

TOGETHER WE MAKE MARYHILL



Here in Maryhill, we believe that partnership is the key, and one that has allowed us to explore and engage and go on some amazing adventures in this last year! This report will give you a little glimpse of this as we continue to partner with the Immaculate Conception and reaching new heights in our Together We Make Maryhill venture. It's been another super-busy year full of activities and events with our community. We hope that you enjoy seeing and hearing about it all!

Young People and Families

We love our community in Maryhill and want to see people thrive and grow and so we always start at the beginning - working with and prioritising families. Our work with children and young people continues to grow and grow. Our summer Holiday Club is a huge initiative as we gather a group to work with, grow their skills and confidence and then follow through with that group throughout the year. And what an amazing group of young people they are!



Although the focus is on running an activity for primary aged children – a huge gift to our community through the long summer holidays – it is the way that the teenagers take the lead that has become the game-changer! As the adults in the room, we provide the framework and the encouragement, but it the young people who plan, prepare, and provide all the energy needed to run a fun-filled programme. This year again the team was made up of a young people from all backgrounds including young people from the Immaculate Conception. The benefits of this partnership are obvious. It allows us to double our numbers and for “the young team” to meet each other and to make friends. In a city of green and blue shades we offer a very different narrative. Throughout the summer we nurture our young people to lead groups, run games and crafts, and take on a part in the drama – to name just a few of the roles.

We also offer a whole range of activities and trips through the summer to thank the teens for their hard work and to give them the opportunity to find their voice and to grow as individuals in a different context from home and school. These afternoons test our skills to explore what will build the group and provide the right environment to include everyone. This year the huge successes were the 'high ticket' items ... the Silent Disco and Nerf Wars alongside the more domesticated BBQ and time out on and in the water at Loch Lomond.

Our main meet up with the young people throughout the year has been the fortnightly youth group called 'Breakout' – and it's the gift that keeps on giving! It's an activity completely shaped by and for the young people. We've loved these times together and are amazed at the power of social games and the simple joys of 'family' activities like baking. Being able to talk about and create the food that we eat and enjoy is a wonderful gift. We were so touched when a number of significant birthdays were celebrated in the group – cakes were made, candles lit and life stages were marked in community. When sometimes home life is hard, we need spaces like this to be the 'safe space' to learn and to grow.



Older People

As much as we are here for families and young people first – we are here for everyone. It didn't take us long to realise that engaging with all ages was a great strength to our work and offered the breadth of opportunity that all benefit from. This year we focussed on one group we were particularly concerned about – those who have been recently bereaved. For nearly ten years now, two of our staff have offered the Seasons for Growth programme in local schools. It's such a valuable resource that we're able to offer and was originally designed only for children to help them navigate change and loss in life – of all shapes and sizes. A programme for adults was later developed and we decided that this could be a really valuable asset to offer our community. And so we found two volunteers (one from each partner church) who were keen to share their skills in this way and enrolled them in training to become Companions – the name for facilitators in Seasons for Growth. We've now run two groups and we're planning a third. The group has been very well received and found to be of great value by those who took part. Not only does it offer coping mechanisms and different ways of thinking about things, it also builds peer support between participants and this can be invaluable at what can feel like a very lonely time of life.

Radical Hospitality

We have a number of activities which we've been running for what seems like – for ever! And we don't apologise for that. We recognise that when serving our community, it's not always helpful to chop and change and to drift into new areas of work. People appreciate stability and that we are always there for them, so when we're offering a service which is needed and appreciated, we work hard to make sure that we can continue to offer it week in, week out. Our most obvious example of this is our Warm Welcome programme. It started on the back of Covid when we partnered with other churches and community groups to make sure that there is a Warm Welcome open Monday to Friday where people can go for free food, warmth and community. Along with the Immaculate Conception, we host two days and help deliver a third.



