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If you contribute to this magazine, you will get a £10 Love2Shop Voucher. Love2Shop vouchers offer plenty of choice. They can be used in over 20,000 stores including Argos, John Lewis, Boots, Debenhams, New Look and Waterstones.

A Word from Anna

Hello, I'm Anna Lunts, CEO of Creative Support.

January's edition of Creative Life is a joyous start to 2020, packed with great achievements and inspiring stories.

I thoroughly enjoyed reading about the meticulous planning for the Caistor Road cruise. I hope you all have a fantastic time and can't wait to see the photographs when you're back home.

I am very proud of our talented and diverse workforce so it was a pleasure to read about Pia and Halina. I really enjoyed the fascinating facts about their home countries and how they manage to stay in touch with family and friends.

In this edition of Creative Life we are launching our Gardening Grants programme for 2020. So if you're running a gardening project or planning to set one up turn to page 14 to find out how to apply for a grant.

We're also launching our 'Patchwork Challenge' on page 18 – I am really looking forward to seeing the end results of your creative needlework.

I feel very honoured that David has shared his story with us and John has let us into his colourful world of fashion.

I hope you all enjoy this edition of Creative Life as much as I have. Don't forget to let our marketing team know what you think.



Anna Lunts, Chief Executive



BE INVOLVED WITH CREATIVE LIFE

Have you been to one of Creative Support's recent events? What did you think about it? What do you think about the magazine? If you have an opinion on an article in Creative Life or an idea for something we could write about, please email your comments to: marketing@creativesupport.co.uk

or write to:

Marketing, Creative Support, Wellington House, 131 Wellington Road South, Stockport, SK1 3TS.



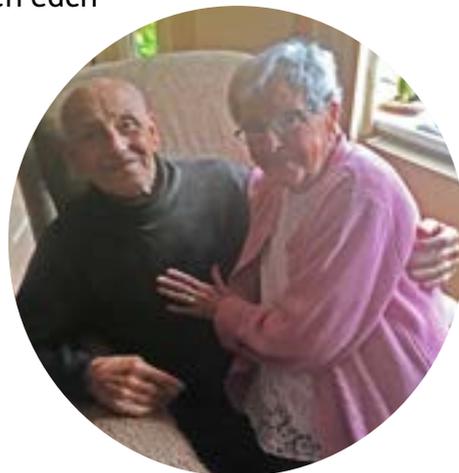
YOUR STORIES

A 20 Year Reunion

Widowers Joe and Rose are brother and sister-in-law who live in their own homes in Droylsden. Due to a number of issues around their health, Joe and Rose have not actually seen each other for 20 years, but have kept in touch by telephone calls to each other every week. Prior to this both couples had had an active social life together.

Julie, one of our Integrated Carers, managed to get Rose to agree to attend an event at St Martins Church in Droylsden, offering to pick her up and drop her back at home afterwards as she was not confident going out with her oxygen tank. Julie then had an idea and suggested that instead of taking Rose straight home afterwards, they should go and pick up some fish and chips and have lunch with Joe.

Rose was over the moon with this suggestion and the plans were made! Joe and Rose are pictured together here after 20 years apart!



Christina, Sporting Award Finalist!

Creative Support service user, Christina Kitromilides, has received a Manchester Sports Award. Christina was nominated by her gym instructor Mike Dolan at the Arcadia Leisure Centre in Levenshume. She made it to the final three in the Changing Lifestyles Recognition category and attended a glamorous gala at the Hilton Hotel to receive her award.

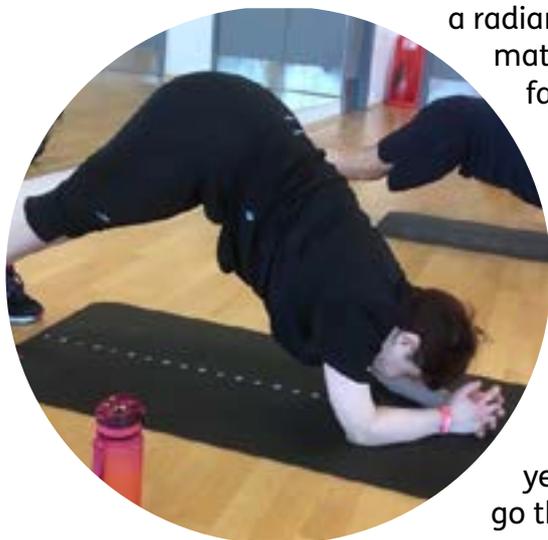
“The participation and lifestyle change has had a massive positive effect on Christina, her knowledge of expectation and goals has increased and her dedication is fantastic,” said Mike.

