

SPARKING ENGAGEMENT



CREATIVE
PROGRAMS AT
LUTHERAN SERVICES

 **Lutheran
Services**
There for you

**BEAUTIFUL ACTS THAT
CREATE MOMENTS OF
SHARED WONDER.
PERHAPS TEARS.
ALWAYS LAUGHTER
AND JOY.**



Creative engagement celebrates the art of participation. It involves a commitment to working with individuals and groups to explore art-making processes and the ability to express oneself and communicate in surprising ways.

The benefits are both demonstrable and evidence-based. Engaging in creative work can open up new worlds and social realities, leading to genuine gains in personal and group-based outcomes.

Creative engagement may involve re-discovering old dances or learning new steps; exploring new ways of painting and conceptualising the world; reminiscing about life, and seeing these memories performed.

Beautiful acts that create moments of shared wonder. Perhaps tears. Always laughter and joy.

Most importantly, engaging in creativity opens up possibilities. It transcends the limitations of how we may view 'ageing', 'disability' or 'youth'—embracing the idea that everyone can participate and continue to grow, learn and contribute to their communities throughout their lifetimes.

This booklet is a celebration of participation—creative acts, stories, memories and exciting collaborations. It is testimony to the values of Lutheran Services and its dedication to creative social care.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Balfour".

Professor Michael Balfour



Michael Balfour is Head of School and Professor of Theatre and Performance at the University of New South Wales School of Arts and Media. His area of expertise is arts and health—in particular, creative engagement.

Michael has worked on international studies exploring arts-based projects in correctional facilities, in sites of conflict, with returning veterans and with newly arrived refugees.

He is the recipient of the Arts and Health National Leadership Award and the Creative Partnerships Australia Award for a project working with people with dementia.



SPARKING ENGAGEMENT

Creative programs are a fundamental part of the care and support Lutheran Services provides.

These programs are central to our vision of supporting those we serve to pursue the lives they hope for. They are key to building vibrant, well connected communities for our services.

Our creative programs are enthusiastically embraced by our residents, clients, staff and volunteers, as well as families, friends and the public. They are generously supported by those who fund our work and shape our services. Creative programs provide a spark that illuminates everything we do at Lutheran Services.

Creative programs benefit the people and communities we serve by:

- stimulating memory, cognition and imagination
- promoting physical activity and mobility
- improving health, wellbeing and mood
- providing outlets for thoughts and feelings
- maintaining established interests and abilities
- developing new modes of personal expression
- encouraging participation and inclusiveness
- building social connection and community engagement
- celebrating diversity and capability
- rising above personal challenges and perceived limitations
- creating exciting new possibilities.

IF ONLY I COULD...

POIGNANT PERFORMANCES
THROUGH LAUGHTER AND TEARS



**WHEN I WAS YOUNG, I WAS TOLD
NOT TO DANCE BECAUSE IT LED
TO FURTHER EVILS. NOW I'M 90,
I'M PAST ALL THE FURTHER EVILS,
SO NOW I CAN I DANCE!**

KEVIN, TABEEL RESIDENT

If Only I Could... is a celebration of the role of dancing and music in the memories and daily lives of Queensland seniors. Aged care residents were paired up with professional dancers to recall, recreate and relive much-loved dance routines from the past.

Director Angela Chaplin, with Arts Queensland funding and initial collaboration with Ausdance Queensland, developed the project over a two month period. Residents from Immanuel Gardens (Sunshine Coast), St Andrews (Gold Coast), Tabeel (Lockyer Valley) and Zion (Brisbane) Aged Care were keen participants.

- It was a marvellous experience.
- We worked with real dancers. I never thought I would do something like that.
- There were people in our group I never thought would be involved, but they stole the show. A lot of people came to see us. It was really moving. People cried. It was great to be involved.
- I danced on stage and played the keyboard. It was fabulous.

Val, Tabeel Resident

- What thrilled me most was the very real collaboration that occurred between the residents and the professional dance artists. Seeing them work together as equals creating performance demonstrated that it is possible to have a world in which we are all valued.

