

As we approach the end of our first year as Mary's Place® CIC, we wanted to reflect and share some details on our progress and performance.

We are increasingly confident that the service provided by Mary's Place® is both needed and appreciated.

We are proud of our Mary's Place® participants' achievements and very grateful for the support from our donors and well-wishers.

**Vision:** provide newly registered professionals with a supportive and safe environment where they can transition from student to professional with confidence, reflecting on personal growth while connecting with like-minded peers.

**Mission:** to offer holistic support for newly qualified professionals through a combination of professional expertise and wellness practices. Mary's Place® empowers individuals by fostering gratitude, reflection, awareness, connection, and self-empowerment, helping them thrive, and remain in their new careers.

## Key achievements and impact

8 well being events in-person and online delivered.

48 participants have joined our live well being events.



We submitted our first grant application to the **Amin Abdullah RCN Foundation** in October 2023.

We were unsuccessful for this competitive award, but received very encouraging feedback about our work and aspirations.



Mary's Place® delivered a well received session in the Compassion Cafe at **Nursing Live**, in November 2023, a national event which attracts over 3,000 delegates.

Julie qualified as a **Sound Healing Practitioner** to enable Mary's Place® to include sound healing in future events.



## Key achievements and impact (continued)

Hosted a **Fundraising Ball** in March 2024 in West Lancashire. Tickets sold out before we started any formal advertising and the response exceeded expectations, both in the income generated and feedback during and afterwards.



We worked with **Claire House Children's Hospice** to deliver a staff development day. We are looking forward to continuing this strand of our work with Claire House and other providers.



A set of Mary's Place® **Self-Coaching Cards** was developed and shared with participants at live events.



## Financial Summary

In total, from the Mary's Place® Ball and through Just Giving and independent donations, just over £8,000 has been raised – thank you to everyone who has contributed.

## Challenges and learnings



We *spectacularly* underestimated the generosity of those attending the Ball.

Thank you if you came along and joined in the fun on the evening, offered prizes or support ahead of the event.



We learned more about managing money as a CIC.

We learned a B2C approach where we work directly with newly qualified staff is powerful, but perhaps not the most efficient route to reach many people.



We are therefore developing a model to work with NHS Trusts and will share more news on that, soon.



## Unexpected outcomes from this first year as a CIC...



**Steven Bartlett, BBC Dragon and Entrepreneur** was thrilled to hear about our work and wrote a lovely note in a card to inspire all Mary's Place® members. We used this as an opportunity for an April Fool's prank and created quite a stir on social media! What we learned from this experience was the power of engaging a high profile celebrity. Our social media referring to Steven Bartlett gained the most attention, to date. Support from those with influence is important to help us reach and help more newly qualified staff.



As Mary's Place® started to gain momentum, we were advised to **trademark the name**. This was surprisingly easy (in the UK). It cost £170 and took a couple of months. The name Mary's Place® is important. Obviously it is a huge link with Mary-Lou, but also our other inspiration...

**Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band.** Bruce has a song called Mary's Place (based on a Sam Cooke song of the same name). Bruce and the band played it at Mary-Lou's first ever concert (aged 6) and at the time she said "mum, they are playing my song!". The thoughts of receiving a cease and desist letter regarding our use of the name Mary's Place® made the decision to trademark an easy one for our Directors!

## Bruce Springsteen playing in Liverpool for the first time ever

In late September, Bruce released 5 UK tour dates for 2025, solely in the North West: Manchester and Liverpool. It's like he knows they need to be here to support Mary's Place®! Interestingly fellow band member Steve van Zandt, has an organisation 'Teach Rock' which supports teachers... seems timely to get the Mary's Place® teachers project on the go. Synchronicity?

## Future Plans



Increase our online presence to grow reach; we were reluctant to consider Facebook initially as we needed to be sure that's where the potential participants would hang out – experience and research has shown us that it is, indeed, the platform of choice. Next six months: grow the audience and add further content.



Develop **our offer for teachers** in response to suggestions and our own observations: "8.8% of the profession left in 2022/23 for reasons other than retirement"



Initial planning has begun for an even larger scale **Fundraising Ball** in Autumn 2025

Register your interest here:

<https://www.marys-place.co.uk/celebration>



## Acknowledgements

We extend huge gratitude to all who have supported Mary's Place® in whatever form, we could not have achieved any of this without you. Special thanks to our Directors: Chris Bilboe, Alison Booth, Louisa MacDonald and Meg McVey for ensuring integrity and fairness in our decision-making.

Thanks to Jennie Reay from Healing Time, Birkenhead, for allowing us to use her beautiful space for our in-person events at a charitable rate.

Huge thanks to Dr Victoria Wilson-Crane (Auntie Vic) for preparing this annual report.

## How to get involved



Do you offer a well being service, in person or online, that Mary's Place® participants might benefit from? We'd love to collaborate, if so.



If you can think of other ways you could work with us, do get in touch.



## A few reminders from our 'scrapbook'



**“... I voted for change; for those less fortunate than myself, for the NHS staff that I have grown up admiring thanks to the tireless work of my brilliant mum and her equally brilliant colleagues, and for school teachers and university lecturers who have been pushed to the brink of exhaustion...”**

**-Mary-Lou Abbott LLB, the inspiration for Mary's Place® 13 December 2019**  
an extract from a post on Facebook, one day after the UK general election