



Impact Report 2023



OVERVIEW



We are a registered charity, working with individuals (16+) with learning disabilities, autism and mental health barriers. We focus on an individual's strengths and aspirations, then work with them to realise their potential, leading to self-worth and independence. We do this through: creative workshops, mentoring, skill development programs, meaningful volunteering roles and jobs, and social events.

In this report:

1. Our aims and ethos
2. Why we do what we do
3. Our services
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5. Thoughts from our our clients and team
6. Our journey so far



OUR AIMS



1. We believe in equality for all. We aim to help individuals with additional needs, and who feel marginalised, to feel more empowered and have increased self-worth.

2. We help individuals with additional needs develop growth mindsets. We use a mixture of methods that bring about an inner resilience, challenging people's perceptions of themselves and their own capabilities of shaping their world.



3. We aim to create social change by demonstrating that everyone has strengths and skills to offer their world. We all have a calling and a purpose we can serve that provides self-fulfilment.



4. We aim to create environmentally sustainable communities through community partnership, creative waste reduction methods and educating people about their role in the world.



We measure success by:

Improved mental wellbeing including confidence, self-esteem and self-respect

Improved community connections, support networks and healthy relationships

Individuals making more positive life choices, including using a service consistently

Individuals learning new skills and feeling like they have a purpose

Individuals attending permanent volunteering, and working towards employment (If this is their goal)

OUR ETHOS



Creativity

We believe creativity engages the mind, enables broader thinking and problem solving, and connects us to hidden parts of ourselves

Empowerment

We 'work with', not 'do for'. We support individuals to develop confidence to lead the life they want to lead. We do this through mutual respect, and by encouraging individuals to take ownership of their own lives

Curiosity

We advocate progress not perfection, encouraging individuals to explore and learn, and to always give something a go

Community

True change happens when the community and its members take action and responsibility as a collective. It is the responsibility of all of us to build our community

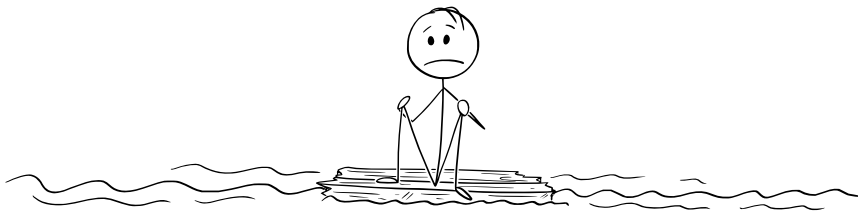
Sustainability

Everything we do is in the aim to create social, economic and environmental sustainability. We do this through practical environmental activities, support, and engagement with our community

WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO

UPPERTUNITY CAME TO BE FROM TWO FOUNDERS WHO FELT THAT THERE WERE NOT ENOUGH SERVICES TO HELP INDIVIDUALS WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS AND MENTAL HEALTH BARRIERS FEEL PART OF THEIR COMMUNITY AND DEVELOP THEIR SKILLS

We fill a gap in our community that is otherwise unmet despite a demonstrated need for more community minded and skill building opportunities for adults who are at risk of social isolation. Support for young people and adults with learning disability is critically needed within Dundee in particular, as the Dundee Health and Social Care Partnership reported that Dundee has the highest proportion of adults with learning disabilities in Scotland (9.5 per 1000, 2017). Yet there are minimal services for adults and young people within this population to maintain community connections. It is also stated that two thirds of the population with learning disabilities live in the most deprived areas of the city. Through the delivery of our services, we support wellbeing, connections, training, development, and employment in our community.



The greatest challenge the people we work with face is isolation. Mencap have identified that 1 in 4 people with learning disabilities spend less than one hour outside their home each day. Mencap also identified that 65% of people with a learning disability want to work, but only 7% have a job. 93% of those interviewed by the Foundation for People with Learning disabilities in 2012 said they felt lonely and isolated. Through this, we are reducing stigma as well as social isolation and empowering individuals to live lives that are rich in love, value and potential. Stigma and lack of community support contribute to the statistics outlined in The Keys to Life, which state that the life expectancy of people with a learning disability is 20 years earlier than the general population. Life expectancy in Dundee is 77 years, but for people with a learning disability this is approximately 57 years. On a local level, Dundee has the highest proportion of adults with learning disabilities in Scotland (9.5 per 1000, 2017).

