



# Annual Report



JUNE 2018- JULY 2019

# The Chair's Report

Uppertunity will turn 4 years old on the 15th of September 2019 and I could not be more proud of how it has grown. Something I pride myself in is that at Uppertunity, we not only listen to our members, we respond. We don't grow for the sake of growing, we grow to benefit the community, the environment and our members. There is method in all of our awesome beautiful madness.

We are by no means the best in our field or even perfect, that is not what we want to be. What we are is a beacon of support and a light of shining inspiration. We give our all and we are genuine in our support. We believe everyone has something amazing to offer this world, sometimes we just need a helping hand to make that something shine bright. We push our members and the community, never underestimating the capability of anyone.

I have met so many beautiful people on this journey, including clients, staff, volunteers, organisations and members of the community. Some have stayed with us for a long while, some have stayed for a short while and many are still with us. No matter how long or short paths join for, inspiration can happen in seconds. So, encounters with others should never be undervalued. I am very proud to be part of and have been part of the journey of so many amazing people. I feel together, we have grown and made this world an even more beautiful place.

- Danielle Gaffney du Plooy  
Manager and Founder

“  
**SO MANY OF OUR  
DREAMS AT FIRST SEEM  
IMPOSSIBLE, THEN THEY  
SEEM IMPROBABLE,  
AND THEN, WHEN WE  
SUMMON THE WILL,  
THEY SOON BECOME  
INEVITABLE.**

CHRISTOPHER REEVE

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# Our History

Uppertunity is a social enterprise based in Dundee working with adults (15 years and over) with additional needs, learning disabilities, autism and mental health barriers, providing personal development, confidence building and social inclusive activities. We focus on an individual's strengths and aspirations, working with them to realise their potential, leading to self-worth and independence. We do this by offering weekly community groups, meaningful volunteer roles, skill programmes, counselling and social events. Magic is happening here at all hours.

Uppertunity came to be from its two founders' belief that there were not enough opportunities for vulnerable individuals to develop and become part of their community. Uppertunity was formed on 15th September 2015, and in October 2015 our first therapeutic art group was set up - Scribbles!

From there numbers increased steadily, and different groups were planned to see where things would lead. We were based in community centres, working out of the boot of our car.

We held our first social event, Oor Burns Lunch, in January 2016. It was set up to bring the community together and celebrate the hard work of the members. This led to more community events such as craft fairs and social gatherings.

By March 2017, we offered 4 different creative groups and offered one off workshops. We also took up a garden plot at the Tay View Community Garden, the start of meaningful volunteering for our members.

A Milestone for Uppertunity took place on the 19th of June 2017... our own premises! Moving into The Circle gave us the space to take another big step: introducing the Capacity Building Program in July, better known as Daring for Development. We have since ran 6 blocks of the daring for Development programme and grew our weekly programme to 10 workshops a week.

We have since started to develop more meaningful volunteer roles for our members. The fun hasn't stopped, we have grown so much more since then. Keep reading to find out more!



## Mission and Vision

We believe that everyone has strengths and unique qualities that can positively influence their world. However, sometimes it can be difficult to know how to start. We are here to empower people to move forward with confidence.

We have created a safe and nurturing environment, where individuals feel comfortable to test themselves and explore their talent and capabilities. We realise that the world is big and intimidating, and we will be with our members every step of the way to cheer them on and offer any help that's needed along the way.



**Our mission is to create social change by demonstrating that everyone has strengths.**

Some people may need more support and attention to get there, but we all have a calling and a purpose we can serve that provides self-fulfilment. We have learnt to be innovative with our resources, connecting with individuals facing barriers on a one-to-one level.

### **Our core beliefs in everything we do are:**

We create a safe and nurturing environment, where individuals feel comfortable to test themselves and explore their talent and capabilities

**We are person centred, placing an emphasis on mutual respect and trust. Our members are a part Uppertunity and not merely a recipient of a service**

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

**We build not only resilience in our members, but in our community as well, pulling down walls of inequality and stigma**

Develop and build transferable life skills in our clients, and empower individuals who are underestimated

**We believe that working with the strengths of the community and individuals living within it is key to a sustainable future**



# Social Impact: The 5 Branches

At Uppertunity, we don't just do social change, we are social change. We measure our social impact using 5 key aspects: governance, workers, community, environment and customers

## Governance

Uppertunity is a registered Community Interest Company with a profit and asset lock. This means all profit made is put back into the organisation to develop its core activities. As part of our Board of Directors roles, all directors are required to volunteer some of their time in our events and activities, ensuring they understand the organisation's ethos.

