chair and I didn't go anywhere. When I saw the bird flying around the room it made me feel that's what I would like to be able to do. Because of my injuries I feel like I'm in a cage, and I would like to be able to get out and walk around. And I think the bird was representing our lives; that you feel

like you are in a cage when you have work [to do] and people to see, and things that must be done.'

'When Andrew said there was going to be a parade, and he thought some of us could be in it, I was really nervous but I thought, "Oh well, nobody will recognise me." ...When I was in the parade, it made me feel good and that my perseverance was worthwhile, I was watching everybody watching me and clapping and cheering and it made me feel good. When I came back to the ward I was really high and I asked the nurses if they had any parachutes because I was very high'

'I learned new things and I experienced a good feeling of friendship and being able to rely on somebody and being able to help others. It has been a good way of building friendships, and to get out of my room and [out of] a closed environment and be happily creating. When I am doing art I feel like I'm free, I can do anything; do it any way I want.'

HOW THE PROJECT WAS RESOURCED

These projects were resourced primarily through the existing allocations for the Recreation Program for Residential Rehabilitation and Lifestyle clients.

Three Recreation Officers and a Music Officer collaborated to include the project as part of their work program. A small amount of sponsorship was attracted from the local Rotary Club in the establishment phase of the first project.

Volunteer time was a vital resource, and interest in the projects actually increased volunteer numbers and their degree of continuity.

Collaborations with other organisations such as Unley Youth Theatre and The Society for Creative Anachronism also brought valuable resources into play at no extra cost to the Recreation Program.

Further Information

Contact: Andrew Noble

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'Gigbee', Photo: Michael Shanahan

3

RESTLESS DANCE

A dance company operating on the basis of reverse integration — members without a disability are informed and influenced in the way they dance, by those members with a disability. This company seeks to represent the culture of people with a disability in ways that tell us about ourselves and celebrates the expressive skills of people with a disability.

■ THE MODEL

Restless Dance describes itself as Australia's leading youth dance theatre resource for young people — with and without a disability. The company has an Artistic Director, Sally Chance and Associate Director, Caroline Daish. They create high quality performances and run workshop programs across metropolitan Adelaide and in some rural centres. Restless Dance has a high percentage of members with Down Syndrome. 'They are perfect improvisers', says Caroline. 'I'm forever questioning why they are maestros of improvisation and what is released when they are expressing and performing.'

■ IN PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE, NOT THERAPY...

Caroline and Sally reject the idea that their work is a form of therapy, and challenge the notion that if a person has a disability they somehow need therapy. Restless is about dance, and high quality performances. Caroline stresses, 'I am inspired working with the group. I enjoy how well the members with a disability dance, and create an ensemble feel — they are right there with you. That's what a lot of actors strive for, being there in the moment.'

Restless Dance offers regular workshops at accessible locations throughout the Adelaide metropolitan

area, and an orientation workshop once a week for potential members who want to come along and find out if Restless Dance suits their interests and abilities. As members' skills develop they have the opportunity to join the performance troupe. The company achieves high artistic standards and has performed as part of Come Out, South Australia's Youth Arts Festival, Adelaide Fringe and toured to Melbourne.

■ OUT OF THE INSTITUTION AND INTO THE WORLD OF PERFORMING...

For group members, some of whom live in institutions, Restless Dance opens up a whole new world. The weekly workshops build and maintain broad social networks and close friendships with other young people, some with and some without a disability. The world of theatre, performance and interstate travel is an exhilarating added bonus.

Restless Dance has two categories of members, those with a disability, and those without a disability. Caroline explains, 'Those without a disability get the experience of developing and seeing that performance quality that members with a disability have. Those without a disability have a more sporadic membership, they join the group because they're interested in

'For me [this work] is parallel to the feminist movement — in challenging and changing cultural values and social norms. I mean, not that long ago women didn't work outside the home.'

'If others were shy or nervous about joining, I'd tell them to relax calm down...and to just go for it!'



Rachel. Photo courtesy Mission High

performing or working with people with a disability and they get other opportunities to move on. Whereas members with a disability don't get those opportunities to move on. They are very stable in their membership and they develop ensemble and performance skills. They're very professional towards their work in the ensemble. Members create friendships too, not just within the disability community, but in the youth community and with people they might not normally meet.'