“Christina is a prime example of ‘never give up.’ Her drive and enthusiasm has a radiant effect when she is in the gym and she lives life to the full. No matter what hurdles she faces, she does it with a big smile on her face and determination in her heart,” added Mike.

“I go on the bikes and do the weights with Mike. It’s really good fun. Exercise feels really good,” said Christina. Christina first started working out after her sister, Fredericka, became concerned about her health and fitness.

“She hasn’t looked back since that first gym session. It’s like she has a new lease of life – I can hardly keep up with her,” said Fredericka.

The Manchester Sports Awards is an annual event established 10 years ago to celebrate community sport and recognise those who go the extra mile to deliver sporting excellence.



Doncaster's Thespians

Well done to our wonderful service users at Doncaster Learning Disability Service who recently participated in a Theatre Residency with our Artist in Residence, Tess Farley. The group participated in workshop sessions over a number of weeks to develop and perform a play.

During the sessions, the group explored their hopes and dreams, who their heroes were and the different relationships that they have. Participants were supported to express who they were and where they wanted to be in the future. Observing the sessions it was clear that they were achieving a sense of value and belonging.

The play was 15 minutes long and it was empowering to see a group of amazing people develop in confidence and perform their story in front of loved ones. At the end of the performance the room erupted with applause and participants stood up very proudly as they took their bow.



Social Inclusion Football League, Blackburn

The Creative Support Social Inclusion Football League raised over £1,600 through a huge charity raffle, with Manchester City striker Sergio Aguero's boots as top prize. The Argentinian player donated the boots to help raise money to improve the lives of the people we support. The boots were amongst dozens of raffle prizes donated by local people and businesses around Blackburn. The grand draw took place at the Butler's Arms in Pleasington.

As well as hosting peer support courses, coaching qualifications and community events, the Social Inclusion Football League has also created two peer-led projects – Blokes United and Girls United. These two groups offer football and social opportunities in an inclusive and supportive environment for those experiencing social isolation or the early signs of depression and anxiety.



Sensory Walk Opens in Preston

Creative Space Centre Manager, Jane Robinson, and her friends and family raised £4,000 to help fund an accessible tree den in the centre's sensory woodland walk, which also features wind chimes, tunnels, a petal drum, an audible tortoise feature, and a rain wheel.

Jane's eldest daughter, 15-year-old Emily, has a life-limiting condition and is a wheelchair user so the sensory woodland walk has been a personal pursuit for Jane and her family.

The woodland walk was officially opened in October 2019 by sponsor, businessman, and fundraiser Pete Marquis through the Friends of Space charity.

