

PRESS RELEASE: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Local charity Magic Me has been nominated for a prestigious Liberty Human Rights Arts Award.

They are nominated for:

“Magic Me uses the arts to bring different generations together to spark ideas and build better, closer communities. Musicians, dancers, artists and drama specialists lead brilliant creative projects that stimulate conversations between older and younger generations.

Through their dedicated volunteer base, their Cocktails in Care homes project combats isolation and loneliness in later life. They also use artists’ residencies, intergenerational theatre performances and filmmaking to explore concepts of gender, identity, age and migration. Their range of inventive work challenges stigma, crosses social and cultural divides and celebrates human connections.”

The charity runs the Cocktail parties at care homes across London. Volunteers, often drawn from young professionals, come to the homes to create a great ‘night out’ and bring a little of the outside world into the lives of the residents and providing opportunities for those without many visitors to have someone to talk to on a social level. Each month there is a new theme linked to the season or the month – in the summer there was a seaside theme, at the start of the autumn a ‘raining cats and dogs’ theme.

Volunteer party managers and other volunteers are all given an induction by the charity before signing up for parties which happen on Wednesday and Thursday nights from September to July.

This is just one of many intergenerational projects the charity has run in its 3 decade long history, often pioneering in its approach the charity at heart believes that age should be no barrier to creative participation and that older people are an asset, not a burden on society.

In 2014 their project ‘Bin Ageism’ explicitly tackled misconceptions about ageing and older people. In 2016 they were commissioned by Public Health Tower Hamlets to help with their Action on Loneliness Project aimed at tackling isolation and loneliness of older people in the borough.

Director Susan Langford says

“Seeing ourselves as a Human Rights charity is something new, but the rights of older people have always been there in what we do. Our work really does address the need for us all to continue to treat older people as humans – with rights. This is particularly true for those living in care homes. Our work demonstrates that they are valued, and often lets the care staff see them in a different light as more rounded people. By not dumbing down what we offer artistically we acknowledge that they are entitled to the same full and active life, the same cultural choice, that they enjoyed when they were younger. We have all been young and we know what that feels like, but we only experience age as we get to it
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In the last eighteen months Magic Me produced its largest programme ever with new partnerships and challenging pilot projects. Building on the great relationship they have with care home communities they brought leading performance artists Punchdrunk Enrichment, Lois Weaver, Duckie and Upswing to create wonderful work with residents and staff, and their Action on Loneliness project linked 60 socially isolated residents with adult volunteers.

Magic Me has been based in Tower Hamlets

The Liberty Human Rights Awards are annual awards are run by the human rights and civil liberties charity Liberty. The results will be announced at the awards event at the Royal Court Theatre on 24th October.

We all need autonomy and social connectedness to stay well and healthy and our work bringing the generations together benefits all ages. There is, also, an extra benefit not just for our current older population, but for all of us; by working collaboratively, as peers, alongside older people, the children involved go on to develop a better understanding of and empathy. We hope that as they grow into adults this will translate into better services being commissioned, better communities being enabled and a better old age for everyone.”