

Musical Connections

www.musicalconnections.org.uk



December 2016

Thank You from Honeysuckle Singers to the Two Ridings Community Foundation Many thanks to the Two Ridings Community Foundation's Arts for Change grants programme, which has supported our singers at Honeysuckle House over the past year. The group has gone from strength to strength, and we are hoping it will continue to grow in both numbers and musical prowess over the coming months. Firm friendships have been formed within the group based on a shared love of music and good company – see below for a great photo of some of them at the Big Sing.



A Wonderful Christmas Big Sing with Millthorpe School

On 6th December, Millthorpe Secondary School opened their doors to us once again for the Christmas Big Sing. The school has hosted this event for several years now, and never fails to delight our guests with their unique blend of musical talent, youthful enthusiasm and thoughtful hospitality. During the afternoon, performances from the school's fabulous jazz and ukulele bands brought everyone to their feet, and it was great to see several generations dancing and singing together. Musical Connections regulars also provided fantastic entertainment with a range of Christmas favourites and, in the case of Margaret Jenkins from Windsor House, an absolutely spellbinding performance of Moon River. Not to be left out, the staff choir outdid themselves, belting out Slade and Wizzard to a packed dance floor!

Several members of the audience were overwhelmed when Elly Fiorentini from Radio York made a surprise appearance and gave an impromptu performance of Silent Night with accompaniment from the ukulele band. Another special guest was Father Christmas, who took time out from his work in the office of Millthorpe's headteacher, to pop down and have a dance with a delighted Dot from Honeysuckle House!



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Huge thanks to Rufforth School!

Rufforth Primary School have been longstanding supporters of our work, taking part in several Big Sings and various other events with different Musical Connections groups over the years. This half-term, they have outdone themselves, not only making visits to Windsor House carehome and Gale Farm Court sheltered housing scheme, but also delivering a crowd-stopping performance at our Christmas fundraiser - AND they held a non-uniform day in school, which raised over £70 for Musical Connections – an amazing effort, for which we are hugely grateful!

We mustn't forget other key partners in our intergenerational work. St Aelred's school are regular visitors to Woolnough House and, only yesterday, the choir laid on a beautiful performance of carols with bell-plates for residents and staff. Ralph Butterfield and Fishergate schools are also firm friends of the project and, over the last week, have participated in hugely enjoyable Christmas sessions at Haxby Hall and Willow House. Last but not least, reception children visited Morrell House to share their captivating nativity play with residents.



University students do their bit

York University's Music Education Group (MEG) has been taking an increasing interest in working outside the formal education sector, which has enabled Musical Connections participants to access new instruments and explore unfamiliar musical genres in more depth than usual. This half-term, participants at Gale Farm Court have enjoyed a ukulele workshop, and Barstow House participants have had a go at African drumming. Abby Hall of York St John University and Joe Christie of the University of York also deserve a special mention for their ongoing and enthusiastic contributions across the project.



Community Fundraising for Musical Connections

Earlier this year, Musical Connections became a registered charity (no: 1165993). While opening up exciting opportunities for the project, this new venture also brings new challenges, not least raising enough funding to sustain and develop our work. We are very grateful for the efforts of some of our key supporters; Musical Connections was the nominated charity for the retiring collection at York St John University's Christmas concert at York Minster – a fabulous event, and wonderful to see a number of students who have worked on our project in action on this stunning stage. Equally, some of the council's sheltered housing venues have held fundraisers on our behalf. We know how much work goes into organizing these events and are extremely grateful for everyone's support – it is making a real difference to us and helping us look forward to the future with increasing confidence.

We held our own fundraiser at St Crux in the city centre yesterday. Despite the cold and rain, our choir performed brilliantly in the morning, drawing in the crowds with a range of catchy tunes and Christmas carols, and in the afternoon, participants from Honeysuckle singers and children from Rufforth school joined together to deliver a stunning intergenerational performance. Huge thanks to everyone who supported this event by singing, baking, contributing to and manning stalls and providing help with the background logistics – this was a real team effort, led admirably by our wonderful musician, Emma Tatnall.

If you're shopping at Waitrose, please think of us!



Throughout December, we are one of Waitrose's Green Token charities – if you happen to be in there shopping for Christmas treats, please do put a token in our box! And if you can help us in any way with additional fundraising, please get in touch! Contact us on 01904 373011, enquiries@musicalconnections.org.uk or write to us at PO Box 724 York YO1 0HL.



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