■ A SPECIAL APPROACH TO LEADERSHIP...

Members with a disability that have been with the company for three years have developed so many skills they are now taking over more support roles. Group members are very emotionally aware, sensitive and supportive. Caroline observes, 'Sometimes when people without a disability work for the company, they want to offer support all the time and they find it difficult to leave off and let mistakes happen, let people express. They may not be doing exactly the right task but what will be born from that, might be a mistake that gives the delight to the next choreographic piece.'

'Why is this stuff important?' Caroline reflects. 'For me it's a parallel to the feminist movement — in challenging and changing cultural values and social norms. I mean, not that long ago women didn't work outside the home.'

RACHEL

A PERSONAL VIEW

Rachel loves music and dance. She is nineteen and lives with her parents at Port Augusta, a regional city in the north of South Australia. She says of herself, 'I love listening to music and I also love dancing. I've been dancing since I was 8 or 9 years old.' Every week Rachel travels for four hours by bus, to come to Adelaide for the Restless Dance workshops. Her participation in Restless Dance means a lot to her. She was inspired from the first time she saw the company perform. Rachel remembers, 'It was when they came to Port Augusta to perform *Talking Down*, I saw the performance at my old school and I thought it was excellent. I really liked all the dancing and I saw my friend Natalie there.'

Rachel soon joined the company and has continued to participate, perform and learn about dance. Recently Rachel took the role of assistant tutor at the Restless workshops in nearby Whyalla, effectively role modelling the session preparation process to newer members, and how to focus attention during the workshop. She says of her own progress, 'I've learned new dance steps, and I'm better at concentration and focussing. I believe that Restless has made me more confident.'

Travelling to Adelaide on a weekly basis and being part of a community of other young people with a common interest, adds a valuable social aspect to Rachel's life in a country town. As Rachel says herself, 'What I like best about it is good friends, it's good for me to know people.' The social benefits are closely followed by the love of performing. 'I don't get nervous performing, I've been on stage ever since I did plays at school...my favourite spot is the stage.'

On reflecting if she would recommend Restless Dance to other people she responded, 'If others were shy or nervous about joining, I'd tell them to relax and calm down, that they are OK, and to just go for it!'

HOW THE PROGRAM IS RESOURCED

Restless Dance is funded on an annual basis by the SA Youth Arts Board with project funding from the Australia Council for the Arts and Living Health.

It provides regular workshops at various locations across the Adelaide metropolitan area and in two regional centres.

Further information
Contact: Sally Chance or
Caroline Daish
Tel (08) 8346 0553



Karrarendi workshop exhibition

4

KARRARENDI ART WORKSHOPS

An arts workshop program for
Aboriginal people who primarily
reside in institutions or foster care.
Through visual arts, drama and
cultural workshops it has been
generating a strong sense of
community identity and
celebrating Aboriginal culture.

■ THE MODEL

Karrarendi is a recreation program primarily for Aboriginal people with a disability. It means 'to rise above, to be proud,' in the Kaurna language. It is a program of the Kura Yerlo Centre Sports Club in Port Adelaide, which provides supported participation in recreational, cultural, artistic and sporting activity for children and adults.

In 1995 Arts In Action contacted Karrarendi to issue an invitation to participate in its Salisbury based art workshop program called, 'Our Place - Northern.' At the time Kathryn Gilbey was coordinator of the Karrarendi program, she arranged for eleven people to join the workshop project.

■ HAVING DISCOVERED THE BENEFITS WE HAD TO CONTINUE...

Kathryn explained, 'We got such positive feedback from the people who had attended regularly. It's a shame that you come to this dilemma; that you offer something and it works so exceptionally well, but it's only [for] a ten week period, and then you take it away. For some people that was devastating. So we had to renew it. We operated on nothing for a while, we sold sausages and held trading tables just so we could continue. Then we applied for and got Australia Council funding for 24 weeks — 10 weeks of visual arts workshops, and 14 weeks of drama arts and culture.'