Poor health can result from social isolation and deprivation. Many people with learning disabilities have experienced lifelong exclusion resulting from lack of choice and opportunity as well as experiencing significant barriers to access. People with learning disabilities, autism and mental health barriers are more likely to be exposed to common causes of poor health such as poverty, poor housing, and lack of employment, social isolation and discrimination. Sensitivity, phobias, excessive worry and managing moods make it harder for these individuals to go out. This is made more difficult when there is a lack of opportunities or there are barriers to access opportunities. Barriers include physical access, use of language, suitable activities or an inclusive space. Research further shows social isolation increases mortality risk by 29% (Holt-Lunstad et al, 2015). We can minimise these risks by offering opportunities to build relationships and self-confidence in environments, like Uppertunity, where they are encouraged to thrive

Aiden and McCarthy's (2014) report for SCOPE demonstrates that in the UK: two thirds (67%) of the British public feel uncomfortable talking to disabled people; over a third (36%) of people tend to think of disabled people as not as productive as everyone else; over four fifths (85%) of the British public believe that disabled people face prejudice; a quarter (24%) of disabled people have experienced attitudes or behaviours where other people expected less of them because of their disability; and one fifth (21%) of 18 – 34 years old admit that they have actually avoided talking to a disabled person because they weren't sure how to communicate with them. It is such prejudice that results in oppression of people with learning disabilities and creates segregation.

Aiden and McCarthy (2014) argue that greater inclusion in mainstream activity and more opportunities for people with disabilities and those without disabilities to interact is the way to challenge such prejudice and fear. This is why we wanted public facing spaces, to connect different communities.



We believe, and experience first-hand, in the power of creativity. Not only can art be used to challenge misconceptions and support the wellbeing of the wider community, but it can be used to support individual wellbeing, which ultimately impacts the wider community. Participation in creativity helps to develop new friendships, promotes resourceful thinking, curiosity and problem solving, and reduces stress and anxiety.

This is key in the clientele we work with, particularly because they are more likely to experience isolation and loneliness. We want to change this and offer opportunities to individuals facing barriers that are not normally available.



When we think about our health and wellbeing, we naturally relate it to a good diet and exercise because of the proven long-term benefits. However, a report from the National Alliance for Arts, Health and Wellbeing (APPG) suggests that having a creative hobby can benefit our mental and emotional health too. Research suggests that art can keep us well, aid recovery and support people to live longer and healthier lives whilst having fun along the way. People with learning disabilities and/or autism can experience high amounts of anxiety daily.

By incorporating art and creativity into people's lives, we can provide opportunities to express, be engaged in what they are doing and give a meaningful focus. Research has also shown that participation in creativity helps to develop new friendships, learning new skills, promotes resourceful thinking, curiosity and problem solving, and reduces stress and anxiety (Gillam, 2012).



OUR SERVICES

Weekly Warriors Programme

A programme of therapeutic activities that take place each week at our main base. This programme is aimed at individuals with additional needs who want to socialise and develop positive wellbeing. Activities include art, sewing, active groups and social groups. There are charges for these groups



UppSkills Programme

A skill focused programme aimed at individuals facing some form of barrier who wish to learn new skills and develop themselves. Activities include planning events and markets, volunteering at events, baking, cooking, sewing, upcycling. There is no charge for this programme



Serendipities Mini Café at The Circle

We offer lunches to our members at Uppertunity at Dudhope Castle, as well as all the tenants and other service users of the Castle. Our members and volunteers help bake and serve the food. We also offer barista coffee and teas. More info here: uppertunity.org.uk/lunch-menu-1



Serendipities Catering

We offer catering for small and large events, as well as take part in markets. Our members and volunteers are part of prepping, making and serving the food, to learn skills. More info can be found here: serendipities.co.uk



Volunteering

We offer a range of volunteering opportunities to help individuals develop skills and confidence, while supporting us to achieve our mission aims. These suit different abilities, and also provide opportunities to bring the community together.