Each of the Warm Welcomes has its own approach and its own feel but all of them are wholesome welcoming environments where people can nip in and out – if they just want something to eat – or stay a while – offering the opportunity to meet new friends and build deeper connections within their community. Each venue has its regulars – often those from the recovery community or with significant challenges in life. Numbers never give the whole story but in this case they might help give an idea of the scale of the needs being met. In the past year, we've served roughly 746 baked potatoes, 1,362 Friday Fakeaway meals, 1,724 toasties, 2,488 bowls of soup, and 2,182 rolls and sausage. This is of course just the physical need of feeding people. We can't put numbers on the conversations had, the friendships made or new connections woven.

Our Friday Fakeaway meals are an example of meeting need. As we try to reinvent foodbanks and challenge dependence around this vital service – so we saw the lack of food provision in the neighbourhood over the weekend. We discussed a number of different ideas and decided on what we could realistically offer in our context: the answer was meals for people to take home. We decided to run a one month trial, handing out the meals (both meat and vegetarian) from our Friday Warm Welcome. The fact that they're readymade means that, in a worst-case scenario, someone can eat them cold or ideally they can be heated up for lunch or dinner over the weekend. The initiative soon proved popular and it's been running ever since. It's not the ideal solution to the problem, there is so much more that we would wish to do, but it helps fill the gaps and get people through to Monday, when they can face up to another week.

Another activity which have become a part of our most loved events is our 'Pop Ups' in the community – usually located at our local supermarkets but also now at community festivals too. This is our chance to celebrate the seasons and to give away hot drinks, to meet people and to hear their stories. It's a wonderful opportunity to build community, to have real conversations with people about what matters to them and to explore whether we might be able to offer something to help, or direct them to someone who can.



This year was also special because we got to celebrate the sixth iteration of the People Make Maryhill awards. It's a really big piece of work and involves gathering nominations from throughout the community and inviting these 'unsung heroes' (people who quietly work away in the background to make Maryhill a better place) to the awards night. And then at our version of the Oscars - there are around fifty winners

chosen and from all walks of life to receive an award. This year this included a number of group awards alongside the amazing individuals that were recognised for their community spirit. They included local environmental groups, schools teachers going the extra mile, long serving volunteers working with vulnerable adults and young people (as usual stealing the show, with heart-warming stories that give you hope for the next generation). It was a truly inspirational evening hearing about so much good work being done in the community, by the community, for the community.

Challenge and change

As we review our work and assess the social impact of our services, so we look to ensure that we are secure in all of our structures and methodology. It's been a really hard year. At times, the challenges of sustaining the work and our own high expectations took its toll. A fabulous member of our staff team intimated that it was time to move on. Iona has served with us in various roles now for 10 years and it will be a huge loss to us and we are taking time to review and reflect on what skills we need to replace all that Iona has embodied in her role.

Volunteering capacity continues to be a huge challenge. Across the third sector, charities are struggling to bring in and keep volunteers – and despite mostly bucking the trend – we too face difficulties. We know the value of the work that we do and we don't want to stop serving our community in the variety of ways we currently offer. We also have ideas and hopes for new activities we want to develop but it's difficult to bring those dreams to life if there is little capacity to carry them out.

We know the power of volunteering – for both the volunteer and the those who benefit from the activity offered – but we need to continue to find new ways to communicate that to people and engage them in our hopes for the community. This is something we're seriously looking at: reviewing how we find volunteers, how we support them while they're with us and how we nurture volunteers to get the best out of the experience – even if that means moving on from us, to other activities which suit them better, to paid employment or maybe even to slow down, if health requires it. As ever it is all about relationships, which is a great strength of our work. We go deep and long and if we can't make this work – no one can.