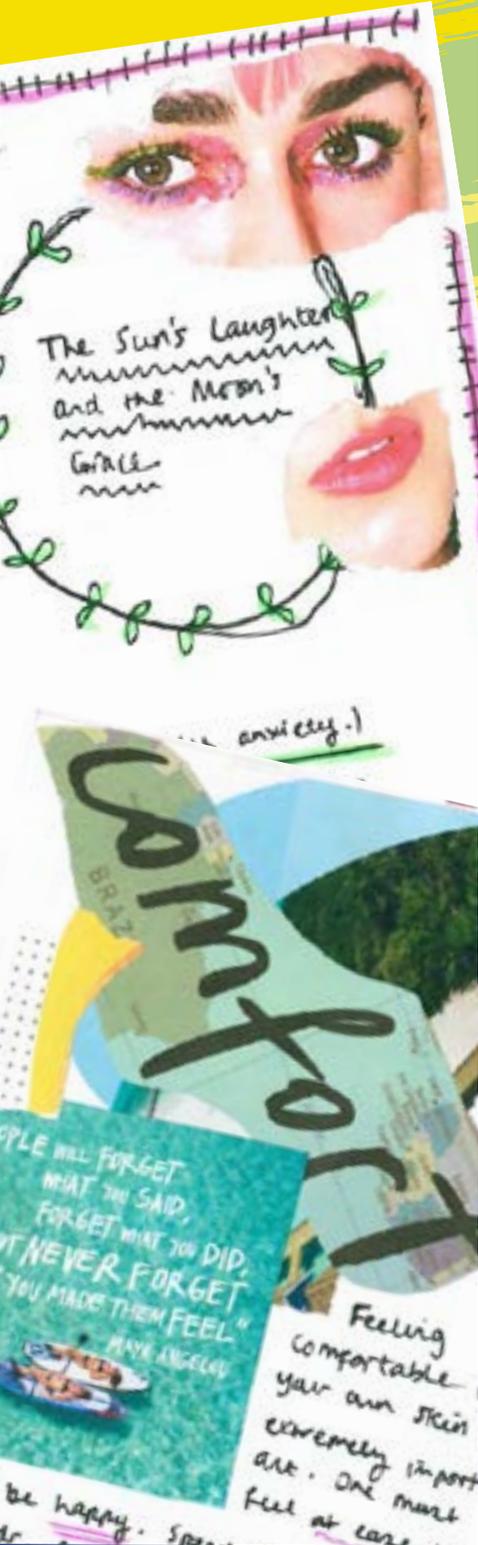
"Emily uses the Space Centre all the time and obviously it's a huge part of our life," explained Jane. "We just wanted something there that she could access and get the most out of, and also something that other people with similar conditions could appreciate and enjoy.

"It's a raised platform; it certainly gives you the feeling of being elevated," she said of the newly-installed tree den. "You can look down on people - you're in the trees, you're in the leaves - so it gives you a whole new perspective.

"You can get up close to the tree trunks and you can experience the weather; as it goes through the seasons, you'll get a lot of different experiences," she added.



MORGAN'S MENTAL HEALTH GUIDES



Morgan, who lives at a Creative Support service in Manchester, has struggled with mental ill health all her adult life. She finds art a really effective outlet and her support workers encourage her to express her feelings through creativity.

Some people do art if they're good at it or it's something they like to do as a hobby but, for me, I find that it's not just the outcome with a piece of work, it's the process of it and how it makes you feel when you're making things.

These booklets are a way of expressing how I've felt about previous difficulties and stuff, like eating disorders and self-harming and anxiety. So, it's just a creative way of expressing that part of my life. I'd also like to think they help others. That's one of the reasons why I've done them.

Art Therapy helped me a lot. I used to be in a service called Art in Mind. I had an art therapist called Nigel who was absolutely wonderful. When I had to go back into hospital he still came to see me every Thursday for Art Therapy sessions.



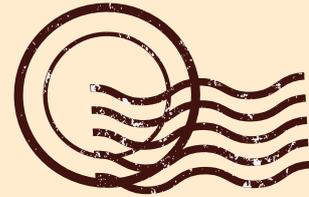
If, like Morgan, you do something to express yourself creatively and to stay positive, we want to know!



COME FLY WITH ME

Seas The Day!

Creative Support Service, Caistor Road, in Grimsby have been planning a special cruise trip for 2020. Service Manager Fran tells us more:



We are always talking about holidays and what everyone would like to do and all the residents said “we want to go abroad”, a task that they set me and one that has not been plain sailing (excuse the pun!)

When they discussed where to go as a group, Benidorm was a popular choice and so the research began! We had to ask consultants if flying would be suitable as Richard and Michael have epilepsy; Andy who uses a wheelchair due to his aquired brain injury would need adapted accommodation, which I found was not easily attainable and can only be secured by booking through specific holiday specialists.

I arranged for all of us to visit the local airport as they were running a holiday road show and lots of different companies were due to attend. With the information that we had gathered and researched, everyone agreed that a Cruise would be their first choice, we visited a local travel agents and we were able to book it!

We sail on the 1st June 2020 for 7 days around Portugal and the group is very excited. Everyone is saving from their weekly allowance for their spending money, and I am going to buy a blackboard for the hallway so that we can start to count down the days.



Do you have any holidays or day trips planned? We want to hear about it! Just email marketing@creativesupport.co.uk and your travel plans could be included in the next Creative Life magazine.