Growing Places

Our community-based green project. This provides an opportunity for people from all backgrounds to gain volunteering experience, learn gardening skills, give back to the environment, learn practical skills and socialise. There is no charge for this programme



The Elephant Wellbeing Space

We offer a safe therapeutic space for individuals with additional needs and anyone facing challenges. This is supported by a qualified Art Therapist. A range of different techniques are used, with the aim to support overall wellbeing. There is no charge for this service, but donations of your choice are appreciated.



THE DIFFERENCE WE MAKE: IN A NUTSHELL

We work with 50 individuals on a weekly basis, using our therapeutic based workshops (12 different workshops per week), and a further 25 volunteers on a weekly basis using our skill based activities (12 different workshops per week)

We offer 7 different volunteering opportunities, and receive on average 60 volunteer hours on a weekly basis

We ran a successful café, Serendipities, for 4 years (Closing in August 2023), where we supported over 50 volunteers, created 25 paid jobs, and offered a safe space for the community. We also ran an upcycle shop for a year and half (ReBoutique), closing in August 2023, supporting over 30 volunteers, created 8 jobs, and supported local creatives, and met so many wonderful people.

Since starting in September 2015, we have provided 49 paid job opportunities, as well as 48 placement (Through universities, schools, colleges and career programmes)

Since September 2015, we have received over 18 000 volunteer hours from volunteer members, volunteer facilitators and community volunteers for events. This equates to over £196 000 if paid the living wage, or 10 full time staff members

We help fight climate change by absorbing CO₂. We use items that would otherwise be thrown away such as fabric, old duvets, furniture, clothes, crafts, paint and much more. We also take food that would otherwise be thrown and turn it into meals, and use it in our member lunch groups. Since September 2019, we have prevented 15000kg of food going to landfill (Approx 49 000kg of CO₂, equivalent to 11 petrol cars running for 1 year)

We have supported 10 individuals with additional needs to achieve the Grow and Learn Award, a horticulture award from the Royal Caledonian Horticulture Society.

Our clients report an increase in their confidence, independence, social circle and skill level.

Carer/family members have reported that their relationships with their cared for person has improved since the person started using our services.

Clients have reported that they now attend other services in their community after starting with Uppertunity. Clients, volunteers and staff have all reported that they have learnt new skills, developed confidence and a sense of purpose since starting with us

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70% of paid staff at Uppertunity have barriers to employment, and many started as volunteers, acting as role models and mentors to attendees

Staff have reported that they are more involved in their community since having stable employment, and feel they have more of a purpose.

Through the delivery of our programmes, we support wellbeing, connections, training, development, and employment in our community by providing jobs. Our staff and volunteers are a part of our mission to reduce social isolation and empower individuals to a life of self-determination and growth.

OUR MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS:

HOW WE HELP THE PEOPLE WHO USE OUR SERVICE



Personal and skill development:

Within all our services, we promote health and well-being, responsibility, creativity, fun and self belief. Our clients benefit from increased confidence, creativity, motivation, skills and a sense of achievement as well as feel more engaged with their community and society. Our service has been successful and continues to grow, with a long waiting list from individuals. Our priorities align well with the outlined actions in Recovering Our Connections (2023) and are reflected in our values and continued commitment to safe and sustainable service delivery in a post-pandemic society. They are additionally in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals as well as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Person with Disabilities.

- We work a person-centred manner, providing a range of tools and opportunities for developing good mental and physical wellbeing, as well as resilience. We offer support that helps reduce isolation and loneliness.
- We develop and build transferable life skills in our clients, and empower individuals who are underestimated. By being empowered, they can then give back to their own community.
- We create a safe and nurturing environment, where individuals feel comfortable to test themselves and explore their talent and capabilities. This helps give purpose and a sense of belonging.
- We provide activities that help reduce stress, anxiety and depression, giving a sense of calm, productivity and self-awareness. During lockdown, we found that being isolated and without a routine was having a negative impact on their mental and physical health, with carers and families also suffering as a result. Within weeks of us restarting some groups and volunteering, the wellbeing of the individuals attending increased greatly.
- We help develop confidence and self-esteem, developing skills to overcome previous and future hurdles in life.
- We reduce social isolation by providing safe and consistent opportunities to meet new people, form relationships and nurture connections.
- We provide opportunities that challenge misconceptions on people with additional needs.
- Each of our therapeutic endeavours furthers the opportunities our members have to connect with others, build on those connections and overcome barriers from stigma, which directly aligns with the priorities of A Connected Scotland strategy, along with the values it outlines of kindness, dignity and compassion. We do this through involvement, engagement and unconditional positive regard.
- We supported ten individuals took part in a formal garden qualification (Grow and Learn), supported by us. Many of these individuals have never achieved a formal qualification. This boosted their confidence while developing transferable skills. We also offer a personalised journal to each individual joining, which we use in our regular check ins. This journal involves reflective work and goal setting.