Uppertunity also invite the clients to be directors, with three members being on the board for 2018/2019.

## Community

The community is at the heart of what we and we work with the needs of the community. Uppertunity host regular events, bringing the community together and reducing isolation in vulnerable groups. Last year, we held 15 events that were open to our members and the public. This helps to bring down walls of misunderstanding and negative stigma.

We also work in partnership with a range of other organisations including Meal Makers, Dial-Op, Project Scotland, Community Job Scotland and PAMIS.

## Environment

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 use eco-friendly cleaning products which can be reused. We use reusable products, minimising plastic usage. We also use single use or non-recyclable items in our arts and crafts groups, reducing waste. We promote reducing, reusing and recycling.

## Workers

All staff, whether paid or unpaid, are part of Uppertunity and its development. We provide a safe space for staff with an open door policy, sharing responsibilities.

We provide placements and employment opportunities to individuals who are ready for work but are facing barriers, such as low or none qualifications, mental health barriers etc. We are a registered minimum living wage employer.

## Customers

Within all our services, we promote: health and well-being, responsibility, creativity, fun and self-belief! Clients benefit from increased confidence, creativity, motivation, skills and a sense of achievement as well as feel more engaged with their community and society. We also work with Fare Share, providing free sanitary products to fight period poverty.

# Achievements: Weekly Warriors

Weekly Warriors is our programme of activities that take place each week, providing a space to have fun, socialise and develop new skills. All activities are inclusive and wheelchair accessible, including a beverage during the break. Spaces must be booked beforehand. Uppertunity is not a drop in service, we are a way of living. We aim to bring out the best in each person and develop long term life skills throughout all our services. One of these ways is teaching responsibility and learning about commitments. Individuals should attend regularly and arrive on time to all groups and workshops.

Since starting with our first group in 2015, Uppertunity has grown to offer 11 weekly groups. These range from our therapeutic art sessions, to our gardening club, to our drama activities group.

These groups are not just groups: they have an ethos behind them. Our members learn new skills, develop their talents, socialise, learn how to develop relationships and build up their confidence. Members also learn about responsibility, respect and taking ownership. This is achieved by the members agreeing to be a part of Uppertunity and its ethos which includes treating everyone with respect, having a positive attitude as well as helping manage the groups. Recycling and up-cycling also forms part of our ethos; the environment is very near and dear to us here.



# Achievements: Daring For Development

At Uppertunity, we offer a program that is aimed at individuals with learning disabilities and additional support needs who are looking to connect with their own aspirations. This program is all about building skills that can be used throughout life and developing the unique talents of the individual. The program takes place over 12 weeks and involves the individual attending various workshops. It provides individuals the framework to build skills and confidence to become more self-reliant.

Uppertunity's Daring For Development programme goes back to 2017, where it started off as the Capacity Building Programme. The aim of the programme is to help individuals become more self-resilient, assist them in realising their goals and aspirations, and allow these goals to be reached.

Through Daring For Development, members will receive one-on-one support, take part in therapeutic activities, learn how to source volunteering opportunities, learn skills such as money management and much more. The programme is 12 weeks long and involves over 90 hours of support and workshops.

So far 20 people have completed this programme and 15 have went on to volunteer with us here at Uppertunity and 12 have went on to volunteer at external organisations.

Daring For Development has encouraged members to be more involved within their community, think outside the box and be more aware of what they have to offer the world.

Each block has 6 places. Three of these places are funded and free, the other three are chargeable. This cost goes back into the organisation and helps to develop the programme further. Funding is also available through Independent Living Fund Scotland (ILF) for individuals aged 16 and 21. Individuals are individually assessed to receive a funded place.



# Achievements: Change Makers

Volunteering is a very good way to discover hidden talents. It helps to build confidence, develop skills, teach the ability to work as a team, enable a person to be part of their community and gives a person the chance to make a change using their talents. We offer different groups where our members can become volunteers and also receive volunteer certificates. Uppertunity now offer 4 weekly volunteer roles at our main premises for individuals with additional needs

## Growing places

Uppertunity aims to develop the community in every way possible and includes our members in this development. One of the ways is through gardening. Volunteers are in charge of creating a beautiful environment within Uppertunity's premises (The Circle). All volunteers hours are recorded, and members can choose to partake in the Grow and Learn award as well, a horticultural award specifically designed for adults with additional needs.

## Cooking for Change

We have partnered up with Meal Makers, where our members volunteer as meal makers for 3 isolated elderly individuals. Volunteers make a meal of their choice with our help and then have the option to drop the meal off at the individuals home, also providing a social visit.

