



ARK·T
Creativity Changes Lives

Impact Report 2024



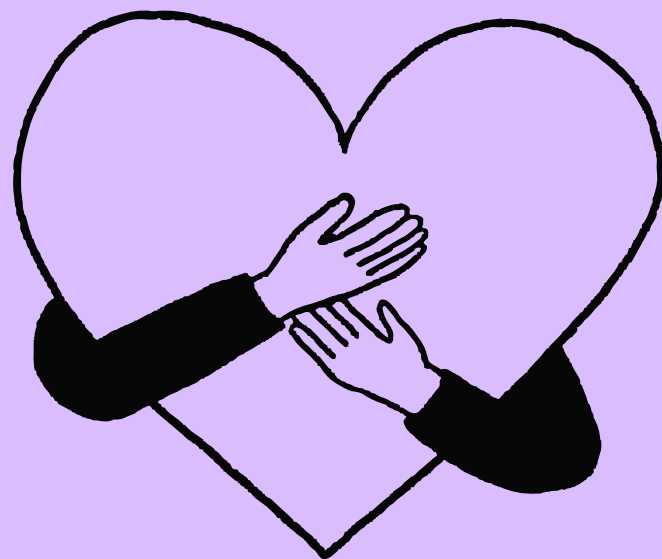
Our Mission



**We use the
transformative
powers of
Creativity and
Human
Connection to
change lives
and spark social
change**

Our Values

Be Kind



Be Brave



Be True to Yourself



OUR AIMS:

Our creative programmes are therapeutic and aim to: Enable people to empower themselves in a safe space through building self-confidence, resilience, wellbeing and healthy relationship skills.

Develop essential life skills, supporting progress into education, training, volunteering and employment.

Challenge inequality and prejudice by dismantling barriers to creativity, arts and culture.

We develop projects using a wide range of creative mediums including: music, visual art, dance, drama, cooking, film, photography and importantly, play. These programmes build resilience, enabling people to gain self-awareness, learn problem solving and positive decision making skills, resulting in more stable, connected, and fulfilling lives.



**The Ark T Centre is a place
where people, art and
powerful ideas come
together**

The Art Nest



The Rookery



Creativity Camps



Trips 1



HerSpace Junior



HeSpace Senior



Theatre Makers



Trips 2



Youth Council



Mental Wealth Academy



Martha Mary Fernback Prize



Placements



2023 to 2024 in photos

Community Lunches



Moving



Volunteers



Hire



2023 to 2024 in photos

Wellbeing Workshops



Wellbeing Workshops



Welcome Space



Winterlights



Creative Writing



Exhibitions



Working in Partnership



Carnival



**The people involved
get to...**

Hire quality space

Gain wellbeing tools

Create shared experiences

"Ark-T made me!"
Young Person

Creativity Changes Lives

Is our creative wellbeing programme for young people aged 6 to 18

Over the past year, our Creativity Changes Lives Programme has continued to provide invaluable creative spaces for young people to explore and develop their talents. Through weekly term-time groups like Herspace Junior, Herspace Senior, Theatre Makers, Youth Council and Printing the Elements. Participants have created beautiful artwork, developed new skills, explored identity, deepened their confidence and self-expression. Groups explored a variety of art forms—from felting, sculpture, upcycling, clay, printing, and making custom bags and t-shirts.

Our Creativity Changes Lives programme reaches young people most in need by partnering with local councils, leveraging our accessible Templars Square location, and promoting actively across schools, community spaces, and online platforms. At our Welcome Space in Templars Square, we make meaningful engagement possible for young people in the local area, offering free creative opportunities to foster resilience and growth.

We use various tools to monitor our impact, including Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaires (SDQs), termly feedback forms, regular parent/carer engagement, attendance registers, and reflective safeguarding check-ins. These practices not only track our success but also help us refine our approach, ensuring we meet the unique needs of every participant.

Supported by | **well
together**



2024



Creativty Changes Lives Groups

In 2024 we ran 5 free after school creative wellbeing groups. Including HerSpace Junior, HerSpace Senior, Theatre Makers, Youth Council, Printing the Elements and MySpace Online.

