



Our Impact

Since our first project in 2014 we have developed several six-month projects supporting over three hundred members in Colchester and London. All our members have reported back saying that they have gained in confidence and have developed a positive outlook in life. We've had family members and friends comment upon the positive impact which the Black Dog Theatre Creation has had upon members lives and their relationships. The Black Dog Theatre Creation has received positive recognition from leading mental health individuals including Dr Tilbury and organisations such as the West Euston Partnership, Colchester Community 360, Camden People's Theatre, Camden Council, Re-Think London SIBS and the Together organisation. We were praised for our work during Covid:19 lockdown where we quickly adapted to online digital formats and continued to offer support. We have produced fifteen successful sell-out productions, several audio plays and have explored a range of different performance techniques including the use of puppetry, masks, use of pictures as stimuli, oral storytelling and music in performance. All with successful outcomes.

We have also developed a spin-off project with the Puppet Soup called "Puppetry for well-being."

"The Black Dog Theatre Creation has become a life-line. It's a wonderful group where people can make friends, gain support and learn to live and connect again." (Kim)

"...a little gem where creativity flows and artists grow and where our confidence blossoms" (Pauline, Member)



Duncan's story

I had suffered a bit of a mental breakdown. My life quickly spiralled out of control. I became depressed, anxious and a recluse. I then found the Black Dog Theatre Creation through the West Euston Partnership. As soon as I spoke to Alfie, he quickly reassured me and gave me the confidence to venture out and attend the weekly workshops. The workshops were really welcoming, enjoyable and really creative. I liked that the group was very diverse in terms of ages, backgrounds and we all became friends and a wonderful team. During the lockdown, Alfie adapted the group online and it became a lifeline for us all so that we didn't feel isolated. He developed opportunities to work with other artists and we created audio plays. When the lockdowns ended, we all worked together to make sure that we all felt happy to return to face-to-face meetings. We created a lovely outdoor theatre tour of Fantastic Mr Fox as part of the Camden Alive Festival. I've now got myself a full-time job, I'm joined lots of other am-dram groups and love helping backstage. Although I still love the Black Dog Theatre Creation!



Carol's story:

My life has not been very easy. I had a rough upbringing that was often abusive and unloved. Whilst still young I was sexually assaulted which left me both physically and mentally broken. Since then, I have never had any confidence. I've lived as an almost recluse – hardly ever going out. A few years ago, I was on a bus when it crashed, and it left me with painful injuries which have caused me to become a prisoner in my own home. Until I started BDTC. Apart from going to church, BDTC has been my only link with the outside world. It has slowly taught me to socialise for the first time in years. I now have friends and through drama and performance, Alfie has helped me to become confident again. With his encouragement and positive nature, he has helped me to start travelling on the buses once more. I know that I am not getting any younger and my health has continued to slowly get worse. (I am now in a wheelchair) yet Alfie has adapted activities and got me up on stage and helped me to perform in front of an audience. BDTC has taught me to believe in myself and that there are no barriers.

Artistic partnerships

We are proud to have created strong links with local performance venues and artists which have supported our work. (And artistic growth) We have worked with The Arts Theatre London, Oxford House Arts theatre, Colchester Arts Centre, Kelvedon Institute, St Pancras Library, Camden Alive Festival. More recently, we have developed long-term links with The Camden People Theatre, Colchester 360, Old Diorama Arts Theatre. We thrive in supporting local emerging, freelance artists and have supported Lighting designer Jake Newton, Puppet Soup, Mask maker Jacob Anderson, Photographer James Taylor, Musician Clive Clifford-Frith, Storyteller Lauren Gleison, Community Education Practitioner Tom Davies, Actor Nick McDuff and musician Ed Nunn. We regularly work with East 15 and Central School of Speech and Drama and have become members of the Camden Artists Network.

12 facts about us:

1. Since our first project, 100% of our members have reported back saying that they have become more confident, independent and feel more positive about life.
2. We have produced 15 sell out productions and several audio plays.
3. We performed a special production of A Christmas Carol at the Actors Church, Covent Gardens to raise money for The Mill Grove Children's home.
3. Dr Tilbury, Senior Occupational Therapist and Actor has hailed the project as being a wonderful and positive group which impacts positively upon the community.
4. All our members have reconnected with the local community.
5. We took part in the Camden Alive Festival performing Fantastic Mr Fox across several parks in Camden.
6. We take pride in developing strong links with community organisations and artists to engage with our community including West Euston Partnership, Rethink, Age UK, Community 360, Camden People's Theatre and more.
7. During Covid we were hailed for the on-going support which we gave to the local community.
8. We regularly support free-lance artists in developing their work.
9. We have successfully explored several performance techniques such as puppetry, oral storytelling, music and every picture tells a story.
10. We are constantly evolving, adapting our practise to remain fresh and exciting as well as finding ways to engage.
11. We have successfully created opportunities to encourage people to talk about mental health issues affecting their local communities.
12. Our audience size has consistently grown. Our projects are oversubscribed and we have built an online audience too!



Community Engagement



A Volunteers Story

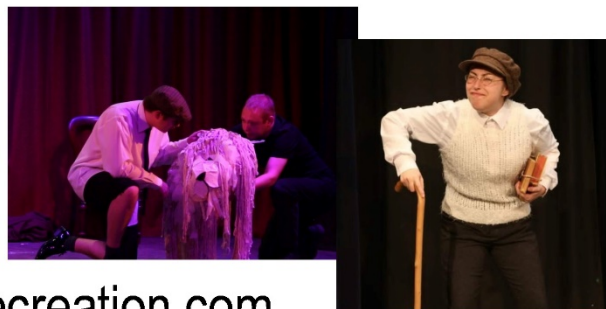
My name is Mark. I have to say when I first decided to volunteer to help with the Black Dog project, I wasn't sure what to expect. But as soon as I arrived at my first session, I knew it was going to be a rather special experience and I haven't looked back since. Everyone – both staff and members were so inviting and encouraging. I've made some wonderful friends and learnt so many new skills. From organising, supporting others to performance skills. It was Alfie who captured my love of music and used it to help the group and nurtured my enthusiasm in becoming a technician and helping with the shows. More recently, I finally became a published author!



We have learnt that having a clear and effective Public Engagement strategy is a core element of any community theatre project. We have developed strong links with both local artistic and community organisations so that we can work together to reach our target audience and make the most positive impact. We have become securely embedded within the community, forged long-term partnerships with The West Euston Partnership and Community 360. Both organisations support us in engaging with the local community particularly those from marginalised communities, ethnic and cultural and social groups which are often be overlooked. We regularly work with Rethink and Dr Tilbury who support our mental health element offering additional sign-posting for both our work and participants, ensuring that everyone feels safe, supported and safeguarded. Our other partnerships include:

- Camden People's Theatre
- Third Age Group (Older people)
- Age UK
- Old Diorama Arts Theatre
- Rethink
- Colchester Community 360
- Kelvedon Institute
- Camden Council
- Colchester Borough Council
- Royal British Legion
- Tesco Bags for Life
- Asda Community Foundation
- Dr Tilbury
- Local libraries including St Pancras Library, Witham Library, Loughton Library
- Hythe Community Centre
- Arts Council, England
- Local doctor surgeries
- Regent Park Singers
- Open Road LGBTQ+
- ELOP
- Terrence Higgins Trust

Our public engagement strategy and development plan is consistently evolving in order to meet the current local needs of our communities,



For more information visit:

www.blackdogtheatrecreation.com