## Create for Charity

Creating for Charity is a social volunteer group where volunteers make items which will be donated to charity such as sensory cubes, puppets and shopping bags. Volunteers can learn new skills, socialise and be part of something bigger. In this group, we also upcycle items that can be sold on with all money raised going back into buying stock.

## Calling All Heroes

We have joined up with Dial-Op, a local telephone service to assist isolated adults, where our members who volunteer are an empathetic ear. Volunteers will make weekly phone calls, with our assistance from our premises, to individuals who need to hear a friendly voice and may need a reminder of their appointments for the week.





# Achievements: The Upside - Counselling

In April 2019, we launched our own counselling service. At Uppertunity, we provide a pluralistic counselling service for individuals with additional needs, learning disabilities, autism, physical health barriers and mental health barriers to resolve personal and psychological problems.

Our clients have said, having a welcoming space that is free of judgement has helped them to be open about how they feel about their life.

Pluralistic counselling is a type of counselling that involves the therapist offering a range of different approaches and techniques to assist the client to address their specific problem. The client chooses from a broad range of tools and techniques that suits them best. This type of counselling is about using a combination of methods and theories, tailoring the sessions to the individual's needs with an emphasis on working collaboratively. Our methods include talking therapy, CBT, mindfulness, sensory cubes, gardening and more.

What are the benefits?

- Developing a greater degree of self-awareness, and a better understanding of self and others
- Improve self-esteem and become reflective in personal relationships
- Lead to healthier life choices
- Find enjoyment and fulfilment in life
- Improves self-knowledge and clarity of mind
- Develop coping mechanisms for the future



# Achievements: Mini UpMakers

Mini UpMakers is our entrepreneur programme where we hone in on the talents of our members, supporting them to develop their talent into mini enterprises. We help our Mini UpMakers, using their talents, to become recognised entrepreneurs.

We hold a weekly workshop where individuals can attend and receive one-on-one support to develop their entrepreneurial skills. As part of this service, we hold craft fairs at our main premises, providing a safe space for individuals to sell their products. We also help with marketing, sourcing external craft markets and providing support in attending them.

Our Create for Charity volunteers also make items to be sold. All our products are made by our members with all profits made being put back into the Mini UpMakers programme. We use materials that would normally be binned after one use including jars, coffee bags, scrap materials etc.



# Achievements: Funding

Uppertunity has received support from various funders since starting in 2015, and we have recently received support from The National Community Fund to expand our services. We have been granted £86,000.00. We would like to take this moment to say a massive thank you to our funders. Having the financial support and the belief is beyond appreciated. Without it, we would not be able to achieve our goals.



# Achievements: Events

We just love celebrating anything and everything, particularly when it brings the community together. Since July 2018, we have run various events:

- An Inspirational Summer Craft Fair
- 
- Two's Company: a social event for individuals to meet new people
- 
- Bake Sale in partnership with the Circle
- 
- Camping Trip
- 
- Games Night Bonanza
- 
- Beach clean up at Barry Buddon
- 
- How to be eco-friendly in partnership with Gate Church Carbon Saving Project
- 
- Yuletide Fair
- 
- Great Uppertunity Bake Off
- 
- Oor Burns Lunch
- 
- Girls Night In
- 
- Pass It On in partnership with Gate Church Carbon Saving Project
- 
- Open Day
- 
- Quiz Night
- 
- Car Boot Sale
- 
- Two night inclusive holiday trip
- 
- Summer BBQ



# Achievements: A new cafe - Serendipities



One of the biggest achievements of the year for us is the establishment of a brand new venture: our very own social cafe, Serendipities!

We opened our cafe in July 2019, located in the Dundee town centre on Union Street. It came together through the generosity of the community and hard work of our volunteers and staff. Many of the equipment, furniture, etc was kindly donated to us and all painting and decorating was done by volunteers.

This new space will not only allow us to put our catering and baking skills to good use, but will give an entire new platform for members to experience. We plan to host various workshops and events within the Serendipities premises.

The food we serve is all homemade and is plant based, aiding in reducing our carbon footprint.



# Awards

At Uppertunity, we never think small. We dream big and reach for the stars, learning along the journey. This is the ethos we instill in everything we do. And due to this, we have achieved some amazing awards.

Our founder won Young Entrepreneur of the Year award and Uppertunity were runner up in the growth category of the Tayside and Fife Social Enterprise Awards.

Our gardens also won a few prizes.