- We delivered **1278 hours** of free after school support
- We supported **73 young people**
- We ran **124 creative wellbeing sessions** after school



In 2024 We recorded how many times we had discussions around the below topics during our creative wellbeing sessions (working with 182 young people aged 6-25. Safeguarding alerts relates to 100 of our young people across our Creativity Changes Lives programme)





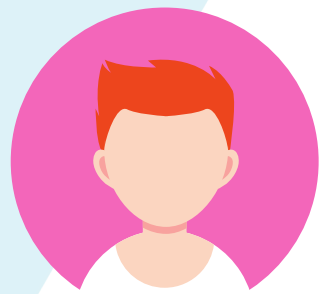
Case Study – Young Person: “If This Was A School, I’d Come To It”

I started coming to Ark-T in 2021 and kept coming because it was fun, creative, and helped me feel better. I was shy at first, but the staff were really kind and made me feel safe. We laughed, made art, and went on fun summer trips where everyone was kind and less judgmental than at school.

At Ark-T, we make our own plays from scratch—create the characters, name the story, set the scene. I once played a talking dog and a half-demon, half-human. We all get involved, try on costumes, and make decisions together. It’s fun and expressive—nothing like school.

Ark-T is a space where you’re free to be yourself. You don’t have to put your hand up, wear a uniform, or hide your feelings. If something's wrong—like if your dog dies or someone upsets you—they give you time and space to deal with it. They help you feel better, not worse.

This place helped me grow in confidence, speak up for myself, and understand my emotions. You can come here feeling low and leave feeling joyful. It’s a place to heal, create, and just be you. If this was a school, I’d come to it.



Case Study: Creativity Changes Lives - “Ark T made me!”

Z is neurodiverse and experiences physical difficulties. They have been part of HerSpace Senior for two years, experiencing significant growth, confidence, and creative expression. When Z first joined, they found the environment challenging. In early sessions, they stayed close to a friend from school and rarely interacted with others. A structured plan for each creative activity helped Z settle in and express themselves.

Over time, Z grew in confidence, moving from sitting quietly with a friend to engaging with the whole group. They now regularly lead activities, sharing their skills with enthusiasm.

HerSpace Senior includes a news-sharing time where everyone is encouraged to speak. Z has used this space to discuss issues like homophobia, transphobia, and prejudice against

neurodivergent people, showing how they feel safe and empowered to use their voice.

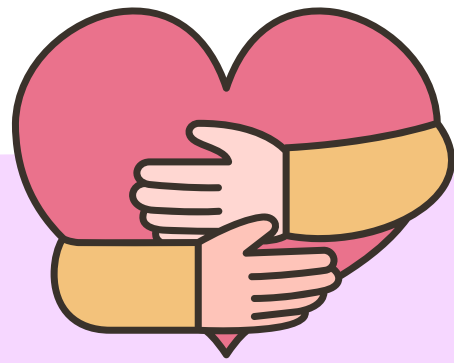
Z’s creativity has flourished, with the group encouraging experimentation. They’ve developed a passion for crochet and sculpture, mediums through which they express deeply meaningful themes. Their creative voice is authentic and evolving.

Z values HerSpace Senior deeply, saying, “Ark T made me!” and describing the experience as “laughter therapy.” One session stands out: Z spent the time crafting miniature origami stars, turning them into beads for a necklace. After a moment of shared laughter, they smiled and said, “This is like laughter therapy!”

HerSpace Senior has become a place of belonging, joy, and self-expression—a space where creativity and community support personal transformation.

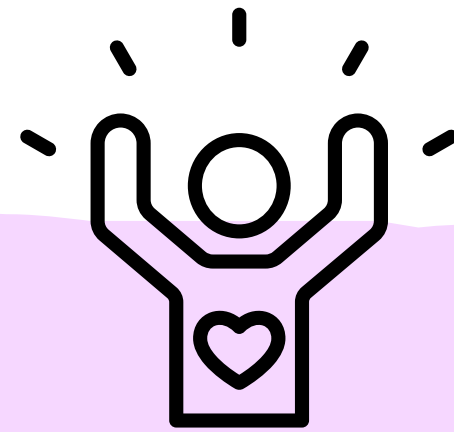
Creativity Camps

Our 18 days of holiday provision offer 15 free spaces per day for children who receive free school meals, 2 spaces are Specialist Education support spaces. Supported by Oxfordshire County Council, Better Mental Health, and private donors.