Angela Chaplin, Director

'The music and the memories. It was wonderful to see everyone dancing. You are leaving us with wonderful memories. Watching and participating was terrific.'

Joan, Zion Resident



A public performance featuring Tabeel and Zion residents with their professional dance partners was staged at the Judith Wright Centre of Contemporary Arts in November 2018—to the thunderous applause of some 200 people.

Angela is developing the creative concept with Lutheran Services to stage a professional season of *If Only I Could...* at Queensland Performing Arts Centre in 2020. Corporate sponsorships and professional collaborations are now being sought for this production.

- *It shows you are never too old to rise to a challenge, try something new or re-explore something you loved. Dance manifests the same joy, the same liveliness that it always did.*

- Judy, Tabeel Manager

- *It was a real privilege that so many shared stories of dance—to hear how dancing has marked moments in people's lives. You have all been dancing a lot longer than us.*

- Sue Gillingham, River City Ballroom

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auSDANCE
QLD



CONFUSION INCLUSION

JAPAN AND LOGAN
MAKE MAGICAL DANCE



Confusion Inclusion was a magical night of dancing and storytelling presented by performers drawn together from two disability services on opposite sides of the world—our own Keystone Centre in Logan and Popeye from Nagoya in Japan.

A true spirit of inclusion—making the world a more accessible place for all—was at the heart of the event. *Confusion Inclusion* was a great collaborative effort by people of very different capabilities, from very different places.

And what a performance it was! People who had never performed on stage before were given the opportunity. They had planned and practised their moves for months leading up to the moment when they stood behind a curtain in darkness, nervously whispering to each other.

When the curtains were pulled aside, the Keystone crew commenced their Food Fight dance to Elvis Presley's *All Shook Up*. They had created the dance moves themselves, drawing inspiration from favourite foods, embodying everything from chocolate to lasagne.

**CREATING ART IS THE BRIDGE
THAT LEADS US FROM A WORLD
OF CONFUSION TO A WORLD
OF INCLUSION.**

STEVE MAYER-MILLER, CROSSROAD ARTS

We had a lot of fun. It was my first time on stage. I loved dancing to the Elvis song. The Japanese dancers were great and are good friends. I can't wait to dance on stage again.

Matthew, Keystone Client

The event took its name from the performance by the Popeye troupe. The Japanese dancers called their routine *Confusion Inclusion*—to foster a philosophy of inclusion, while tackling the challenges and confusion that can be encountered along the way.

Confusion Inclusion was presented at the Butterbox Theatre in Logan in March 2018. The project was made possible with funding from Logan City Council for Keystone, while Popeye sourced funding from Japan to conduct their tour to Brisbane.

For those in the audience, it was a wonderful show. For those performing, it was the opportunity of a lifetime.

The Keystone Crew is set to make a reciprocal visit to Japan in January 2020 to once again perform with Popeye.

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ZION ART SHOW

ART DRAWS
COMMUNITY TOGETHER



I used to paint when I was younger. I enjoyed it a lot. My interest in art was rekindled when I came to Zion. It's great to be part of an art group. We have a wonderful teacher. It's stimulating and keeps your mind busy. I find it very therapeutic.

Irene, Zion Resident

Each year, the Zion Art Show presents artworks by residents of Zion Aged Care at Nundah, as well as artists from the local community. Held in the St Paul's Church Hall near Zion, the exhibition is open to the public and presented to professional gallery standards.

Most artworks on display are available for purchase and are typically snapped up on opening night. Artworks contributed by Zion residents are the product of ongoing collaborations with art therapists.

The Zion Art Show is always a popular event—with both the contributing artists and the attending public.

• Art is the best therapy. It's very absorbing and relaxing. Your brain and hands are working together. I get a lot of satisfaction out of it. You're free to do whatever you like. You do things you didn't think you could do.

• Betty, Zion Resident

• The art program engages people and brings them together. It encourages them to explore their thoughts and feelings. They're free to do whatever they want. We can work on anything from individual paintings to group mosaics. I feel privileged to work with people, learn about their lives and help them achieve things they may not have thought possible.