Carlisle's Artists

Our older people's service, The Laurels in Cumbria, hosted an artist in residence, Gill White, who worked with residents over a number of weeks to create works of visual art using nature, digital tools and photography. This project culminated in an art exhibition at the service. Designed and developed with up-to-date research in Arts, Dementia and Wellbeing at its core, the residency focused on 'in the moment' experience, rather than reminiscence, which research shows can significantly improve the health and wellbeing of residents. Here's what our artists had to say about the project:



"I thought it was fantastic going out."

"I was learning things I might never have done myself... no one has done anything like this, that is spot on with me in a care home."

"I feel satisfied when I feel useful."

"If the plan is to do it again next year, without doubt I'd be involved in that. Delighted!"

"It was good, and it's getting you out of where you are, your mind occupied with other things...it was a laugh!"



"I was very pleased and impressed! I was pleased that I'd done that."





A Day in the Life of...

Andy,
from Wokingham

Andy recently travelled to London to attend Comic Con and has written to us to share his experience:

“On Saturday the 26th October, my support worker and I went to London for Comic Con. Comic Con is a event where people can dress up as their favourite characters from films, games, books comics. My ticket cost £20, which was very reasonable for what I got to see and do.

I dressed up as a cowboy as I was meeting a voice actor who acted as a outlaw in one of my favourite games set in the wild west. It was a pleasure meeting Roger Clark, who came across really well. It cost an extra £98 to have photographs with both voice actors and an extra £76 for both autographs. But I saved and budgeted to be able to do this - it was really worth for me! It’s always best to pre-book the people you would like photos with as it does get busy.

There were many stalls where you could buy many items, if you wanted to. I chose not to, as I had the photos done.

I enjoyed my time at the convention and I would go again in the near future.”



Would you like to appear in this feature?

Email marketing@creativesupport.co.uk and tell us about a day in your life!

QUIZ TIME

Find the answers at the bottom of page 13

As we enter a new decade, we're testing your knowledge on the 2010s

- 1) Which female artist released the best-selling album of the 21st century to date in 2011?
- 2) What year did Prince William marry Kate Middleton?
- 3) The 2013 film Frozen produced one of the biggest soundtracks of the decade, what was the film's signature song called?
- 4) How many General Elections have there been in the UK in the 2010s?
- 5) What year was the London Olympics and the Queens Diamond Jubilee?
- 6) What year did the ALS ice bucket challenge go viral on social media?
- 7) *Becoming* is the 2018 memoir by which former US First Lady?

HOLIDAY WORDSEARCH

by John, Meet and Greet Volunteer at Head Office

A	R	T	Y	G	D	S	J	A	S
E	K	H	O	S	E	A	J	L	U
R	C	A	Y	U	F	G	B	A	N
O	H	A	R	B	N	E	E	D	B
P	A	D	S	A	H	K	A	L	A
L	A	J	K	Y	O	E	C	A	T
A	P	O	O	L	T	K	H	N	H
N	T	Y	D	S	E	A	E	V	I
E	N	W	E	R	L	G	H	B	N
S	W	I	M	M	I	N	G	A	G

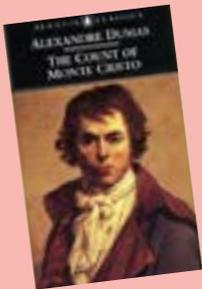
As it's that time of year when we all dream of a little more sunshine, this edition's wordsearch is all about being on holiday

BEACH
KARAOKE
SUNBATHING
SWIMMING

POOL
AEROPLANE
SEA
HOTEL



Bookmarked



The Count of Monte Cristo Alexander Dumas

A review by Martin Maybin

The Count of Monte Cristo is an intriguing book. It is about a young man who was wronged by people who were in power because he was given the captaincy of a ship and he didn't want it so they wronged him and got him put into prison for something he didn't do.

I enjoyed it because of the way it was written. It was just so intriguing because when you read the first chapter you hear about the young man but you don't know a lot about the people around him. It takes a long time to get off the first chapter but once you get into it you can't put it down.

I think the message was what the priest told him 'never use money for revenge.' Money can turn you into something you're not. If you use money for revenge it can do you more harm than good. It can turn people against you. Use money for good not evil.



