



annual report

APRIL 2019 - MARCH 2020

MESSAGE FROM **our chair**

A year of achievements

I had the great pleasure of becoming Chair of the SensationALL Board of Trustees in November 2019 and since my appointment I have been humbled by the passion and commitment of the Board members and staff who work in partnership to ensure a high level of service delivery which, it has become clear to me, is a lifeline for so many local families.



I joined SensationALL at a time of great change and ambition, and I would like to extend my thanks to the outgoing Chair, Bob McCracken, who was instrumental in achieving the Community Asset transfer of the Old Schoolhouse amongst many other achievements. This has given us a secure base for the future and significant progress has been made in making it a wonderful, safe setting for everyone involved in SensationALL.

It is the hard work and dedication of the staff and volunteers that make SensationALL the success that it is and I am also grateful for the support of the public who engage wholeheartedly with our fundraising activities, and to the providers of grants and the local businesses who support us in so many ways.

We are ambitious, willing to take on large-scale projects to make the lives of our service-users as positive and fulfilling as possible. We are embarking on an exciting transformation of our car park and play facilities which will enhance the learning and play environment. We are refreshing our strategic plan, reflecting the significant expansion of our expertise into the mainstream school setting. There are plans to establish a training academy, which will embrace income opportunities and showcase our inhouse expertise.

Of course, the forthcoming year will bring challenges as the developing situation with Covid-19 presents unprecedented circumstances. However, we are confident that the continued support of donors and the wider community will ensure the continued success of SensationALL.

janine chalmers

CHAIR OF BOARD OF TRUSTEES



Suz Strachan, Bob McCracken and Susan Kay



WHAT WE DO

our vision

It is our mission to provide therapy-based services and activities for children and adults living with any disability or support need.

We empower families to address the challenges that complex conditions present by equipping them with practical techniques, knowledge and advice. Our centre offers a safe place to access specialist facilities and support, a place where they belong and can be themselves.

Our building is a safe haven where families can relax, play, and learn while being fully supported by specialist staff. Following the community asset transfer for the building in May 2019 we can now proceed with plans to develop it to better meet the needs of our service users, staff and volunteers.

**ALL
AGES**

**ALL
CONDITIONS**

**ALL
FAMILY
MEMBERS**



tailored

S U P P O R T

Our founding ethos is to provide needs-led support that is specific to each individual and will help them in their area of need. Through our groups and sessions we improve an individuals communication, learning, sensory processing and general development all while helping them gain confidence and resilience to deal with the world around them.

One step at a time

With no formal diagnosis or access to local support, Josiah's mum was desperate for help to address the 18 month old's delayed development and speech.

Josiah was extremely resistant to joining our groups so the team offered 1:1 sessions. Initially, he was so anxious and upset he could only stay in the building (close to the exit) for a few minutes. But quickly we realised Josiah had an inquisitive nature, a great sense of humour and loved music which we could use to entice him to stay. Being non-verbal, a lot depended on an intensive interactive approach (using the copying of behaviours to promote shared attention and communication) to provide the needs-led interactions to gain Josiah's interest and trust.

The key to success was plenty of time, acceptance and a toy accordion! Like the Pied Piper, Suz mirrored Josiah's steps with music and gradually 'one step at a time' he not only stayed longer, but became willing to enter other rooms in the building and try out unfamiliar resources and equipment (including the ball pool, sensory room and interactive projector).

As his mum learnt skills to further Josiah's communication through play, she was empowered to continue the work at home.

Josiah is making great progress and has even attended Sensory Play Group as he gradually becomes more tolerant of community experiences. We were all amazed and delighted when he happily visited Santa at SensationALL's Grotto and was brave enough to collect his own present!

No formal diagnosis is required to access SensationALL's services

We are committed to offering early intervention for young children. It is our aim to help families with concerns about their child's learning, motor skills, sensory processing, behaviour, communication or general development.

As we know how confusing, stressful and often lengthy the diagnostic process can be our services are designed to support families struggling to access appropriate help and advice.



MAKING AN impact

SensationALL's inclusive, needs-led intervention has a massively positive impact on the attendees and their whole family.

For some families, SensationALL's support can give them the strength and skills to deal with their daily challenges and reduce the sense of loneliness that they often experience. Our social groups give individuals with support needs a place to be themselves where they feel they belong and can develop positive relationships in a safe supportive environment.

Around 70% of service users are under 18 years old, and we are committed to creating social opportunities for youngsters of all ages and abilities which help them build friendships and confidence.

Teen empowerment

Being understood as a teenager is difficult for everyone but for those with Autism, Learning Disabilities, social difficulties or mental health issues, life can be exceptionally difficult.

Teen SocALLise, our weekly social group, has played an invaluable role in the lives of many teenagers over the last few years, giving them a safe place to develop peer relationships, confidence and life skills.



Euan is one of the teens who started attending in 2019 as he was struggling with such poor mental health he found it difficult to leave the house and as he was not attending school, he felt extremely isolated. Initially, his behaviour varied wildly from completely dominating conversations and being overly excitable to being paradoxically quiet and withdrawn.

But thanks to the opportunities to interact with other teens while being supported by staff and volunteers, Euan felt able to try new activities and outings into the community. He settled into the group quickly and over a short period of time his confidence grew - staff noticed he was becoming more respectful of others, taking an active role during sessions and showing a compassionate nature and maturity.

The SocALLise ethos is to accept each individual's uniqueness and enable them to develop a sense of self by promoting their strengths and interests. Euan is a great success story as in finding a safe place to be himself, he has had the confidence to volunteer at SensationALL events and initiated his own fundraising challenge. In group, he proactively offers support and advice to others and is even in the process of being trained as a Mental Health Ambassador at school.