Real life stories

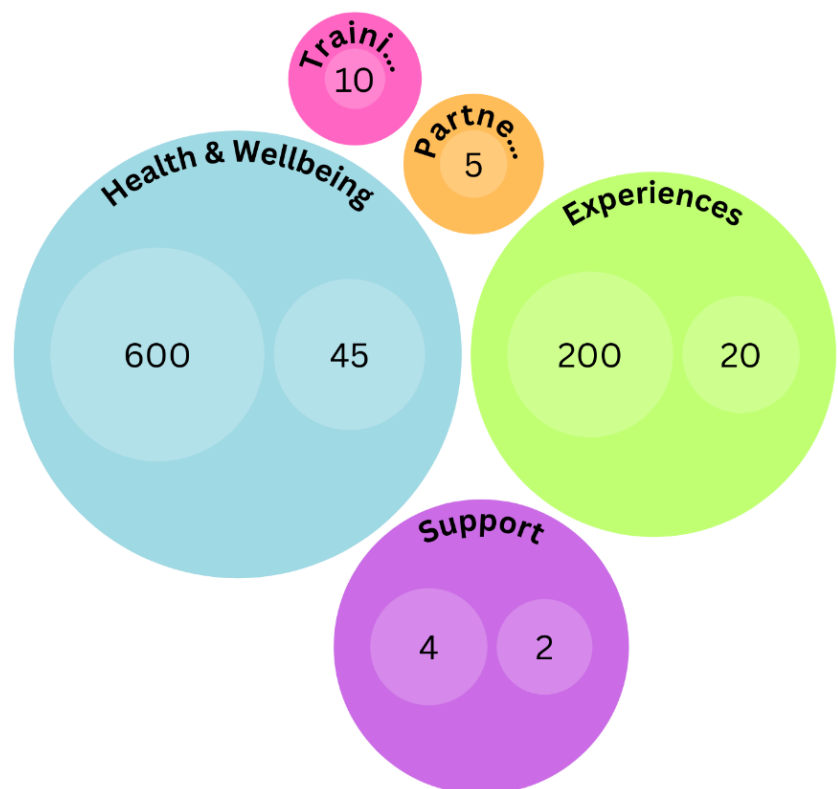
As much as we work for the whole community, it is each individual who counts and we know that funders love to hear the difference that is made in the lives of individuals. So, this year we'd like to share a little of the stories of Barbara* and Kelsey*.

*Barbara is one of our regulars at the Warm Welcome. She is elderly and has spent time in hospital and mental health care this past year. The Warm Welcome is a life-line for her and so many others. Barbara builds her day around the simple interactions of getting herself out the house, the short walk to the building and the conversation around the tables. The fact that we can feed Barbara is a great comfort to the family. Barbara's son has realised the intervention that the Warm Welcome provides and sees how vital it is to Barbara's mental health. So much so that he kept us all informed of Barbara's hospital stay

and took time off work to help her make a return to the group when she was able to do so. And the amazing thing is how much these interactions become a circular thing. With Barbara giving as much benefit to the group as she receives and the way in which she was missed and asked for – followed by the joy at her return. The Warm Welcome is where the community comes together and is celebrated.

*Kelsey hit a big birthday with us and it was celebrated with cake and a lovely celebration. The fact that her friends in the group wanted to mark her 18th Birthday with us was quite unexpected, but of course, lovely. Kelsey has been navigating the transition out of school and into further education and it's been a rocky road. Kelsey has lived most of her life now in the UK and has English as a second language. She has needed to be self-reliant, with a single parent working night shifts and needing to work herself from a young age alongside her schoolwork. These challenges have not held her back. Her dreams are big - Kelsey hopes to study Medicine. This year her grades on leaving school did not match her dreams and it was the leaders of the Breakout group that she felt able to share her sense of profound disappointment at a dream dying. We were able to support her in this time and enable her to assess the pathways possible. Kelsey is committing to college and the long way round to meet her dreams. Having the support to write personal statements, CVs, and navigating wider achievement pathways has been vital to Kelsey's journey so far.

*Names have been changed



Social Impact

There's a lot going on – sometimes it feels hard to keep track of it all! We like to see things as circles – circles are inclusive and make everyone equal. Numbers only ever tell a fraction of the story but they help paint a picture. Here you can see the activities grouped to show the number of beneficiaries on the left and the number of volunteers on the right (with Partnership and Training only involving volunteers). But for us, the important factor remains the individuals represented by each number and the story that each person carries. As we move forward into another year, we continue to seek the individuals and ask what we can do to support our community.

Baird Trust | Bellahouston Bequest | W M Mann Foundation
Gemmell Bequest Fund | FISCAF | JTH Charitable Trust

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