New Beginnings, a poem by Abbie Timbey

*Walking into the building,
not knowing what to expect.
Will the staff be kind?
and treat me with respect?
Will I remember everyone's face?
When I need it will they give me space?*

*Walking into my flat,
My heart beating like the wings of a bat.
My heart is racing,
And my hands are shaking...
Will they help me through my struggles?
Will they help make my mind less
muddled?*

*Reaching out for the first time
was overwhelming,
The voices were yelling,
I didn't think the staff would be
understanding,
But the staff were amazing,
They made me feel at home,
And I no longer felt alone.*

*People stereotype supported living,
Drugs alcohol fights and chaos,
I didn't think I would get the support,
But I changed my perception thanks to
Creative Support,
Hip hip hooray Creative Support!!*



Would you like to appear in this feature?

creativity corner

In 2019, we received so many fantastic entries to the Art Competition it was difficult to decide on the top 12 winners. This edition's Creativity Corner shows off some of the runners up that were sent to us over last summer.



Top (left to right): Dean Corcoran, Steven Hodgkinson, Donna McDonald
Middle: Clara Berta, Jonathan Hirst,
Bottom: Michael Daniels, The Shawe, Doris from Stoke

Gardening Grants 2020



Following the success of Be Involved initiatives like Green Goals and the Sunflower competition, as well as the fantastic gardening projects that were set up in 2019, we are delighted to introduce the Gardening Grants Programme 2020.

The programme encourages applications from services wanting to start gardening projects that will enrich the lives of the people they support. This could be taking on a plot at your local allotment, starting a wildflower garden, building a sensory garden, or getting a group together to grow crops in your back garden, a greenhouse, or even on your windowsill! Being involved in gardening activities has so many benefits. In addition to getting out in the fresh air and enjoying a new hobby, gardening can also improve mental health and help to combat social isolation. Keith Bailey, project lead for Sunnybank's allotment group, says: *'Some of our service users are socially isolated and doing the gardening sessions has given them purpose. They have made new friends with a common interest.'*

The Gardening Grants programme officially launched at the Celebration Gala on **4th December 2019**, and applications will be accepted until **14th February 2020**. A service can apply for **up to £500** subject to terms and conditions. Please email the grants team for more information and to request an application form: **internal.grants@creativesupport.co.uk**



**Apply for a grant
of up to £500 to
start your 2020
gardening project!**

If you would like a complete guide of how to apply, please email **internal.grants@creativesupport.co.uk** In the guide you will find all the specific terms and conditions for applying and an FAQ's sheet.



John loves style and fashion and was delighted to show Georgia Stabler, Marketing and Social Inclusion Officer, and Sally Wheatman, Communications Officer, round his stylish room and let them have a look through his wardrobe.

John loves to express his personality through his clothes. He enjoys scouring local charity shops for the perfect pieces, like this longer length, brightly coloured floral dress with a gathered bodice. His 'Inca' inspired earrings were bought locally, too, along with his bracelet which came from a shop called 'Nomination.' John likes to buy a new charm for the bracelet each time he goes out shopping. John's colourful manicure is courtesy of Salon Chic.

John likes to see what the staff at Grove Court are wearing and often asks them about where they bought their clothes and shoes.

His flair and sense of style is also evident in the flamboyant decoration of his room. The bed knobs are made of cut glass to match his chandelier, he has a beautiful chaise long and he has a tailors' dummy wearing a feather boa in the corner of the bay window in his room.

One wall of the room is decorated in glittery, silver wall paper and there are two large, framed photographs of the signer Shirley Bassey – John is a huge fan.

Support staff helped John create a mood board which was his inspiration for the room. Every time he saw an item or a colour he liked in a magazine, he cut it out and pinned it to the mood board.



Service User Awards

In this edition of Creative Life, we would like to recognise some recent Service User Award winners and runners up who have worked hard to be a community champion.

Michael, from Bury was chosen as October's top prize winner. Michael was nominated in all categories for championing the allotment project at Ormrod Court and encouraging all staff and other service users to get involved with Creative Support's Green Goals campaign.



Graham (a.k.a Speedy) from Leeds, is a sewing whizz, his skills and confidence using his favourite machine have come on leaps and bounds. He is always keen to take on any sewing projects that need doing, whether that be stitching together work in Creativities or fixing aprons from Courtyard Cafe. Graham is always the first to volunteer his skills to help others.