Kathryn feels passionate about the fact that there are practically no opportunities for Aboriginal people living in institutions or foster care, to explore their Aboriginality. 'This program exists because there's a lack of services,' Kathryn explains. 'Aboriginal health is spoken about now, in terms of holistic health — we talk about how we cannot be healthy people without having access to each other, having access to our community — to our land. That doesn't seem to apply to Aboriginal people who live within an institution, and who have a disability. If you're living in isolation you can't actually grow as an Aboriginal person. What happens is that your status as disabled completely overshadows your status as Aboriginal — you're fed, clothed, housed or employed as a person with a disability, and you're not even considered as an Aboriginal person. There's no black person feeding back to you.'

■ ESTABLISHING BROAD COMMUNITY LINKS...

The Karrarendi arts workshop program has provided workshops at different locations across metropolitan Adelaide. The approach has been to collaborate with allied organisations who can provide suitable venues and links into

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'Since I've been coming here my temperament has got better, because I've joined in with new friends. My body's telling me it's no use loosing your temper when you can do better through your creative work.'



Maria: Photo courtesy Karrarendi

much better. 'When I first started my workshops...I had lots of problems cropping up everywhere, and Kathryn used to take me outside and talk about it and she used to hug me and say, "Don't worry, we'll sort it out," and we did!...I used to be such a bad tempered little sausage at times, but since I've been coming here [Karrarendi workshops] my temperament has got better, because I've joined in with new friends. My body's telling me it's no use loosing your temper when you can do better through your [creative] work...'

Aboriginal networks. Collaborating organisations have included Wilto Yerlo, the University of Adelaide's Aboriginal Education Unit, Tauondi Inc, formerly the Aboriginal Community College, and the Port Community Arts Centre. Aboriginal artists have been located through associated community networks and the program has attracted a large number of artists some of whom donated their time for the workshop sessions. Recently Kura Yerlo were able to appoint a Community Care Co-ordinator who will, among many other duties, co-ordinate any future workshops.

The Karrarendi arts program has been enormously successful, even though it has been co-ordinated on a shoe string budget, with largely volunteer time. Kathryn believes its success is largely due to the emphasis being placed on the group dynamic. She explains, 'I always placed the emphasis on the group, we've concentrated on the circle. Although we accept people into our circle, we are an inner circle and it is group focussed. Even when we ran into unexpected difficulties, the sessions were always extremely successful, because I had [the group] backing me up. It was about maintaining group happiness, that's the most important thing...to remember who you are doing it for.'

MARIA

A PERSONAL VIEW

Maria is an Aboriginal woman who was born in Darwin and now resides at Minda Home in Adelaide. She says of herself, 'I don't think of myself as disabled any more, when I turned 37, I just tossed my disability out the window, and said, "That's it! I've had you! I'm going to decide to be a normal person from now on!"'

The Karrarendi arts workshops have added a whole new dimension to Maria's life. Becoming part of an Aboriginal community, learning about Aboriginal culture and exploring her own creativity has been a powerful experience for Maria. 'Art is a good way of showing we've got a good ability where there is a bad disability...It makes us feel good and satisfied inside that we've done something that we never thought we could do before.'

Maria participated in the whole program of workshops which included, pottery, screen printing T-shirts, dancing, painting, music, concerts and performances of various kinds. She believes that finding a creative outlet has helped her understand and control her feelings

HOW THE PROGRAM WAS RESOURCED

The workshop program was funded through grants from the Community Cultural Development Board of the Australia Council for the Arts, the City of Port Adelaide, and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission.

A paid coordinator facilitated the weekly workshop program and workshop venues were provided at no cost by collaborating organisations. The program attracted a high level of volunteer time which included the fundraising activities.

Further Information

Contact: Sue Castledine
Tel: (08) 8449 7367



Dave in rehearsal. Photo courtesy Arts In Action

5

MALLEE MUSIC PROGRAM

A series of music workshops run over a 16 week period involving people who are survivors of mental illness. The workshops provided a social and creative focus for the participants to build new networks and friendships, and explore self expression with music as the focus.