Due to the right support, acceptance and personal development, Euan is well on his way to being an impressive young man who is a positive contributor to his community.

“
I feel I have found
somewhere I can be myself.
A lot of things have helped
me through these tough times
and SensationALL was
undoubtedly one of them.
”

CREATING A **community**

Creating a community where whole families can meet with people who understand the challenges of living with complex conditions is at the heart of what we do. We want reduce the isolation that many families experience when they are struggling to cope with a suspected or confirmed diagnosis. The saying 'It takes a village to raise a child' couldn't be more apt- we provide a safe, healthy environment for individuals to grow.

It is our aim to share our knowledge and expertise with all who need it. This year we expanded our advisory services with monthly Information Mornings for new families or professionals to find out more about our services and available support.

In 2019 we were approved as a supplier of Flexible Learning Pathways with Aberdeenshire Council and began to provide out-of-classroom learning opportunities for primary pupils with support needs.

Life learning

Fitting in, making friends, coping with schoolwork and busy environments is all part of growing up. But for children with support needs, a more flexible approach to education and daily learning is required.

When the first Flexible Learning Pathways group began attending SensationALL, the children struggled to tolerate each other. Often reacting and communicating in negative ways, screaming, running off and sometimes being aggressive. But with graded support and adapted activities accompanied by some 1:1 time we began to see improvements.

Use of the soft play room and movement activities helped to establish an environment to promote cooperative play. By focusing on emotional education and relaxation techniques we improved their self-awareness and taught tailored strategies that could be utilised at school and home.

The transformation has been amazing and this group now regularly work together as a team, actively consulting each other on their thoughts and preferences. By encouraging positive experiences and interactions we have enabled them to build trust and increase their confidence.

Westhill Community

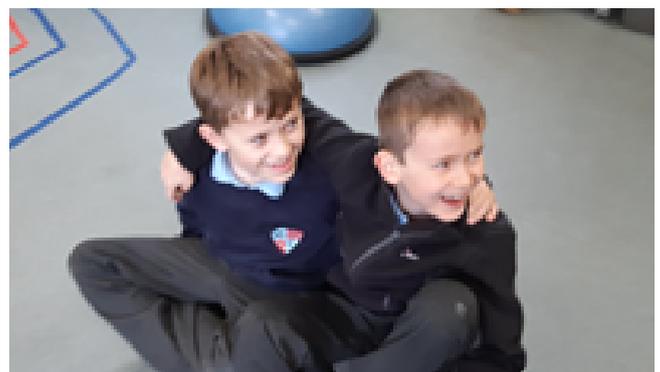
SensationALL has always had a commitment to the local area by providing a community venue for various groups and clubs (e.g. Dyslexia Scotland, Downs Syndrome Scotland, Rainbows etc.) as well as the creation of our sister company, an out of school childcare club.

SensationALL works hard to develop and make links with local businesses, including Holiday Inn West, M&S, Tesco and Coop.

Our volunteering opportunities have benefited local residents including many secondary school pupils and University/college students.

The Third Sector Community

We collaborate with many other organisations and recently delivered training to Aberlour Futures, St Machar Project and Quarriers. As well as partnering with Dyslexia Routes, NHS staff, Pamis and other external trainers to deliver extensive training workshops.



WHAT WE'VE achieved

This year marks a huge milestone in the charity's history as we take ownership of our building following the completion of the Community Asset Transfer from Aberdeenshire Council. This move secures our premises and provides a stable base to develop our service provision further.

2019-20 has been full of achievements as we've expanded the services to offer additional school-age social groups, created the Young Adult Project and adapted MusicALL to include a yoga segment.

key numbers

512
different
individuals directly
impacted upon

2,573
participations
in services and
groups

364
sessions took
place across 18
service streams

1,047
volunteering
hours from 74
volunteers

£ income

Unrestricted funds	£123,132
Restricted funds	£40,247
Total Income	£206,004

expenditure

Charitable activities	£192,802
Governance	£ 1,558
Total Expenditure	£194,360

balance sheet

Current Assets	£149,222
Fixed Assets	£29,565
Current Liabilities	£30,054
Net Current Assets	£163,379



Westhill 10k - runners from Tesco



Inaugural Ball



Christmas Fayre volunteers

fundraising in 2019-20

This year has marked our best period of fundraising to date with over £70,000 in donations from individuals and local businesses. We are overwhelmed by the generosity of our supporters.

Once again we were the proud charity partner of the Westhill 10k running event in June 19', generating almost £3,000 for SensationALL.

In another first for the charity, we held 'A SensationALL Ball!' at the Holiday Inn in September, hosting over 90 guests for a 3 course meal and entertainment. The event was a huge success, raising almost £10,000 and we are eagerly looking forward to the next one!

Our community fundraising events continue to go from strength to strength and this year the Summer and Christmas Fayres were boosted by an amazing contribution from our teenage service users who were involved in organising raffles and manning refreshment stalls.

SENSATIONAL supporters

We would like to express our gratitude for ongoing financial support from our key funders:



Thank you to all the businesses who supported us with donations in the last year, including:

- Fulcrum
- Fairhurst
- Apache North Sea
- APS Financial Ltd
- Architectural Doors & Windows
- Seven Incorporated Trades Widows Fund
- Tesco

Not to mention all the amazing groups who came to help us to paint, decorate, garden and clean our centre:

- M&S Westhill
- Westhill Men's Shed
- STATS Group
- Wood Plc

We couldn't achieve so much without our amazing volunteers who give up their own time freely.

Special thanks to our dedicated board of trustees:

Bob McCracken	Outgoing Chair
Janine Chalmers	Incoming Chair
Susan Kay	Co-founder
Tom Pates	Treasurer
Aileen Reid	
Theresa Roper	
Valery Burnett	
Stuart Bews	
Clare Livingston	





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