Wellbeing is key throughout our services for our clients, volunteers, staff and the community:

We have a check in colour wheel at our main base, with a printed name of all members, volunteers and staff. This helps to provide a safe space, and an opportunity for the team to check in

Our manager, a qualified art therapist, provides regular mentoring to the staff. We also have team days to help with bonding. We offer counselling (From an external qualified therapist) for staff.

We also have volunteer celebration days, as well as check in regularly with our volunteers.

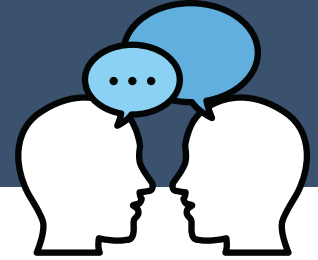
Our staff are also mental health first aid trained.

We do regular wellbeing check-ins with our members and volunteers. Uppertunity wellbeing checks are an organic and on-site service facilitated during regularly scheduled activities by our trained staff members.

All staff are PVG checked and complete safe guarding training.

We also have gold conversation cards near our check-in wheel that clients can use if they need or would like additional wellbeing support





Listening, hearing and responding:

We take an ecological view to participation; we work to the understanding that every organism affects its environment and is affected by said environment in equal measure. We have always considered involving members a lead priority. Our members attend because they choose too, not because we are commissioned to deliver services.

The activities that we deliver have been developed by involving members in decision making. The range of activities is because of their ideation, and success of said activities is because of their willingness to participate in shaping the future. Our clients guide what groups we run. We only start new groups and run events on the suggestions of our clients.

We regularly ask our client's feedback and opinions. We do this informally, such as during groups and through catch-ups, as well as formally through questionnaires. For example, when planning the activities for workshops, we ask our clients what activities they would like and then plan around this. We also share with clients what resources we have available, helping them to think around this, helping to empower and develop critical thinking.

Some examples of how we listen, respond and involve our clients:

Some of our clients wanted a bake off. We held 2, and from this, we found out that many individuals wanted to learn more about the hospitality industry. From this, Serendipities was born.

Some clients voiced that they wanted to sell some of their artwork. We hosted craft fairs, as well as set up a space in our café to sell it.

Various clients suggested doing a performance. A group then formed their own written play, made the props, planned an event and hosted it for family, friends, care managers and fellow support organisations. We have since hosted 4 public performances.

Many of our clients, and their carers, said they have never received a formal qualification and it was something they wanted to achieve. We looked at different options and offered these in a discussion with our clients. It was then agreed that 10 individuals would take part in a formal garden qualification (Grow and Learn).

Some of our clients wanted to go away on a trip with friends as they have never experienced this before. We looked for local venues that were wheelchair inclusive. These were then presented to the clients, and one was picked. The clients were then involved in planning activities that would help raise funds. We've had 2 trips away.

OUR WIDER COMMUNITY: HOW WE BENEFIT AND ENRICH OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY

The community is at the heart of what we do and we work with the needs of the community. We host regular events, bringing the community together and reducing isolation in vulnerable groups. This helps to increase understanding and remove negative stigma.



Partnership working:

Uppertunity works in partnership with other organisations including Project Scotland and Barnardo's where we provide work placements for individuals who require skill development before taking on paid work role. We are able to provide that safe space. Due to Covid-19, the number of opportunities has greatly diminished however, with referrals to us increasing for both participants and volunteers. Our organisations tag line is creating opportunities, building communities. We believe in working in partnership with other organisations, which will not only help the sustainability of Uppertunity and the sustainability of the other organisations, but also aid the personal development of our clients/volunteers and increase inclusion.