This creative community arts project inspired 16 new songs and culminated with a series of local performances, plus one performance at a national mental health conference in Adelaide.

■ THE MODEL

The Murray Mallee Music Program was the initiative of an arts officer with the South Australian Country Arts Trust, and a community mental health nurse with the Murray Mallee Community Health Service. Following liaison with Arts In Action, a composer/musical director experienced in working in community contexts, was located to co-ordinate the project and run the workshops. The workshop program commenced in 1996. Workshops were primarily held in Murray Bridge, Pinnaroo, and Karoonda.

Bob Petchell, the artist working on the project, was sensitive to the need to structure the project to provide maximum flexibility for participants. He explains, 'The hardest thing for people with mental health problems is being able to do things that have continuity to them, certainly anything creative, because it is a matter of good days and bad days, and the bad days can be so crushing. A lot of people who came along already feel pretty down about themselves, feel that they haven't been able to achieve things. So if you set up a project that can't accommodate them it just gets added to the list of things they haven't been able to complete.'

■ BEING PREPARED FOR THE UNEXPECTED...

Bob believes that it is very important to organise each session plan, but to maintain flexibility and respond to whatever presents itself on the day. 'Creativity doesn't happen in a linear way,' says Bob, 'The spark can be totally unexpected when it comes, and that's what the facilitator has to be ready for. Yes, it's got to be planned, and have a good environment with appropriate support, they're really crucial things. But the chemistry that happens in the session is another thing. It's about creating an environment in which things can happen, without actually defining exactly what will happen.'

■ MAKING MUSIC IS REWARD ENOUGH, THE REST IS A BONUS...

While Bob acknowledges that personal benefits such as increased self esteem and social skills will flow

from his work with groups, his focus is on the arts. 'I would feel bad if I'd just entertained people,' Bob explains, 'Music is like a celebration to me, but these projects are more than that. Sometimes it's the shared moment of silence after you've sung something we've all worked on. Other times it's a feeling of euphoria over our collective achievement, or when people outside the group hear what we created. But all the time it's creating something meaningful to the group which didn't exist before — moments of truth which are beyond words. And you never know when that's going to come.'

The workshops proved to be an outlet for the creative talents of a number of participants. 'Dave essentially writes love songs, but through those love songs comes all the other stuff about his, and other people's lives, that's his medium, and I find that incredibly refreshing,' Bob reflected. 'There was one woman who had been coming along and she turned up one day with some of her poetry, which was very powerful and moving. Like a lot of other people she wrote them when she was ill, and felt her life was falling apart. To bring them along was an important and creative act for her and the group.'

■ LEARNING ABOUT OURSELVES AND OTHERS THROUGH ART...

'Things like this are important because the creative vision of people who are survivors of mental illness is

'Health patients aren't going to produce reports on the state of their health, but they are often going to write maybe ten words that just hit you between the eyes - different languages that can cross over.'

'I'd encourage anybody to write music... it's good for peace of mind and saying how you feel.'



Dave: Photo courtesy Jo Davis

Although Dave likes to keep pretty well to himself, he enjoyed the opportunity to meet with other like minded people and the exhilaration of performing. He explains, 'One of the first times I performed I was really nervous, but the last few times, I thought, 'I'm not going to let myself get nervous, because it destroys everything. You have to have an attitude that the worst thing that can happen is you make a mistake, and that's nothing to worry about. Although I'm not yet really relaxed on stage, I'm hoping I soon will be, then I'll be able to put more into it. You can't beat the feeling you get when you're singing a song that you really feel, it's a real rush.'

'I'd encourage anybody to write [music]. ... it's good for peace of mind and saying how you feel.' Dave thinks for a moment then asks, 'Did you know Henry Lawson was in and out of jail and mental institutions? I only just found that out.'

very special. That's not saying that everything people create is wonderful or special. But sometimes it touches on aspects of the whole human experience that is really important to hear. There's a certain rawness that comes out that hits you very powerfully, and you can see or hear something of yourself.

'Health Bureaucracies write booklets and huge reports on health matters, but it's not the language of the people those bureaucracies are there to service. So just on that level, creative arts projects give people the language to actually say something, and have a voice. Health patients aren't going to produce reports on the state of their health, but they are often going to write maybe ten words that just hit you between the eyes — different languages that can cross over.'