80%

Of the participants who attend our Creativity Camps come from disadvantaged backgrounds



78%

Of participants reported feeling more confident after attending our Creativity Camps



78%

Of participants reported feeling more confident in their creativity



FEEDBACK CREATIVITY CAMPS

"Huge variety of activities going on, and it was absolutely great to see the children were involved in cooking their own food every day. This was complemented by drama activities, arts and crafts, and a discussion about how members of staff work hard to upcycle and create craft activities through this. The kids are able to attend a trip every week, and this is a great way to ensure that they have access to experiences they might not otherwise experience."

Oxford County Council Feedback Aug 2023

"My daughter was soooo happy at Ark-T camp. She tried to cook all the recipes from the camp because she said she had the best food there, and one day she prepared pasta with tomato sauce for her dad for dinner. She was tired at the end of the day but full of emotions and happiness! Thank you so much for your great work."

Parent 2023

"Fantastic provision for children"

Oxford County Council Feedback
Aug 2024

2023 to 2024

54

At our Creativity Camps we offered 54 free specialist supported spaces for children with Special educational needs



At our Creativity Camps we worked with 49 young people



72

Creative wellbeing sessions were delivered at our Creativity Camps



At our Creativity Camps we made

1188

healthy & delicious breakfasts, snacks & hot meals for children

**Self Esteem builds
Creativity Flourishes
Internal resource grows
Feel part of something**



Welcome Space at Ark-T: A Year of Community and Creativity

In October, we embarked on an exciting new chapter, moving into our new building at Templars Square. With a lot of elbow grease and creativity, our team transformed the once-yellow walls into a welcoming space for the local community. With the help of a generous friend from Oxford Community Action and their van, we moved everything ourselves and spruced up the yard to create a warm environment for everyone. A year on, our Welcome Space has become a vibrant hub for connection, creativity, and support. We've met countless new friends, thanks to our amazing volunteers who keep the space open, greet visitors, and make everyone feel at home. Among their many contributions, one volunteer runs our popular free macramé drop-in sessions every Monday.

The space has also become a vital resource for families, hosting a monthly support group for those raising PDA Autistic children. Every day, we offer early years play activities and showcase beautiful community exhibitions that change every few months. We're so proud of what we've built together, and this is just the beginning. Over the next year, we aim to grow the Welcome Space into an even more thriving hub for the local community.

THE WELCOME SPACE in Templars Square



We've
welcomed
1437
visitors



Open
for
184
Days

900
Hours
open



6
Community
Exhibitions



Welcome Space visitor feedback

"It makes me feel happy
and comfortable."
Visitor October 2024

"Love this place, I
feel good here."
Visitor June 2024

"This place is
precious." Visitor
September 2024

Art Nest - A year roundup



This year, The Art Nest has been full of special moments! We welcomed our first group of siblings, who worked together to design and build a wooden stool—strengthening their teamwork and even bringing those connections home. One older brother even invited his younger sibling to play a video game for the first time!

During our Art Weeks exhibition, children proudly shared their work with their families, their faces glowing with pride. One young artist, with us for over three years, went from doubting his abilities to confidently declaring his latest project, Mixed Up Animals, as “the best work ever!”

Our September lantern-making project was a hit, with children beaming as they saw their willow and tissue paper lanterns featured in a BBC event. They took their creations home, each with a tea light to illuminate their hard work.

The Rookery Parent Group – Creativity & Connection

At The Rookery, parents, carers, and toddlers joined us weekly for 16 weeks, learning to upcycle furniture, craft resin jewellery, and make coasters. But beyond the creative projects, the space became a place of support—where conversations over tea and toast covered everything from parenting strategies to online safety and self-confidence.

It's been a year of creativity, growth, and community—thank you for being part of it!

September 2023 to July 2024



The Art Nest



31

We ran 31 creative wellbeing sessions at a group called The Rookery for **parents**



212

We ran 212 **creative wellbeing sessions** for children aged 6 to 11 years old



82

We worked with 82 **children** from Orchard Meadow and Pegasus primary schools

September 2023 to July 2024

ART NEST FEEDBACK



“The impact of Art Nest on our most vulnerable pupils cannot be overstated...We are immensely proud and grateful to offer this therapeutic resource, which is not only a crucial part of our school’s safeguarding and support systems but also a key contributor to the mental, emotional, and social development of our pupils. Art Nest continues to be a source of inspiration and pride for our school and community.”