Gabrielle, from South Shields, has been attending a beauty course at a local community centre and has received the first beauty and wellbeing award in recognition of all her hard work. For the past year Gabrielle has also been volunteering at the Cats Protection service which she thoroughly enjoys. She recently received a thank you card for her hard work and dedication.



Steven, from Manchester, finds time to volunteer at a local allotment once a week and manages his own little garden at the back of his flat in addition to caring for his wife. Steven has grown massive sunflowers (at least 12 feet tall), apple trees and carrots! Steven is now enrolled on a cooking course at Creative Together where he goes with his wife who is a member of the art group.

John, from London, was nominated for the time and effort he has put into transforming the overgrown garden at his service into a clean and welcoming environment. Thanks to John there are now clear walkways, a roofed outdoor terrace, and lots of flowers that all the residents can enjoy.



Do you know someone who deserves recognition?

If you would like to nominate someone for a Service User Award, you can request a nomination form and further information by emailing: serviceuser.awards@creativesupport.co.uk

Achieve Q



ACHIEVE
Quality

Achieve Q is our internal award for Creative Support staff, which represents and recognises the attributes expected of each of us within the organisation.

Everyone can get involved to ensure our staff are recognised – colleagues, managers, service users, their families and other stakeholders are all able to nominate an individual or a team.

Our December 2019 Gold Award Winners

Mairead Spina, a Support Worker at the prevention service in Northamptonshire was awarded Gold for her tenacity and commitment to ensuring the very best for a client who had been homeless for the majority of his life. Mairead's drive and determination secured a physical address for the man, who was at the time living in a caravan. This act enabled him to have access to benefits and medical care. Mairead went on to secure more permanent accommodation in a person centred way, making sure the gentleman would still have close friends around him and a PA to attend to him. She was innovative, diligent, compassionate, and went above and beyond to ensure the gentleman's needs were met, his voice was heard and he received all he was entitled to. Mairead's exceptional work has had an immeasurable impact on this individual's quality of life, and is something she should be forever proud of. Well done.



"The gentleman was so grateful for everything Mairead has done for him and states he now has everything he ever wanted." - Leanne Dawson, Service Coordinator



Michelle Brindle, a Support Worker in Burnley won Gold for her quick thinking and courageous actions, which unmistakably saved the life of a service user. By administrating back blows and abdominal thrusts, Michelle prevented choking. Michelle demonstrated the upmost composure, professionalism amid crisis and promptly ensured the individual went to hospital.

"Michelle was very calm and saved JM from choking. She was aspirational and a credit to our team."

Jeanette P Shepherd, Support Coordinator

Is there a staff member you know who goes above and beyond?

If there is a team or individual who you think is doing a great job and deserves to be recognised, please email: achieveq@creativesupport.co.uk for a nomination form or for more information.



Patchwork Challenge

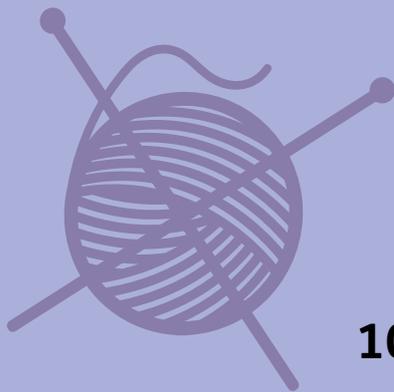
We're making a Creative Support patchwork tapestry and we need your help!

We are setting a new challenge across Creative Support for service users, staff and volunteers to make a patchwork square that represents something unique about a service, location or individual. 10 inch by 10 inch squares will be provided on request and all designs must leave an inch around the edges free for sewing the patches together. We also encourage anyone taking part to get creative with decorating their patchwork square, you could paint, tie dye, embroider, crochet, stick, or draw a design! If you would like to be sent a patchwork square please contact the marketing department by emailing marketing@creativesupport.co.uk or by calling the head office number: **0161 236 0829**. Once you have recieved and decorated your patchwork square, you can send it back to marketing using the freepost envelope that will also be provided. Please address all completed squares to:

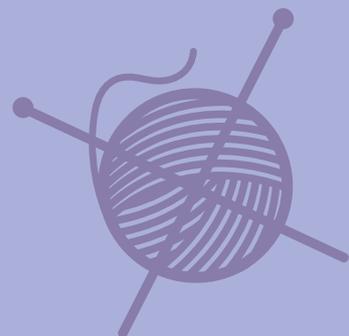
Marketing, Creative Support, Wellington House, 131 Wellington Street South, Stockport, SK1 3TS

The example square below was made by Maggie who attends Totally Textiles at Courtyard Creativities, Horsforth. Back in May, she began an ambitious embroidery of her favourite Coronation Street character Chesney. Maggie worked very hard, and patiently on Chesney and completed him a few weeks ago.