DAVE

A PERSONAL VIEW

Dave has been playing music since he was twelve. He became more serious about his music after he became ill with schizophrenia when he was in his late teens. Towards the end of 1980, Dave moved to the country town of Pinnaroo in South Australia's Mallee district. He likes the calmer and more friendly atmosphere of country life. It wasn't until he moved to Pinnaroo and met up with Costa, a talented musician, that Dave was inspired to develop his musical talents further.

Dave's mother found out about the Mallee Music Program and thought he might be interested. He went along not really expecting a great deal, but interested in anything to do with playing music. Dave remembers the good social climate within the group. 'Just getting together with others was good for me. Everybody joined in and mum came along too, Bob got her on the drums, and old Johnny, who's about sixty was playing the drums too. Everybody loved music and we all got off on it. One of the good things about it was that it was easy come, easy go, there were no demands and no hassles, we'd laugh and crack up, it was a good atmosphere.'

'Bob's got a real talent as far as getting everybody to join in, to feel really good about themselves. He never gets mad, he's got heaps of patience. He helped me to arrange my songs, write introductions to them, things like that.'

■ PERFORMANCE MEANT DISCIPLINE...

Performing with the group was a challenge for Dave, because he had to focus and maintain high levels of concentration. He believes he learned a lot through participating in the workshops, perhaps the most valuable being a new insight into group performing. 'Bob helped me keep my songs together. When I play I tend to ad-lib a lot, and when you're playing with a group you can't do that. It's more relaxing when you know where it's going. It was an experience — playing with others.'

HOW THE PROGRAM WAS RESOURCED

The project was funded by SPARC Disability Foundation and the South Australian Country Arts Trust. It was supported by staff members of the SA Country Arts Trust, the Murray Mallee Community Health Service, and Arts in Action.

The project was coordinated and the workshops facilitated by the project artist who worked in conjunction with a local advisory group. Venues were provided at no cost by collaborating health organisations.

Further Information
Contact: Arts in Action
(08) 8224 0799



'Down South' Come Out '95. Photo courtesy SYTE

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SOUTHERN YOUTH THEATRE ENSEMBLE

A disability friendly youth theatre ensemble which offers the opportunity for young people to learn about theatre, develop social and teamworking skills and to experience a climate of mutual acceptance. Dispelling negative labelling and working together to achieve common goals has been a powerful life experience for participants and a catalyst for releasing their creative energies.

■ THE MODEL

Southern Youth Theatre Ensemble or SYTE as it is usually called, is based in Noarlunga, in Adelaide's southern area. Artistic Director, John McFadyen describes it as a fully integrated youth theatre company. The area has a high population of young people and a shortage of recreational choices for young people, particularly in the arts.

SYTE offers a range of weekly workshop sessions for young people with or without a disability. The organisation works primarily with people up to age 26. However, John points out that SYTE doesn't turn people away if they are over 26 and their needs and interests fit SYTE's charter. The workshop program is structured so that participants can begin at a level that suits their abilities or level of confidence, as well as age group. John explains, 'We offer a safe environment, this is really important, matter who we're talking about, any performance activity is risky business.'

■ THEATRE AS LIFE EDUCATION...

John's experiences as a teacher and theatre worker, have convinced him that making theatre is an educational experience for all people, but especially young people. He believes it is a powerful way of learning about ourselves, other people and the society in which we live. SYTE is designed to provide these experiences and to create opportu-

nities for those who want to develop their theatre craft to professional levels.

SYTE promotes its activities through community newsletters, local advertising and word of mouth. It also receives requests from other organisations, to visit and tell people about the SYTE programs, and run a workshop session as an introductory activity.

■ IT CAN TAKE TIME TO TAP INTO POTENTIAL...

John believes that it is important to provide people with a disability with the opportunity to progress at their own rate. 'It's a step by step thing,' he says. 'A lot of the time these young people don't have the opportunity to go out and mix to learn social and communication skills. So through the theatre, drama and dance, we're increasing their awareness of themselves, their body, their vocal abilities and learning how to co-operate.'