• Dani, Art Therapist

• I didn't realise I could paint until I came here and Dani helped me. You don't know what you can do until you sit down and try.

• Sylvia, Zion Resident

• I grew up drawing and painting. It was my favourite activity when I was a little boy. My mother drew. I drew before I did anything else. I got a scholarship to art school. I loved it. Later on, I did caricatures and drawings for the newspapers, in addition to my work as a journalist. I still like to doodle today. It's very absorbing.

• Harry, Zion Resident

THE SOUND OF SYMBOLS

PERSONAL STORIES
UNLOCKED



With the creative goals all ticked off for *The Sound of Symbols* performance, feedback from residents shows the emotional, communal and community payback was the real triumph.

Respect, friendships and deeper understanding were the outcomes from the three-month process, culminating in an on-stage performance attended by more than 150 friends and relatives.

The Sound of Symbols started with a modest goal: to make a performance-worthy production inspired by the interests and talents of aged care and retirement living residents.

It should be no surprise in the honouring of people's diverse stories that a broad, yet nuanced performance was the result.

- To celebrate residents' stories and history through dance, live music, soundscapes, symbols (props) and drama (improvised and scripted)
- An all-ability approach to choreography, inspired by Axis Dance Company
- Exploring symbols and props to drive the narrative, expressing the personality and history of a resident

- Hidden challenges could be overcome and new things accomplished.
- It gave me goosebumps.
- It has given me the opportunity to learn about other people's stories.

I wrote this piece of music in 1942 for a competition for a film score in Europe. It didn't win, but I am still playing it today.

Paul





PASTIME MEMOIRS

A COLLECTION OF MEMORIES FROM OUR PAST
AND STORIES FROM OUR IMAGINATION



Written and presented by the residents of St Paul's Aged Care at Caboolture, Pastime Memoirs explores the significance of the pastimes, special occasions and memories that define us as individuals and bind us as friends, family and community.

These memories were told through the voices and performances of residents, combined with symbolic stage and sound design.

Pastime Memoirs took shape over several months as St Paul's residents would regularly get together to playfully explore familiar topics and fond memories. It was all about sharing stories and a laugh.

Pastime Memoirs was shared with family, friends and the community through a performance at St Paul's in October 2018.

IT'S BEEN WONDERFUL HEARING
EVERYONE'S STORIES, GETTING TO
KNOW EACH OTHER AND SHARING
WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILIES.
WE'VE HAD A GREAT TIME PUTTING
IT ALL TOGETHER IN A PLAYFUL WAY.
IT ALL CAME FROM THE RESIDENTS.

NATALIJA, CREATIVE PROGRAMS TEAM

*It's good to hear of
other people's experiences.
It's good to share stories and
bring back memories. My family
are coming to see the show.
I have never been bored since
I came to St Paul's.*

Olive, St Paul's Resident

- We'd go to dances at the church hall.
- It was always a special occasion. We'd
- wear evening dresses that we'd borrow
- or make ourselves. I can still feel my feet
- burning at the end of the night. My friends
- and I would go home and sit in a circle
- with our feet in a bucket of iced water.
-
- I spent the whole day fishing. I had a
- wonderful time. You wouldn't believe the
- fish I caught. They were biting well that
- day. A kingfisher tried to take some of
- the fish I caught. Phyllis had to come
- and fetch me because I got so carried
- away. We cooked the fish for dinner.
- It was delicious.
-
- Charlie wore a navy blue suit. He looked
- very handsome and was the perfect
- gentleman. He even placed a handkerchief
- in his palm so as not to mark my dress
- when we were dancing. I was so thrilled to
- be wearing the new dress I'd been saving
- up for. It was silk with big pink flowers and
- soft green leaves. Charlie and I danced for
- what seemed like hours and hours.

REMINISCE

SHAKING OFF FEAR AND FINDING A VOICE,
PART OF THE DEMENTIA UNRAVELLED PROJECT



Reminisce tapped into memories through movement, visual cues and touch, unlocking communication and connecting families with their loved ones who have dementia.