Other relationships we have with the community, including formal and informal, are: Career Ready, Abertay University, Dundee University, Dundee City Council, Cornerstone, Scottish Autism, Enable, Inclusion Group, Barnardo's, Dundee Carers Centre, and various local creative organisations including. We are also involved in various city wide networks to share resources and skills including Dundee Food Poverty Network, Dundee Growing Network, and Dundee Climate Action Network.

Support for our clients and their wider support network:

The Covid-19 pandemic highlighted to us the importance of our service and the importance of being engaged in your community. During lockdown, we stayed in contact with our clients and carers. We found that being isolated and without a routine was having a negative impact on their mental and physical health, with carers and families also suffering because of it. When we restarted our services, we found that we had to start from the beginning again with building skills and overcoming anxiety. After a few weeks, the wellbeing of the individuals attending went up. The carers said that their moods at home improved as well. We see first-hand how isolation and anxiety can have a long-term detrimental effect on not only the community, but specifically vulnerable groups.

OUR TEAM:

HOW WE TREAT AND BENEFIT OUR PAID STAFF

All staff, whether paid or unpaid, are part of Uppertunity and its development. At Uppertunity, we do not believe in hierarchies. We are person centered, placing an emphasis on mutual respect and trust.



We provide placements and employment opportunities to individuals who are ready for work but are facing barriers, such as low or no qualifications, mental health barriers etc. Over 70% of our staff have employment barriers. The majority of our staff started off attending as volunteers from employability skill development placements. We provide regular mentoring to our staff, where we support with personal and career development.

At Uppertunity, we ensure all individuals are treated fairly and have access to the same opportunities, regardless of their background, characteristics, or identities. Our focus is on creating a workplace that values and respects the unique backgrounds, experiences, and identities of all employees. We ensure equal pay and compensation, and do not have zero hour contracts. We encourage work-life balance by offering flexible working arrangements wherever possible, such as parental leave options. Staff work 4 days per week, 5 days max if doing overtime. We ensure employee involvement and participation through regular team meetings, and regular mentoring sessions. We encourage open communication and create opportunities for employees to provide feedback, share ideas, and contribute to the organisation's goals. We are transparent, and update staff on a regular basis. We provide safe and healthy work environments. We receive support from an external H&S and HR advisor to ensure we are providing safe working environments.



Uppertunity is managed by two co-managers. We decided to opt for a co-managing route as we aim to create an environment that reduces hierarchies as far as possible. The co-manager and founder of Uppertunity is a qualified art psychotherapist, and has over 12 years' experience of working within the community. The other co-manager has over 5 years' experience working in the community and managing projects. Our board is made up of 7 individuals who all have experience supporting and developing members in their community in different ways. Majority of our staff members have lived experience in care, arts and mental health.

Our chair has over 30 years' experience working within the community, setting up and running businesses, and has lived experience of family members with additional needs. The next most experienced board member has over 30 years' experience working with individuals with additional needs, helped set up Barnardo's Growing Up project, is currently working in the Carers Centre, and has a range of network contacts. Another board member has over 15 years' experience setting up and running social enterprises, with network contacts. The other three board members have experience mentoring and providing career development for individuals facing barriers.

OUR ENVIRONMENT:

HOW WE PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT AND PROMOTE SUSTAINABILITY

We are carbon footprint conscious. We follow a non-violent approach, therefore providing alternative positive ways of thinking. We build confidence in individuals to make a change through a supportive and non-judgmental environment.



We have our own gardens where we maintain green spaces fruit trees, pollinator friendly plants and herbs. This provides an opportunity for our members to get in touch with nature and develop skills in plant care, planning and teamwork. We also encourage birds and insects to our garden to help biodiversity. We have sections of our gardens separated for rewilding with long grass, bug houses, rocks and wildflowers.



We follow a circular economy model, wherein waste is minimised as much as possible and all resources are reused to the best of their ability. We upcycle old furniture, clothes and other items such as jewellery and candle wax into new items. This helps to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill and provides an opportunity for people to learn new skills and learn about the impact of waste, and how to prevent it.

We work with FareShare, and receive food that would otherwise go to waste. We then use this food in our cooking skills groups, lunch groups and mini café.

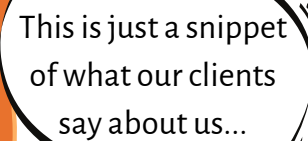


Our catering service also aims to be green by offering reusable items such as plates, cups etc, and only offering vegan food to combat the pollution and harm associated with the farming industry.