The experiences of sharing, interacting and trying new things extends into other dimensions for some participants. In the case of young people without a disability coming into the group, John aims to help them enhance their understanding of what disability and social integration means. 'What I would want to achieve with them, is to build the ethos and skills to work in a group where some members have a disability — to see the common philosophy, be accepting,

'Through the theatre, drama and dance, we're increasing their awareness of themselves, their body, their vocal abilities and learning how to co-operate.'

'It is different from work because when you're working you've got to follow systems. At drama...you improvise and see what you can come up with.'



Kym in 'Down South' Photo courtesy SYTE

supportive and willing to take risks.' John hopes his work with SYTE counteracts to some degree, the conditioning which has been developed in regard to disability, often due to past policies of institutionalisation.

John has learned how to run a fully integrated youth theatre organisation pretty well on the job. 'I came at it from the angle of, "Here we are and I'm learning as much about you as you're learning about me!" Which is the best way to learn. I had some ideas but I was also relying on the participants and their carers to show me what they liked and could do. It was a huge learning curve.'

■ NEXT COMES PERFORMANCE...

As participants develop their theatre skills, they have the opportunity to progress into SYTE's performance troupe. Budgets permitting, SYTE mounts two large productions a year, and presents smaller performances in between. Members have the chance to learn all aspects of theatre and performance, including stage management, technical production and play writing skills.

SYTE's performances show the audiences more than their production. They show a group of young people with and without disabilities performing together as a unit, collaborating in telling a story, celebrating theatre, dance and music, and demonstrating a better future for people who live with a disability.

KYM

A PERSONAL VIEW

Kym works at Bedford Industries, a sheltered workshop program in metropolitan Adelaide. He found out about SYTE when John came to a meeting of the Bedford Players where Kym was a member. Kym remembers, 'I said, "Yeah, I wouldn't mind joining." I've been a company member since then and got elected onto the board a year after I joined.'

Along with football and ten pin bowling, theatre is an important part of Kym's life. 'I travel down by train and then bus to the Noarlunga Arts Centre, it takes me about an hour and a half to get there from Bedford Industries and someone drops me home afterwards.'

■ A CHANCE TO EXPLORE CREATIVE ABILITIES...

Since arriving at SYTE with only a small amount of theatre experience, Kym believes that he has developed his performance skills considerably. 'I've achieved a lot of skills through drama', he said, 'I've learned to speak more clearly and have come out of my shell, so to speak.' Kym thinks that SYTE is also a great outlet for his creativity. 'It is different from work because when you're working you've got to [follow systems]. At drama John tells you what to do and then you improvise and see what you can come up with.'

Kym is keen to find out as much as possible about theatre. To this end, he became a board member to learn how the management side works, and to contribute a participant's point of view to management. He also observes other workshop classes from time to time, to learn more about running workshop sessions. Although Kym has mainly participated as a performer, he is equally happy working in other areas of theatre, as long as he is part of the creative theatre environment.

Kym has ambitions to push his abilities further, he explains, 'I'd like to become an assistant director for a show, to find out how the other side works. This next play called *Sleight of Hand*, I'll be stage manager, and I'm doing voice overs for *Comedy Capers*. I wanted to learn more drama skills and that's what John has helped me with.'

HOW THE PROGRAM IS RESOURCED

SYTE is funded annually by the SA Youth Arts Board and Noarlunga Council, other income includes session fees, and project funding from various sources.

Further information
Contact: John McFadyen
Tel (08) 8384 6744

CHEAP AND EFFECTIVE THINGS TO DO

- Be an active supporter of these activities. Find out what community based arts programs already exist in your locality or area of specialisation. The arts organisations listed in this publication can provide you with relevant details. Many local councils also run community based arts programs.
- Get a copy of your local government council's disability action plan and see if there are any new initiatives for improving access for people with a disability to arts and cultural activities.
- Network information about disability friendly arts programs to others in community health, disability or community services professions.
- Develop arts contacts that you can use or refer others to. Subscribe to relevant arts newsletters or publications and recommend them to others.
- Be flexible and inventive in providing access for people with a disability to existing programs, identify the barriers and then find the solutions.
- Lobby to restructure existing programs that could effectively incorporate arts workshops.
- Be an agent for change. Initiate new models of working that incorporate the arts and creative expression into community, health and disability services.

