

# spotlight

on Children & the Arts

Spring Edition 09

## A JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY

by Donal McCabe, Land Securities



Hundreds of children stamping their feet, clapping their hands and shouting in unison may not be everyone's idea of inspiration. Indeed over a number of years inviting them into your workplace to demonstrate their artistic skills may be considered lunacy. Perhaps at times it was, but was it worthwhile? Certainly.

Land Securities has worked with Children & the Arts for four years after starting a journey to open up its shopping centres to the local community through engaging children with art forms that may have otherwise escaped them. Like any corporate, we may have wrestled with getting the most out of our sponsorship. Whether it be in trying to get a reputation for working hard to be a trusted part of the local community or being happy just to know that you were. We may also have balked at the extra work it involved for some of our shopping centre teams and questioned the cost / benefit of the effort. But on reflection what we cannot escape from is that through working with Children & the Arts our actions achieved so much.

We helped engage hundreds of children with the arts. We saw our shopping centres blossom as part of their local community. We learnt important skills in engaging with and promoting the local community. We learnt to appreciate that education and engagement are the responsibility of everyone and we learnt that people from all over the country can be brought together by business and the arts and create great things.

Watching a dozen schools put on their show at our Create-a-Quest project finale this year was a pure delight. Not because of the setting, or the undoubted skills the pupils, teachers and local art institution had demonstrated in the performance but through the enthusiasm, concentration and smiles that were there to see in every child's efforts. We set out to help children discover the arts and ended up discovering how arts can discover children: now that is worthwhile.

## START SNAPSHOT: LITTLE ANGEL THEATRE

Little Angel Theatre has been providing high quality puppet theatre for young people in and around Islington for over 45 years. Set up in 1961 by John Wright (father of Joe Wright, director of *Atonement* and *Pride and Prejudice*) LAT is taking part in its second year of Start.

This year LAT is working with Year 3 classes from six schools across Islington. Their project began with a performance of Roald Dahl's *The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me*, followed by two days of puppet making workshops.

**We're the only class doing it,  
working with real experts!**  
Pupil, Downhills Primary School ”

At Kentish Town Primary School, a school serving a very mixed area of social and private housing, the children displayed incredibly high levels of concentration when their focus in everyday lessons is usually very low. Across the board teachers noticed how the children helped one another and worked together outside their usual friendship groups.

**It really enriches their learning and  
increases their motivation to learn.  
It does wonders for their speaking  
and listening skills, and their self  
confidence. They are immensely  
proud of their finished products.**  
Class Teacher, Kentish Town ”

The culmination of the project was a Festival Day where all the schools were invited back to the LAT to perform their puppet shows to one another on stage.

LAT's Start project is an excellent example of the benefits of long term funding. The success of the first year's project has ensured the schools' commitment to the partnership in year two, resulting in a project that was both hugely enjoyable and a powerful learning experience.

**I thought it was fabulous!**  
Pupil, Kentish Town  
Primary School ”

## A CLASSICAL HIGHLIGHT – MUSICQUEST REACHES 10,000 CHILDREN AT THE END OF ITS SECOND YEAR

In February 2009 MusicQuest, (Children & the Arts' orchestral project wholly funded by Classic FM Music Makers charity and supported by Yamaha Music UK and Classic FM), drew to the close of its second year with a series of five regional finale concerts across the UK.

MusicQuest is a three year project that introduces children between the ages of 7 and 11, who might not otherwise have the opportunity, to classical music and encourages teachers to use music in their everyday teaching practice.

This year The Philharmonia Orchestra travelled to Bradford, Stoke on Trent, Kilmarnock, Great Yarmouth and Middlesbrough delivering workshops in schools and performing at concert hall venues for all the children involved. By the end of its second year MusicQuest has provided 10,000 children with a unique classical music experience.



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## CATALYST TEACHER TRAINING DAYS

Since November 2008 Children & the Arts has hosted a series of five professional development days for Key Stage 2 teachers in Hampshire, Liverpool, Birmingham, Bristol and London.

### CATALYST book for teachers

Each *Catalyst* day has been designed by Children & the Arts to introduce the arts into the classroom, focussing on Storytelling, Drama and Music. Arts professionals have led workshops in order for teachers to gain practical skills in using the arts in their everyday teaching and they have also had the chance to meet guest speakers including award winning authors, storytellers and directors of national arts organisations.

Every teacher who has attended has received a limited edition of the *Catalyst* book, which includes 60 inspirational activities to use in the classroom covering Dance, Poetry, Music, Storytelling, Theatre and Visual Arts. The book also gives practical information on planning arts projects and working with external artists and arts organisations.

The final *Catalyst* day will be held in Newcastle in June 2009. Keep checking [www.childrenandarts.org.uk](http://www.childrenandarts.org.uk) for updated information on this day.



## ROYAL PARKS FOUNDATION HALF MARATHON

On Sunday 11 October 2009, The Prince's Foundation for Children & the Arts is taking part in the Royal Parks Foundation Half Marathon.

The 13.1 mile route goes through the beautiful Royal Parks – St. James's Park, Green Park and Kensington Gardens – whilst taking in some of London's oldest landmarks, including Buckingham Palace and the Houses of Parliament.

With over 12,000 runners taking part and plenty of fun for the family, including The Brakes Food and Fitness Festival in Hyde Park, there's no excuse not to take part!

Visit our website for further details on how to secure a place in this year's Royal Parks Foundation Half Marathon and find out what benefits there are for running in aid of Children & the Arts.

Places are on a first come, first served basis so register quickly!

<http://www.childrenandarts.org.uk/about-us/how-you-can-help/royal-parks-foundation-half-marathon>

## SHOWCASING ARTISTIC TALENT – THE GREAT ART QUEST FINALE

On Thursday 26th February 2009, children from schools in London, Sheffield, Preston and Cambridge attended the finale of the The Great Art Quest, Children & the Arts' national visual arts project sponsored by GAM.

The finale, held at The Prince's Drawing School, took the form of a celebratory exhibition of the work created by the children throughout the project. They took part in two workshops including one led by Neil Buchanan of Art Attack! fame and world-renowned artist Gavin Turk

spoke on the importance of the visual arts.

The Great Art Quest, which has been running since September 2008, has linked four art galleries with their local primary schools. Graves Gallery (Sheffield), The Harris Museum and Art Gallery (Preston), The Fitzwilliam Museum (Cambridge) and The Courtauld Institute of Art (London), have been working with schools that have limited art facilities and would otherwise be unable to organise cultural visits of this kind.



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Children & the Arts is also delighted to announce that GAM has renewed its sponsorship of The Great Art Quest for a second year. From September 2009 to February 2010 The Great Art Quest 2009 will link The Whitechapel Gallery (London), spacex (Exeter), The Hunterian Museum and Art Gallery (Glasgow) and The Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art (Gateshead) with local schools, enabling a further 1,000 children to experience the visual arts for the first time.