

Local Theatre Performance 'Reframes' Dementia

On Saturday 28th September, Chichester Festival Theatre hosted a special performance run by The Reframed Project and inspired by workshops at Sage House, a dementia hub in Tangmere run by the local charity Dementia Support.

The one-off performance of sung narrative-dance was attended by Dame Patricia Routledge, long-standing supporter of local charity Dementia Support and Chichester Festival Theatre. Participants of the workshops, who all either live with dementia or care for a loved one with the condition, also enjoyed the unique show.

The project has been awarded funding by Arts Council England and aims to 'Reframe' how dementia is perceived, using the experiences of people affected by the condition. To achieve this, local director and writer, Fiona Dunn, working with a composer, choreographer and film director, ran a series of creative imagination workshops at Sage House earlier this year.

These workshops explored the musicality of people living with dementia and their loved ones, using words, music, movement, poetry, storytelling and laughter. Each session encouraged participants to explore what friendship, love and laughter means to them in a fun and relaxed environment. These words were turned into lyrics, movements into choreography and experiences into stories.

Reece Jobe, Services Manager at Sage House called the piece an "incredible performance that will provoke every emotion. It was performed with such wonderful decorum while still highlighting the challenges that people face when affected by dementia".

The Reframed Project's aptly named "Fantastic Racket" performance was also filmed for a celebratory screening at Sage House at 2:30pm 9th October. This red-carpet event is an opportunity for participants to dress up and enjoy an afternoon of glamour in a safe and relaxed environment, particularly for those unable to attend the performance.

Fiona Dunn was inspired to create the piece of theatre after being inspired by the "wonderful, funny, inventive and moving conversations" she had while volunteering at Sage House's Day Breaks service.

Fiona adds; "We are honoured to be working with Sage House - their expertise and passion for their community is expressed every day in their bustling and vibrant building and we are excited to share our creative practices and give confidence to carers and families to work imaginatively. If we breathe, we can create".

The ReFramed Project is already making plans for future work in Chichester and across the UK. Fiona commented, "we could see from the reactions of the audience that there is a real need to bring this kind of joyous experience to more people, so we need to start raising more money to make more work!"

Sage House in Tangmere provides vital and life-changing support for families affected by dementia, including free, specialist advisors, known as Wayfinders, who help people understand how to deal with dementia, with or without a formal diagnosis.

Ends

Notes to Editor:

1. Dementia is now the leading cause of death in the UK. 1 in 3 people born since 2015 will develop dementia in their lifetime and the number of people living with dementia in the UK is predicted to rise to 2 million by 2050.
2. Established in 2014, Dementia Support is an independent local charity that has been operational since opening the doors of Sage House in West Sussex in 2018.
3. Our vision is "a society where dementia is wholly understood and accepted, enabling people living with dementia to be fully supported throughout the whole of their journey."
4. Our unique dementia hub brings a full range of services under one roof, including advice, guidance, activities, day care, and personal care. We support over 2,500 people affected by dementia in West Sussex.
5. We receive less than 4% of our annual income from statutory sources and actively fundraise to provide support.
6. The Reframed Project aims to challenge perceptions of dementia through creative channels. You can find out more at thereframedproject.co.uk.

Contact Details:

James Lovell | Head of Fundraising, Marketing and Communications
James.lovell@dementiasupport.org.uk |