GETTING PAST THE BLOCKS

1 COST

'There's not enough money for things we are already doing.'

Same budget different approach: Work within existing budgets, can you include an arts aspect into existing activities?

Small can be beautiful: Start modestly, set up a trial project to test the benefits and effectiveness of a community arts project.

Seek matching funds: Use existing funds to attract some matching or complementary funds from arts grants programs or other allied organisations.

Share resources: Collaborate with allied organisations and share resources.

2 TIME AND ENERGY

'Everyone is overworked and stressed out, we can't do any more.'

Not more, but different: Community arts projects can offer a stimulating and rewarding alternative method for achieving usual work goals while refreshing jaded people.

Attract volunteers: Community arts projects can inspire volunteers to get involved thus providing some relief for paid staff.

Attract fresh resources: Funding for community based arts projects can provide extra resources and ease workload pressures.

Collaborate with others: Community arts projects can inspire several organisations to collaborate and share workloads.

3 TOO HARD

'No-one knows how to do it.'

Keep it simple: Start with a modest idea, simple ideas are often just as effective as complex ones.

Use a resource organisation: Ring a community arts resource organisation listed in the following pages and ask for help.

Learn from an expert: Secure a small budget allocation to contract an experienced arts worker who will work with you to develop a project and attract funding.

Employ an expert: Target funding to employ an experienced arts worker to run the project.

4 NO SUPPORT FOR CHANGE

'The decision makers won't support these activities.'

Take a practical approach: Demonstrate the relevant links between how the project will work to deliver other health goals and suggest a practical resourcing plan.

Try an educational strategy: Invite an arts worker experienced in this type of work to make a short presentation at an appropriate meeting.

Pictures can speak louder than words: Use good booklets or videos about relevant and successful community arts projects to help communicate your ideas.

Safety in numbers: Don't underestimate the value of community or client support in this area, canvass their views and levels of enthusiasm.

ADVICE ABOUT COMMUNITY
BASED FUNDINGCOMMUNITY BASED ARTS FUNDING OPERATES
ON TWO KEY PRINCIPLES

- That the project is relevant to the participating community, and aims to support and develop the creative expression of that community.
- That there is a shared approach to funding or resourcing from other major stakeholders in the project's goals.

FOUR THINGS TO REMEMBER

1 CLARIFY THE
IDEA FIRST

There is no simple recipe for obtaining community based arts funding. For example, there are youth arts funding programs, regional arts, Aboriginal arts, and community cultural development funds. Deciding which ones to approach will depend on what you want to do. A successful funding strategy will start with being clear about what you want to achieve. If you need help in clarifying your ideas, contact one of the Community Arts Networks or Arts and Disability organisations listed below. They can discuss your ideas with you and offer advice or referrals.

2 MATCH THE IDEA TO THE
FUNDING SOURCE

The next step is to match your idea to the most appropriate funding program. You will obtain the best advice in this regard from the resource organisations listed below, who will refer you to the relevant program officer for that fund. The State and Federal arts funding agencies can provide you with booklets which outline their current funding programs and closing dates. Refer to the contact details below.

3 CHOOSE A PARTNER-
SHIP APPROACH

Most community based arts projects or programs are resourced by a combination approach. For example, a mixture of funding and in-kind support from a combination of sources. This could be some arts or local government funding plus in-kind support from health or disability organisations. A collaborative approach means all the partners stand to gain from a shared modest investment.

4 SUCCESS TAKES TIME

Give yourself plenty of time to explore possibilities and find the right pathway to a quality outcome. Nothing succeeds like success. If you can demonstrate the value of this work to all the stakeholders, they will be more likely to invest in the next initiative. Many projects take between six and nine months to develop and attract resources.