# A Word From Our Members

## What do you think about Uppertunity?

Meeting new people  
Coming to do the activities, talking and socialising with friends  
The creativity, being given ideas and some guidance  
I feel good, learn new things and gives me something new  
I like the art and indoor sports  
Art, jewellery making and friends  
I really enjoy the groups, I want to stay here from 9am to 5pm everyday  
I like how there are so many different clubs, and all the different activities  
Learning new skills

## What can we do better?

A therapist  
Have a lunch group with sandwiches  
More tables  
I like everything  
Sometimes noisy  
Nothing  
I like it the way it is

## Describe Uppertunity in one sentence...

Happy place to be  
Uppertunity has changed my life, it has given me opportunities to learn new skills  
New skills, very enjoyable  
Fun!  
It's a great place  
I get use to meeting other people, learn new things and learnt to be proud of myself  
Fun and friendly  
It's a friendly place to be and very fun  
It's good  
It's a good experience, nice people

## What makes you keep coming back?

To try new things  
Cause it's fun  
I enjoy it, there's always different activities  
I enjoy seeing friends and continuing something I've started  
Learning something new  
I like seeing friends and doing the activities  
I enjoy working with others and doing artsy things  
I like completing my long term projects

## How would you feel if Uppertunity no longer existed?

Sad  
Confused and sad  
Rather upset  
Sad  
Without Uppertunity, we wouldn't learn something new  
Uncomfortable  
I wouldn't have anything to do, feel bored and I will miss the support I get at uppertunity  
I would become lazy

# All the little things

There's always magic happening here at Uppertunity and we have tried our best to describe some of that magic.

Often what makes the magic is the wee sparks. Below are some of the many wee sparks that have happened over the past year.

We upgraded our kitchen space, thanks to the generosity of the community



We handed out various volunteer awards, with our volunteers donating over 1000 hours of their time



We launched our catering service, providing yummy meals for like minded organisations



We built and launched our pop up 'shop'