Executive Principal, Orchard Meadow Primary School

“My son T loves his sessions at art nest. He struggles alot with school but Thursdays are the only day he enjoys as its Art Nest day. It literally is the only thing that helps him through the week. His care for everything he does has also improved. Art Nest has really helped T. Thank you Clare and everyone at Art Nest. ”

From a parent, 2023

“When I’m painting, I feel my stress go away”

Year 1 July 2024

2023 to 2024



Case Study: Art Nest Facilitator Reflections - P's Journey

P arrived for their first session in September 2023, as part of a mixed group in Year 3. During introductions around the sofa, P said: "I'm going to my baby brother's funeral tomorrow." The group became quiet. A practitioner expressed sympathy and reminded P that the space was there for them if they wished to talk more.

P found it difficult to listen on the sofa that day and thumped the soft toys. However, around the art table, they concentrated well and enjoyed drawing in their sketchbook. For the rest of their time in the Art Nest, this became a regular and calming part of their session.

Over the weeks, P continued to share thoughts about their brother:

"I can feel him holding my hand."

"His soul is giving me a cuddle."

The school was informed after the first session, and it was added to P's attendance notes. When P again spoke about their brother and showed signs of anger, the Art Nest team contacted the School Family Support Worker (L), who had not previously been aware of the situation due to being away. L contacted Mum the next day. Mum shared that the family would now give P more support at home.

P had not spoken about their brother to their class teacher, L, or family members. A second referral was made for P to continue having space and support if they wished to talk further.

**Our communities take part
in activities - Creative,
mentoring and hire**

Community Lunches

Community Lunches are monthly events providing accessible creative wellbeing and other activities and services for the people of OX4. We listen to and learn from the community through outreach, feedback gathering and conversation, and will continue to develop the event so that it meets the wants and needs identified.

Community Lunches are a partnership project with:



January to December 2024



We hold 10 Free Community Lunches for the local community each year, which also include...

"The best thing about the event
was how welcoming it was"

- Benefits, Debt and Housing Advice
Dementia Info and Advice
- Mental Health and Employment
Support Cuppa & Chat social group
- Under 5's Stay & Play
- Pay-as-you-feel Meal
- Bitesize Talks
- Adult's Craft Class
- Dementia-friendly Social & Games
Support

435 PEOPLE ATTENDED OUR COMMUNITY LUNCHES

"I am glad I came it has made my day"



340

Pay-as-you-feel meals served

160

Of the 340 meals served 160 Free Meals were served

27

Attended dementia support & advice services

87

Attended our Early Years play sessions

99

People attended one of our Creative Wellbeing sessions

56

Volunteers helped us





CASE STUDIES

COMMUNITY LUNCHES

A has come to the community meal before and came back as they were hungry. A said they had only gotten a quarter of their benefits due to error and were really struggling. They shared that they had experienced racism within the system, their social worker in particular and that had made things very difficult for them. They have a new key worker who is mixed race and that is more positive for them. They said that waste2taste felt like a really welcoming space.

S, E and M had gone to advice sessions at The Venue earlier that day and heard about the lunch from that and so decided to try it out. M has aphasia and heard about the day through Dementia Oxfordshire. They really enjoyed the food - the fact that it was so fresh and environmentally friendly was a real bonus. They loved all of it! It was their first time but they were so glad to know that it was there. They said they wished they'd known it was there before as they definitely would have come earlier. They said it was really nice to get out with their mum in an environment that wasn't too overwhelming for her.

Interns contributed 1,830 hours to helping run Ark-T

56 hours of Mentoring and coaching were provided by Ark-T staff to our interns

Our volunteers helped run our welcome space for 1170 hours

Volunteers supported workshops, events, groups, and festivals across Ark-T

Volunteers made a really big difference to us in 2024

Ark-T supported 5 interns in 2024

340 pay-as-you-feel meals were provided to the local community

56 volunteers supported 10 community lunches

Thank you!



**...and benefit partnerships that
address
Food Poverty
Green Arts
Cultural Education
Family Wellbeing
Mental Health**

A heartfelt thank you to all our private donors and funders—without your generous contributions, Ark-T's vital community work would not be possible. We are deeply grateful for the support of all those who support Ark-T. Your funding enables us to continue making a meaningful impact to our precious community!



Garfield Weston
FOUNDATION