Photo courtesy Julia Farr Centre

SOME USEFUL
RESOURCESAvailable from the
Community Arts Network SA

From Idea To Application: a practical guide to arts project development, (1996) Community Arts Network SA

Handy Hints Sheet: A Seven Step Approach To Project Concept Development, (1996) Community Arts Network SA

Handy Hints Sheet: How to Look For Funding and Project Resources, (1996) Community Arts Network SA

Handy Hints Sheet: Legal and Industrial Issues in Project Management, (1996) Community Arts Network SA

Handy Hints Sheet: Preparing Funding Applications, (1996) Community Arts Network SA

Healthy Arts, a guide to the role of the arts in health care, (1993) Arts Access Victoria.

The Australian Directory of Philanthropy, (1993) Thorpe, in association with the Australian Association of Philanthropy

**DISABILITY IN THE ARTS,
DISADVANTAGE IN THE
ARTS, AUSTRALIA
(DADAA) Network**

DADAA National Coordinator

Arts Access, Vic
Tel (03) 9699 8299
Fax (03) 9699 8868

DADAA, SA, Arts In Action

Tel (08) 8224 0799
Fax (08) 8224 0709

DADAA, QLD, Access Arts

Tel (07) 3260 6306
Fax (07) 3260 7324

DADAA, NSW, Accessible Arts

Tel (02) 555 1022
Fax (02) 818 4469

DADAA, NT, Browns Mart

Tel (089) 81 5522
Fax (089) 41 3222

DADAA, TAS

Community Arts Network
Tel (002) 233 828
Fax (002) 240 686

DADAA, WA, Rock Bay Inc

Tel (09) 384 1855
Fax (09) 383 1230



**COMMUNITY ARTS
NETWORKS**

Community Arts Network, SA

Tel (08) 8232 4343
Country free call 1800 245 678
Fax (08) 8232 4336

Community Arts Network, Qld

Tel (07) 3846 1218
Fax (07) 3846 2056

Community Arts Network, WA

Tel (09) 328 2022
Fax (09) 227 7897

Community Arts Network, TAS

Tel (002) 233 828
Fax (002) 240 686

**Community Arts Association,
NSW**

Tel (02) 821 2210
Fax (02) 821 3460

**STATE AND TERRITORY
ARTS FUNDING
AUTHORITIES**

ArtSA

Tel (08) 8207 7100
Fax (08) 8207 7159

NSW Ministry for the Arts

Tel (02) 228 5533
Fax (02) 228 4722

Arts Victoria

Tel (03) 9684 8888
Fax (03) 9686 6186

Arts Queensland

Tel (07) 3224 4896
Fax (07) 3224 4077

Arts Tasmania

Tel (002) 337 308
Fax (002) 236 414

**NT Office of the Arts
& Cultural Affairs**

Tel (089) 997 375
Fax (089) 996 386

**Arts & Cultural Development
Unit (ACT)**

Tel (06) 207 2384
Fax (06) 207 2386

**FEDERAL ARTS FUNDING
AUTHORITY**

Australia Council for the Arts

Tel (02) 9950 9000
Toll Free (1800) 226 912
Fax (02) 9950 9111



DISABILITY INFORMATION SERVICES

South Australia

Disability Information & Resource Centre (DIRC)

Tel (08) 8223 7522
Country free call 1800 182 179
Fax (08) 8 223 5082

Tasmania

Aged and Disability Care Information Service

Tel (03) 6234 7448
Country free call 1800 806 656
Fax (03) 6234 7449

Victoria

Disability Resources Centre

Tel (03) 9428 8911
Fax (03) 9428 9482
Disabled Persons Information Bureau
Tel (03) 9616 7704
Fax (03) 9616 8142

Western Australia

People With Disabilities (WA) Inc

Tel (09) 386 6477
Country free call 1800 193 331
Fax (09) 386 6705

Canberra ACT

Community Information and Referral Service of ACT

Tel (06) 257 1687
Fax (06) 248 0932

New South Wales

People with Disabilities

Tel (02) 9319 6622
Fax (02) 931 81372

Disability Information & Referral Centre

Tel (02) 9369 3594
Fax (02) 9369 3512

Queensland

DIAL, Office of Disability

Tel (07) 3224 8444
Country free call 1800 177 120
Fax (07) 3224 8037





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