“I am really happy with my work. Chesney is in a frame next to my record player at home. I feel proud when I look at him.” - Maggie



10”



10”

This square is not to scale

Creative Cooking



Sugar-free Flapjacks

Sam at Creative Together in Manchester says:

“Our members love to make these refined sugar-free flapjacks as they’re easy to make and contain fruit, fibre and nuts while also tasting delicious!”

Difficulty Rating: ● ● ○ ○ ○

Step 1

Add 50g butter, 2tbsp peanut butter and 3tbsp honey to a pan until warm.



Step 2

Remove pan from heat and add 1 apple, peeled and grated, and 2 ripe bananas followed by 250g oats, 85g walnuts, 100g raisins and 85g mixed seeds.



Step 3

Put flapjack mixture in a greaseproof paper lined tray and cook in oven at 160°C for 55 minutes or until golden.



Step 4

Allow to cool, remove from tray and cut into small rectangles - enjoy!



Would you like to appear in this feature?

Email marketing@creativesupport.co.uk with your healthy recipe!

creative origins



We're lucky at Creative Support to have staff from countries and cultures all over the world. Our new Creative Origins feature invites staff from outside the UK to share some thoughts about their home country.



Pia

**Support worker,
Doncaster**

I was born, brought up and educated in Germany. In November 2018 I moved over to England and now live and work in Doncaster. As my father is English, from a young age me and my family have often come to England for holidays and I always enjoyed it. I can now be closer to my grandma, aunties and cousins but also keep in touch with family and friends in Germany by travelling to them or by them staying with me in Doncaster.

Interesting facts about Germany...

I was born in North, Rhine Westphalia, in a town called Gelsenkirchen which is home to the famous club 'FC Schalke 04'. Gelsenkirchen is part of the big mining area, called The Ruhr. In the early 20th Century Gelsenkirchen was an important coal mining town in Europe. It was called 'The City of a Thousand Fires' for the flames of mine gases flaring at night. Nowadays a lot of old collieries have been converted into parks, museums and other tourist attractions.

What's important to me...

It is important for me to stay in touch with my family and friends, speaking to them and seeing them whenever I can. I want to stay close to my background and visit Germany as much as I can. To live a fulfilling life I want to have a purpose, therefore I set myself a goal to invest in developing my knowledge and skills, just how I was raised. I want to be free to make my own mistakes and to learn from them. Growing up in Germany I got to know about ethics and morals and would always raise my children in the same way.



In this edition, we meet Pia who is from Germany and Halina who is from Poland. Both Pia and Halina are support workers based in Doncaster.



Halina

Support worker,
Doncaster

I was born, educated and brought up in Poland, but as a young girl came to England by myself. I married a Yorkshire man and I am now a mum to 1 son and a grandmother to Stella and Ted. I have no family in Poland now, but I still like to visit. I love their food and hospitality. After living in England for almost 50 years I regard myself more English than Polish. I've spent all my adulthood here, worked hard and made a good life for myself and my family.

Interesting facts about Poland...

I was born in Zagan where the famous 'great escape' took place. Now there is a big museum where you can see the 3 famous tunnels (Tom Dick and Harry) dug by British airmen POW who escaped, but most of them were recaptured and perished (killed). A few million POW died there. In Stalag VIII.C my husband Ray served 23 years in the British Army and after his service ended in 1992 we visited Zagan to pay our respects.

What's important to me...

1. I am still fluent in my native language and my catholic faith.
2. I encourage my son (who speaks Polish and visits with his wife and children) to remember our roots. He goes to Poland every year as he loves the culture, food and the people. He is also teaching his young

children Polish and he is proud of who he is and where his maternal grandparents came from.

3. During World War II, Poland suffered so much and every family was affected. I lost family members and taught my son about the hard times our ancestors endured. He's been to Auschwitz as the history is very important to him and myself.

