



**annual  
report  
2022**

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# overview

Stepping Stones Learning and Leisure is a charity that provides meaningful and worthwhile activities by listening to, learning from, and working with adults with learning disabilities.

Our weekly programme of activities includes art, drama, dance, and music. People who attend Stepping Stones can learn new skills, share experiences and broaden their horizons.

Activities are delivered at a community centre, but we also work off site in partnership with other organisations in the area.

**2022 was our first full year of face to face service delivery since 2019.**

## introduction from our chair of trustees

### **BACK TO THE FUTURE IN 2022 - Stepping Stones was firing on all cylinders**

Welcoming our students (both old and new) back for a full twelve months of - in real life - activities felt that the good, old times had finally returned. We rounded off this successful year with a spectacular Christmas Disco, complete with a Strictly-styled talent show and a glitter ball!

Never ones to rest on our laurels, the stars aligned to help us draw breath. Secure funding in 2022 (and confirmed for 2023), together with the additional expertise brought in by the new trustees meant that we could take stock, listen to our students and supporters, and plan for the future based on feedback and evidence. We have a solid base to maintain and grow and we are committed to doing this well.

Many thanks, as always, to our supporters, carers, staff, trustees and most of all, our students. You are our inspiration and I am forever amazed by your zest for life. Watching your dance and music performance; viewing your art work; eating your allotment fruit and vegetables and seeing you prance up a catwalk talent show, dancing to Abba whilst wearing a top hat and a feather boa is pure magic!

Thank you.

Lynn Bransby, Chair of Trustees

# report from our treasurer

I am pleased to present the Treasure's Report for Stepping Stones Learning and Leisure for the fiscal year ending on 31 December 2022. This report and accounts provide a summary of our financial activities over the course of the year and our position at year end.

## INCOME

During this fiscal year, our charity received a total income of £100,641 which compares to £65,885 in 2021.

Our primary sources of income as in previous years were:

- 1. Donations:** Generous foundations, charities and businesses provided funding totaling £65,891 to support our work. Of this amount, £30,000 from Terra Firma Charitable Trust was granted in 2022 and is included in this year's accounts but relates to the provision of services in 2023.
- 2. Grants:** We received £26,250 from Southwark Adult Learning Services during the year. This is based on the number of unique users of our services.
- 3. Subscriptions:** Users of our services pay a nominal fee for attendance and income from this source during the year was £8,458.

## EXPENDITURE

Our charity incurred total expenses of £63,943 during the 2022 financial year compared to £54,217 in 2021.

The major expense categories were:

- 1. Salaries and tutors fees:** Our major expenses during the year, at £55,595 relate to the salary for our operational manager and the fees paid to our tutors, all of whom work tirelessly to provide outstanding services to our users.
- 2. Activity-related expenses:** Administrative costs relating to hall hire and other activity-related and office expenses were £8,348 during the year as we returned to a more normal structure of in person classes.
- 3. Governance Costs:** Costs including accountancy fees and insurance were £1,684 for 2022

# report from our treasurer

## FINANCIAL HEALTH

We are pleased to report that our charity remains financially stable. Our current assets as of 31 December 2022 stand at £126,223 which is held almost entirely in cash at bank and a small amount of accounts receivable.

The trustees continue to monitor our financial position carefully to ensure that, as a charity, we have a secure future ahead of us. We remain prepared for the unexpected through maintaining a healthy reserve fund while ensuring we are meeting our obligations to our funders to make full use of the resources made available to us.

Our accounts are independently examined annually by our accountants, Gibson's Financial Limited, and their separate report containing more detailed financial information is available and filed on the charity commission website.

**We look forward to your continued support as we work to further develop our services during the coming year**

Jennifer Walmsley, Treasurer

# report from our operations manager

The structure and routine of Stepping Stones weekly activities is the foundation for a community that provides reassurance and facilitates resilience. It is from this secure base that trust is built and where opportunities to broaden horizons emerge.

The return to a full programme of face to face delivery was a significant step in 2022. Over this year as our confidence has grown, we have been able to be together more, to talk, listen and share.

Here are some of the highlights and achievements of 2022

## REBUILDING

We have delivered a varied programme including art, music, digital, dance and drama classes at our community centre base. Our weekly timetable is back to pre COVID number of classes. Hours of delivery and number of sessions delivered have all increased, along with the number of people attending each session.

We have been able to further increase our reach through continued partnership work at a local residential home where music sessions are delivered, as well as offsite gardening activities at a community allotment.

ART . DRAMA . DANCE . DIGITAL SKILLS .  
GARDENING . KEEP-FIT . MUSIC

**295**

sessions delivered  
16% increase from 2021

**580**

activity hours  
40% increase from 2021

**90**

service users  
50% increase from 2021

## RETURN OF THE SUMMER SHOW

We have sorely missed our Summer Shows in the last two years. It was a much anticipated and triumphant return to the stage on Friday 15th July. The day was filled with joy, and fuelled by the determination that had kept us focused throughout lockdowns and restrictions.

We are so grateful to the supportive and enthusiastic audience that came along to acknowledge and celebrate the achievements of our performers.



# ENRICHMENT

Our digital skills group helped to organise two very popular social activities during the year. Both events provided much needed opportunities for socialising, new experiences and fun.



**Seaside  
Outing**



**Christmas  
Party**



Catriona Finlayson, Operations Manager



# evaluation

During this year we are grateful to have achieved increased stability and security. This has given us time to reflect and consider how we are meeting the needs of the people who attend our activities. An accessible survey was conducted in Autumn 2022. 27 surveys were completed, a response rate of 40% of St Faiths class attendees at that time. We also invited carers and families to respond to a separate survey and received 13 responses.

## RESPONSES



88% responded that coming to Stepping Stones makes them feel very good or good.

85% said they enjoyed the class, 78% liked seeing their friends and 70% said they liked getting out of the house.

Carer feedback was very positive, highlighting engaging and interactive services that have a positive impact on the well being and happiness of the people who attend our activities.

100% of people who responded thought we provided excellent value for money.

**"Its an asset to the community and the people that attend"**

**"I really like learning new things"**

**"Something to look forward to each week"**

**"Communication and service is fantastic. A nice sense of community for the people supported"**

**"Excellent communication skills. Excellent human relationship. Excellent show of love and empathy"**

**Social activities and more classes at St Faiths were the most common suggestions for new activities from all responders to both surveys.**

# acknowledgements

We are incredibly grateful for the funding we have received during this year. It has underpinned all of the successes and accomplishments detailed in this report, and it has also opened the doors of opportunity for 2023.

**On behalf of everyone at Stepping Stones, we extend huge thanks to The Peter Minet Trust, The Terra Firma Charitable Trust, Southwark Adult Learning Service and the Southwark Neighbourhood Fund.**

St Faiths Community Centre and Church have provided support and encouragement throughout the year and we are always so grateful for the warm, welcoming and wonderful space that we get to we call home.

Our tutors, volunteers and trustees have all demonstrated great care and creativity - this year has had many highlights, underpinned by a lot of hard work and commitment.

Carers, support workers, friends and family - thank you for your invaluable contributions in sessions which help us to build a strong and supportive sense of community.

And to our amazing service users - your strength, resilience, unique talents and skills enrich our community every day.

# THANK YOU

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