Families who took part in the creative program—as part of a larger community-wide project *Dementia Unravelling* held in Biloela, Central Queensland—said the engagement process broke down stigmas around dementia.

The *Reminisce* program ran over eleven sessions and culminated in a performance of *The Red Dress*. People living with dementia and their loved ones explored key stages in life. This chronological approach helped participants and families to take a longer view of their lives.

Each of the sessions explored the many different ways people remember. From sounds and touch and visual sense memories, to body memories like dancing and throwing a ball, to emotional memories that bring back times of joy, sadness and love.

Sessions were activity based and used several strategies such as music, photos, sounds, games, objects, craft, dance and storytelling to trigger people's memories.

- *I think their relationships have been strengthened. The multi-layered approach to exploring people's stories was part of the project's success—sparking conversations and storytelling. That layered approach brought people into the present—into themselves again.*
- Clare Apelt, Creative Programs Team
- *I now know how to draw a story out of Mum and connect with her better. I'm not so scared of dementia anymore.*
- Reminisce participant

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ALICE IN TRINDERLAND

THEATRE PIECE PROMOTES
CONNECTION AND INCLUSIVITY



Trinder Park Aged Care residents drew on the Lewis Carroll classic to celebrate difference and explore the world of people with dementia. *Alice in Trinderland* was an interactive outdoor performance and picnic involving Trinder Park residents, staff and volunteers, as well as professional performers and local high school students.

An enlightening and accessible cultural experience for all, the production involved theatre, dance, music, costume and games. The presentation was staged as promenade theatre—with audience members coming to the performers—enabling people with mobility issues to be fully involved in the production.

- Only a third of the high school students had grandparents and they'd never really met people with dementia. At the same time, the residents had little connection with school students. Now they have a common ground.
- David Gerrard, Creative Programs Team
- Not only is it an incredible opportunity for our students to work with industry professionals, it also creates a beautiful bond with their community, building understanding and building relationships.
- Rebekah Bruneau, Drama Teacher, Loganlea State High School
- It's the first time that I've ever spoken to children like this, apart from my own children. It's made my day. I'm weeping now!
- Trinder Park resident



Alice showcased how people experiencing dementia benefit from performing. Involving a range of performers, the project reached a broad audience as staff, family and friends of participants became characters at the picnic. This in turn allowed a wider community to better appreciate the abilities of people experiencing dementia.

Alice promoted connections, self-confidence and independence for all who participated. It also helped shape a model and tradition for creating a regular outdoor theatre piece that promotes wellness, inclusivity and community capacity.

- *It was really fun and creative and we met some really great people.*
- Loganlea SHS student
- *To see the residents have the confidence to perform and come out of their shells is amazing. Everyone has achieved something. It was absolutely delightful.*
- Susan, Trinder Park Lifestyle Team
- *I'm in my nineties now. I enjoy mixing with people like this. I'm one of those people who like to have little chats. I think the schoolkids enjoyed it too.*
- Trinder Park resident

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EXPERIENCED
ENOUGH TO
DELIVER.

SMALL ENOUGH
TO CARE.

Lutheran Services is a not-for-profit organisation that has been serving the people and communities of Queensland since 1935.

We provide quality, contemporary care and support for people of all backgrounds, at more than 20 locations throughout Queensland.

Older people. Young people and their families. People living with disability or mental illness. People experiencing domestic violence or hardship. From Tallebudgera to Biloela.

JOIN US

To find out more about our creative engagement programs at Lutheran Services, or explore possible collaborations, please get in touch.

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THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS



THIS BOOKLET IS A CELEBRATION OF PARTICIPATION—
CREATIVE ACTS, STORIES, MEMORIES AND EXCITING
COLLABORATIONS. IT IS TESTIMONY TO THE VALUES
OF LUTHERAN SERVICES AND ITS DEDICATION TO
CREATIVE SOCIAL CARE.

PROFESSOR MICHAEL BALFOUR