# Touching memory: helping young people get in




The Ardgowan Primary school created 12 memory boxes

Pupils from Ardgowan Primary School worked with museum curators and artists to explore the life of people living in Inverclyde between the 1950s and 1980s.

The project is part of the Hearts, Hands and Minds arts, design and activity strategy being developed in Glasgow. 54 pupils from Ardgowan Primary school worked with curators from the Mclean Museum and Art Gallery, artists from Greenock-based Rig Arts and NHS healthcare workers to create 12 memory boxes.

These boxes contained a handling collection of objects for use in memory work with adults with severe complex dementia needs in a new mental health care facility in the area.

Ardgowan Primary School embraced the project and staff quickly saw that it struck a chord with participants. Working with the McLean Museum and Rig Arts inspired pupils, and teachers saw that dementia resonated with many pupils, including on a personal level. This, combined with learning about recent heritage that family members could recall, offered inter-generational learning opportunities and discovery.

[quote]The project provided a safe space for some pupils to share that they had relatives living with dementia.[/quote]

The project provided a safe space for some pupils to share that they had relatives living with dementia. They could share their anxieties, and see that their family was not alone in dealing with these experiences.

Alzheimers Scotland delivered ‘Dementia Friend’ training to help pupils understand how people with dementia see the world, and the importance of colour, touch and smell to them. This showed pupils the benefits their handling boxes would have with recollection and memory work that NHS staff do with patients.

The headteacher was so inspired by this, that there is now a plan for the entire school to become a ‘dementia friend’ and receive training from Alzheimers Scotland. The school has also raised thousands of pounds for a dementia organisation.

The 12 completed memory boxes were exhibited at the Hearts, Hands and Minds exhibition at the Beacon Arts Centre which formed part of the 2016 Scottish Mental Health Arts and Film Festival.

For more information, please see the Touching Memory project blog.



Young people from Deaf Action on Calton Hill, Edinburgh Colin McLean Photography




**ns with £250,000 funding**

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