



'Inside Outside' gallery at Altnagelvin Area Hospital

One young boy who took part in the 'Inside Outside Gallery' project at Altnagelvin Area Hospital in Derry gets excited now every time he is attending for treatment because he knows he will see his artwork displayed on the hoardings.

For Nicola Laight, stakeholder engagement co-ordinator at Farrans Construction, this story sums the whole project up. "It has given people who are ill something else to focus on," she says.

Farrans Construction partnered with Arts Care on this project as part of the firm's corporate social responsibility under the Considerate Constructors Scheme. One of its key objectives was to address mental health and wellbeing on healthcare construction sites and in the wider community.

The project involved Arts Care's artist-in-residence at Altnagelvin Area Hospital, Bronagh Corr-McNicholl, doing workshops with ten different groups. This resulted in 50 artworks being displayed on the hoardings around the three-year construction works for the hospital's north wing redevelopment.

The groups who took part included service users of both adult and child mental health services, cancer service users, local schools and Farrans Construction staff. For example, elderly people from Creggan Day Centre, mental health day care clinics and Farrans staff took part in one workshop where they created a series of prints, intaglio, linocuts and poetry for the gallery.

"The beauty of this project was that Bronagh worked with service users across a wide range of different healthcare services, as well as with Farrans Construction staff," says Jenny Elliot, chief executive of Arts Care, who came up with the concept. "As a multimedia artist, she can turn her hand to anything. It meant the artworks could be transcribed digitally into large-scale images that were installed safely and robustly."

ON-SITE WITH WORKERS

To engage with Farrans Construction staff, Corr-McNicholl set up a table in the middle of the site where they could come during their tea break, explore how to make artworks and express how they felt about working there. "It was an environment where they were able to forget about everything and open up about mental health and stress," says Laight. "At first, they were apprehensive, but Bronagh facilitated things by making the process relevant to them and helping them to produce blueprints that related back to the



A participant in the 'Inside Outside Gallery' project. Arts Care and Farrans Construction were winners in the Allianz Arts & Business NI Awards 2019

BUILDING ON CREATIVITY

Winners of the Cultural Social Responsibility Award at the Allianz Arts & Business NI Awards 2019, Arts Care and Farrans Construction, have delivered a unique concept which has made a real difference to mental health and wellbeing on a healthcare construction site

construction site."

It gave the staff involved a huge sense of achievement and pride to see their names up on the hoardings next to their artworks. One participant said that being given the opportunity to create a piece of artwork to display was like putting their own stamp on the building. "For us as a company, it gave us a better understanding of what we're doing and how our hard work benefits the community," adds Laight.

In Elliot's view, this project has shown the powerful impact creative partnerships between the arts and business can have on the mental health and wellbeing of staff and service users on a healthcare construction site.

"The Inside Outside Gallery has provided a platform for the voice of some of the most vulnerable and sick adults in our community," she says. "The new build lies alongside the cancer centre and it is so beautiful now to follow the route. It makes that journey into the hospital less stressful and has created something valuable for the community. People are less aware of it being a noisy construction site."

The success of this project has made Farrans Construction keen to replicate it

across other construction sites as part of its commitment to build social value and leave a lasting legacy in the communities it works in - as well as invest in the health and wellbeing of its staff.

Arts Care is a reasonably small charity, with around 100 artists on its register. This collaboration has significantly raised awareness of its work and potential to do more. "As the first of its kind on the island of Ireland, the Inside Outside Gallery has given us a real opportunity to showcase a model that works within the healthcare context and could be rolled out internationally," says Elliot.

Arts Care and Farrans Construction were also shortlisted for the New Sponsor Award and the Staff Engagement Award in the Allianz Arts & Business Awards NI 2019.



Artworks created as part of the Inside Outside Gallery project