We signed up for the Charter for Involvement



We met the gang of Beech Grove Garden

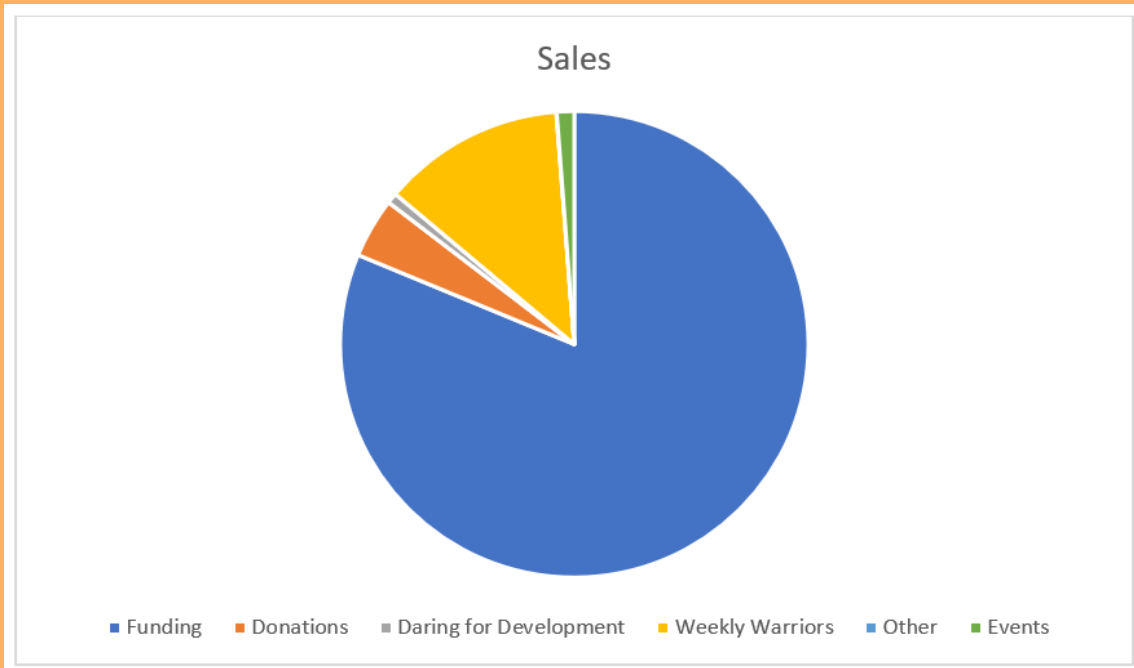




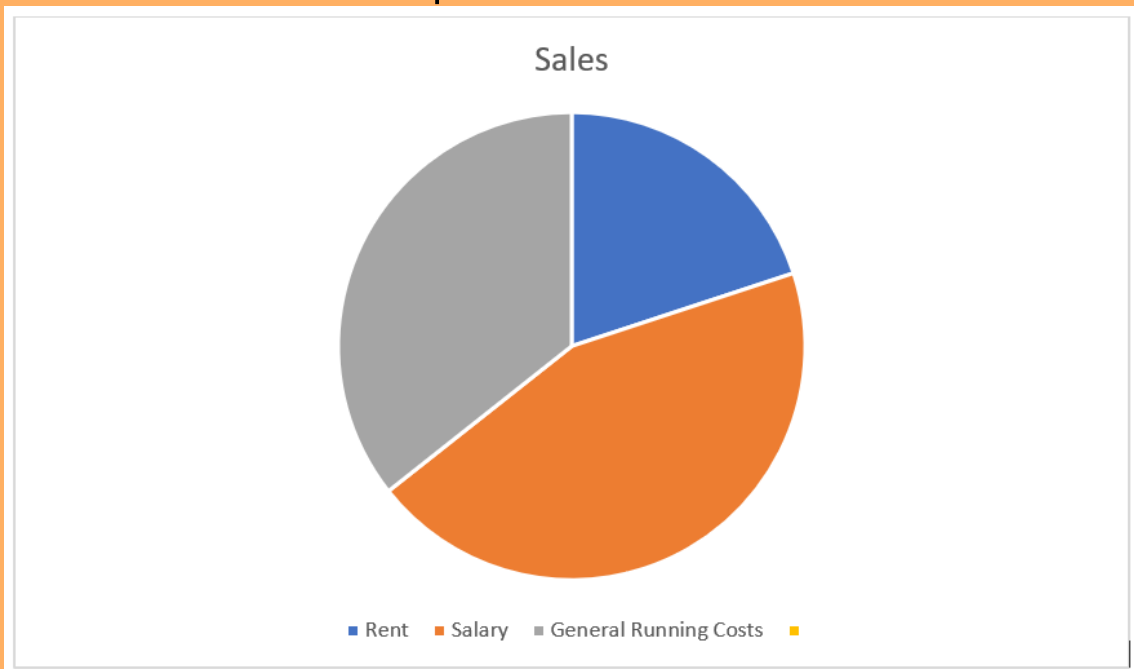
# Financial Breakdown

**Income - £46,000.00**

Income came from grants, funding, donations, Weekly Warrior payments, events and payments for Daring for Development



**Expenses - £38,000.00**



## Plans for the next 12 months

Host at least one event each month

Develop our mental health programme....Big Beautiful Beyond

Develop a wellbeing timetable in our newly taken on gym space

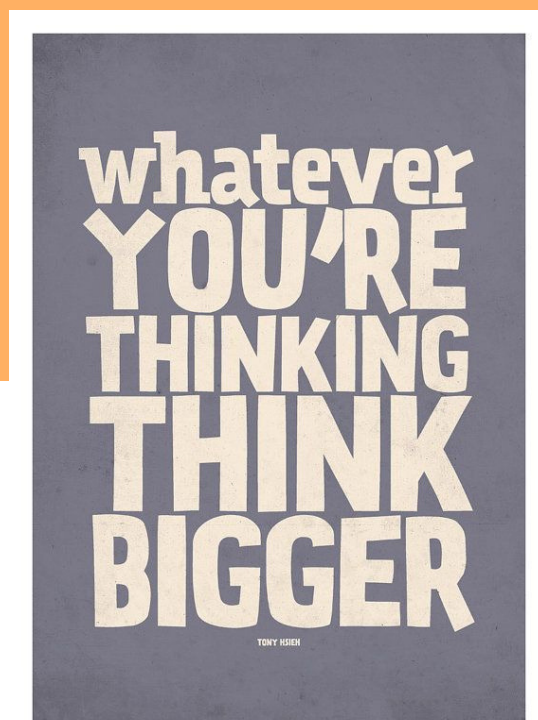
Grow our numbers

Hire one of our members as a paid staff member

Develop and grow the new cafe space

Develop a mentoring programme

Keep being awesome!



# Some Showing Off



IF YOU HANG OUT WITH  
ME FOR TOO LONG I'LL  
BRAINWASH YOU INTO  
BELIEVING IN YOURSELF  
AND KNOWING YOU CAN  
ACHIEVE ANYTHING.

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