We help prevent waste, and teach skills and share knowledge on the impact of waste and single use.

THOUGHTS FROM OUR MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS:



This is just a snippet of what our clients say about us...

"I am learning new skills. I am very proud of what I make and achieve"

"I love the fun & laughter at the groups. I enjoy interacting with everyone"

"I've become more capable and I love helping with everything"

"I love meeting my friends. I have a better social life"

"I love spending time with different people and learning new things"

"I like that I make stuff and can give it to other people"

"I like all the different classes to choose from. I like all the different activities"

"I get a lot of support at Uppertunity"

"Uppertunity has changed my life. It has given me so many opportunities"

"It is a happy place to be learning new things"

"I keep coming back because I get to try new things"

"Uppertunity is a good experience, meeting new people and learning new things"

"I would feel sad and confused if Uppertunity didn't exist"

We support and work with over 50 clients on a weekly basis.

"I enjoy coming here. It's a friendly place and very fun"

"I enjoy completing projects and finishing stuff I've started"

"I love Uppertunity as I get to be creative"

"Without Uppertunity, we wouldn't learn something new"

"I get used to meeting other people. I've learnt to be proud of myself"

Uppertunity changed my life. It saved me."

PLACEMENT FEEDBACK

"When I was first told about my summer placement, I was like I am going to end up somewhere so boring and I am not going to enjoy it, but actually I ended up really enjoying my placement. Before my internship I wasn't really confident and was really quiet but with my placement I have developed more and more. I have had to talk to people and help people and just put myself out there and also learned problem solving as not everything goes to plan and had to work round things.

My confidence has grown a lot since this time last year and communication is slowly getting there too and I think this will help with my transition to either work, college or uni after school. The internship put me out of my comfort zone and helped me over my fear of public speaking and boosted my confidence. This experience has helped me to realise that I would like to do something involving art and helping people in the future."



CASE STUDY FEEDBACK

"With all of what S has achieved with Uppertunity it is hard to predict how far they can go in 5 years as they have took quite a few strides on. The service provider is nice but S didn't have a focus and would often just be walking about. Uppertunity has given S a real big purpose during the week which is great. S looks forward to it, which is good for S's mental health, S is busy and learning. I mean I would never have imagined S at an Allotment ever, but D (Founder) just has a magic touch to encourage them to do things that they would never imagine doing. Even the sewing I would never have imagined that S would be using it, we had sewing machines but we had to give them away. Now she is sewing. I would never have dreamt that. So it's hard to tell you future hopes as she has come really far. And that is still to emerge as there is still a lot more to go."



THOUGHTS FROM STAFF

How has working with Uppertunity impacted you?

"I feel I have a purpose"

"I feel part of a team"

"Uppertunity has boosted my confidence"

"Uppertunity has made a big impact on how I communicate towards other both inside and outside of work"

"I am engaging more with my community (i.e. local holidays. museums etc)"

"I'm thinking bigger and planning my future. Before, it wasn't something I thought about"

"I've come out of my comfort zone and am trying new things"

"Uppertunity has given me a start"

What have you learned from working here?

"I have learnt so many new creative skills such as woodwork, upcycling, sewing etc"

"I have learnt how to approach things with confidence"

"That I can help people and make them feel good about themselves"

"That I am able to support others to be the best they can be"

"I have learnt that I have a lot to offer"

"I have learnt that a job can be fun and enjoyable"

Where do you see the most benefit from our work?

"That our members know we are a safe space and they are a priority"

"The positive vibes we are feeding back to customers and volunteers, and that we are a safe and inclusive space"

"The life skills we are teaching that can be used throughout life"

"That members know and feel that they are important"

OUR JOURNEY SO FAR

2015

Uppertunity was set up on the 15th of September 2015 as a Community Interest Company by our two founders, Danielle and Darryl. In October 2015, the first therapeutic art group, Scribbles, was set up! This was based in Douglas Community Centre. We started this with no funds, just an idea, passion and a 'let's go for it' attitude. Our numbers grew over the year, and we started to make connections with the wider community.