Life in Poland is much better now than when I was there living under the communist regime. Times were hard then everything got rebuilt, beautiful architecture, access to theatres and operas, happy people – lots of lovely places to visit, especially Krakow.

MY JOURNEY

Our special feature where we catch up with a Creative Support member and hear about their journey

In this issue we speak to David Johnston, a member of Breakthrough who attends our Creative Together centre in Manchester. David shares with us what it's like to live with Moebius Syndrome and how it has not held him back in life.

I was diagnosed with Moebius Syndrome as a baby at Great Ormond Street Hospital. Moebius Syndrome is an extremely rare condition where my fifth, sixth and seventh cranium nerves in the brain are not fully developed. This has resulted in no facial expression, poor vision and speech and problems with my fine and gross motor skills. I was also born with club feet which wasn't part of the original diagnosis. I had regular Physiotherapy, Occupational and Speech therapy sessions throughout my childhood to treat the areas affected in the brain and my club feet.

Every year on the 24th January there is a Moebius Syndrome Awareness Day where fellow sufferers around the world and the United Kingdom talk about their experience with the condition and share their stories on social media platforms.

My family moved around the country when I was a child, I lived in the North East of England in a small town called Stockton-on-Tees from 1993 to 2014, I managed to pass my GCSEs and get all the way to University, however I dropped out of University because I could not handle the stress.

From 2005 to 2014 I was supported by Shaw Trust, a national charity that supports

adults with physical and learning disabilities to find employment and training opportunities. I helped out in the administration office where I typed out health and safety risk forms, researched information on plants and photocopied documents. I also took part in an Art class at Shaw Trust where I learned that my disability does not hold me back in trying new things. In the spring of 2014 I lost my volunteer job due to cuts in government funding.

In late 2014, my family moved due to my dad getting a new job. Before leaving the North East, I researched things to do in Manchester and I found Breakthrough on the internet. What I liked about Breakthrough was that they offered classes, events and trips for people with physical and learning disabilities or mental health needs.

I have loved Breakthrough from the moment I arrived and have met some wonderful people. For the last four years I have taken part in the Art group where I have completed individual projects and helped out with the designing and making of decorations for the Breakthrough parties or Pride parades which are held in Manchester every August. I have just started taking part in the Drama sessions after meeting the session leader at



the Breakthrough Christmas party, she discussed what the drama session is all about and I thought that I would give it a try and I also found that people understood what I was saying and that they liked my sense of humour.

When I am not attending Breakthrough, I go to a cycling club at Wythenshawe Park where bikes are adapted for adults and local schoolchildren who have various disabilities. I do roughly around 20 laps on a 200 metres athletic track. I enjoy cycling as it helps me keep physically active.

I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to the people that have helped me during my 35 years of life. Most of them I will never see again but I will always be grateful for their input. Also I would like to say thank you for my family for the love and support they have given me in my life.

What's on in 2020

FESTIVAL OF EXPRESSION 2020



Make 2020 the year to try something new!

Our 'Be Involved' guide 2020 is a 'Festival of Expression'. We will continue to support you to be an active part of the Creative Support community and we would especially like you to have a go at something new!



Whether it's learning a new skill, visiting a new place or taking up a new hobby, we want to celebrate experiences you've never had before. Maybe you're planning to go on holiday for the first time, or trying a different destination this year? Perhaps you would love to go to a festival or a concert or maybe you've always wanted to learn to sing or play an instrument....whatever it is, let's make 2020 the year to try something new! The 'Be Involved' Guide is packed full of ideas for and themes which encourage activities and events across the country.

Getting into the festival spirit!

We have created a special pack for those who are hosting a festival at their service to showcase their new skills, or for those who are attending a festival. Contact the marketing team to request your 2020 Festival of Expression wristbands, bunting, t-shirts and water bottles.

We will also be publishing a list of local festivals you could get involved in. Check out our 'What's On' page on our website to find out more.



If you are learning a new skill or developing a talent you already have or even hosting/visiting a festival we would love to hear from you. Maybe you could put on a show or get together with others to put on an exhibition of your work? Whatever you decide to do, please let the marketing team know and don't forget to take photographs of your events!

Send them to: marketing@creativesupport.co.uk

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A selection of memorable moments from last year...