2016

We held our very first social event, Oor Burns Lunch, in January of 2016. Our numbers grew, and we started our second art group, Doodles, at the Ardler Community Centre. We spent the first year making connections and finding out what was needed in the community. Danielle ran the groups for the first year and a half, unpaid, within Dundee based community centres, travelling with all the materials in her car. We started receiving volunteers from January 2016.

2017

We started exploring different types of art, and started a textiles based art group, Totally Stitched, at Menzieshill Community Centre in March 2017. We also started Growing Places, our garden project, having been given a garden plot at Tayview Community Gardens in March. 2017 was also a big year for us, as we received funding to begin to pay Danielle as well as pay for a permanent space. We moved into our first permanent premises in July, at the Circle. This meant we could offer more workshops, and support more individuals, as well as run our skills development programme, Daring for Development Program. This was a 12 week programme that involved cooking, socialising, goal setting and other life skill based workshops. We ran this programme for 3 blocks, supporting 12 individuals. We then integrated these workshops into our weekly timetable as we found that more consistent support has more impact. We also created a larger garden space at The Circle. We also held our first arts and crafts fair in December.

OUR JOURNEY SO FAR

2018

In 2018, we received funding to employ our second paid staff member, helping us to offer more workshops and events. In February 2018 we held our Two's Company event, giving a chance for individuals to socialise. We also held a Bake Off in June, and our first camping trip to Fife with some of our members in September. We held more events including craft fairs, Oor Burns, games nights and more. To ensure we were delivering the right services, we held 'have your say' events in 2018, which was open to all people with a learning disability or additional support need, and was largely attended by people with a wide spectrum of support needs. We also undertook stakeholders interviews with different groups of stakeholders.

2019

2019 was another exciting year for us, we opened our café, Serendipities, at 12 Union Street! We ran various evening workshops here for the public, and supported various local artists through our busker nights and pop up gallery. We received funding to employ more staff for Uppertunity's base, and employed new staff for the café. We launched our Energising the Everyday training program, which is our hospitality based skills programme. We held our first inclusive trip away for 2 nights in a cottage, where members in wheelchairs could join as well. We also started our catering services at the start of the year, testing the waters.

2020

The year many of us remember, the year covid happened. This year we really learnt the importance and value of human connections, and the wider impact of isolation. We received funding to launch online activities, supporting our members and the community through social distancing. Union Street, where our café was located, became pedestrianised, allowing us to have outdoor seating and host street events. We launched UppMakes, our upcycling and refurbishing project to teach our members new skills and help tackle waste.

OUR JOURNEY SO FAR

2021

We received funding from Community Job Scotland and the Kickstart Government scheme to employ 6 additional staff members, offering more supported employment opportunities for our volunteers and the wider community. We gained access to additional space at The Circle, allowing us to offer drama based activities, as well as a dedicated sewing room and woodworking space. We started a new set of groups called Freestyle, which is not dedicated to one specific art form. In November, Unique Beats performed their first play at our end of year celebration! We also had our first wedding catering order!

2022

At the start of 2022 we made some major developments. We moved with The Circle from Staffa Place to Dudhope Castle, and took our garden with us! We also opened a second shop in March, ReBoutique, an upcycle shop on Castle Street in Dundee. This was a space to offer an alternative sustainable shopping opportunity, use up waste, and offer creative volunteering and job roles. We began renewing the castle gardens, and running some of our workshops in the outdoors. We performed our second play, "The Greatest Show", and Unique Beats began production of a long-form film featuring Gio the alien!

2023

2023 was another busy year. Serendipities was mentioned in National Geographic's places to eat in Dundee. In June we took part in Big Garden Open Day, working with Art Night to get people involved in Dundee's Gardens. To celebrate our progress we held an open-to-all pot luck garden party in partnership with Fighting for Fairness! This included the showing of Unique Beats first short film.

We converted to a charity, and sadly had to close Serendipities and ReBoutique in August due to rising costs.

We continue to work towards our mission from our Dudhope Castle base, providing catering and smaller upcycling services in-house. We have also set up a new service for those who wish to gain new skills, called UppSkills!

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE INVOLVED WITH UPPERTUNITY AS A CLIENT,
VOLUNTEER, FUNDER OR DIRECTOR, PLEASE GET IN TOUCH. WE ARE ONLY ABLE
TO ACHIEVE WHAT WE DO WITH THE COLLECTIVE SUPPORT OF OTHERS.



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