Art Delivered to Your Door to Combat Loneliness in New Charity Project

Thursday 11 November, 2021

Paintings in Hospitals **announces OASIS, a pilot project created to ease social isolation and loneliness at home by connecting participants with art, creative activities, and communities of like-minded people.**

Launching in November, the OASIS project aims to place meaningful artworks, specially produced for individuals, directly into people's homes and to enable eligible participants to make new social connections through a range of guided conversations and group activities.

Initially launching in the Guildford and Waverley area, OASIS is a way for people battling with social isolation and loneliness to get together to explore new creative and cultural experiences, while lending a supportive ear or offering advice to others experiencing similar struggles.

Loneliness and social isolation are growing public health concerns in our ageing society. 50% of people over 60 are at risk of social isolation and one-third will experience loneliness later in life.[1] Research shows that loneliness is associated with poorer physical and mental health amongst older people. In particular, loneliness is associated with depression, and older people with a high degree of loneliness are twice as likely to develop Alzheimer's disease as those with a low degree of loneliness.[2]

Joanna Brendon MBE, the founder of the initiative who brought the concept of OASIS (Original Art for the Socially Isolated) to Paintings in Hospitals, knows the struggle people face in isolation from her own complex health challenges.

Joanna said: "I'm an all-too-frequent visitor to hospital. Initially, it was here where I discovered the work of Paintings in Hospitals. Coming home, I realised how fortunate I am to be surrounded by art, including my own, the creating of which is hugely important to my wellbeing. This led me to think that, while patients benefit from art in hospital, it is those isolated at home who really suffer from the lack of it, whether to soothe or stimulate.

This isolation pre-existed the pandemic but the virus shone a spotlight on it and exacerbated the problem for vulnerable people: people with chronic, and sometimes terminal, illnesses who don't often visit hospitals as there is nothing there to improve their clinical experience or outcome.

I'm in my mid-seventies, and still regard myself as very much alive, but I am realistic about my health conditions, so it was very important that whatever I set up was sustainable. Paintings in Hospitals has an exemplary reputation and seem to be the ideal organisation to take OASIS forward."

To deliver the OASIS pilot project, Paintings in Hospitals has partnered with Reconnections by Independent Age. Reconnections support over 65s who feel lonely or isolated. People want to connect in a variety of ways and the team listen to each individual and work with them to find new opportunities and rekindle a love of life. Whether it's discovering disco, bonding over bonsai, absorbing art, or forming friendships. OASIS will be launched with the Guildford and Waverley team and will bring participants together over a shared love of creativity.

Janette Powell, Reconnections pilots lead, said: "The whole concept of OASIS is so exciting as it fits beautifully with our approach of connecting people with what matters to them as an individual. We know that art can bring comfort, joy, inspiration, or a chance to lose oneself in a moment, distracted perhaps from illness or other challenges. We are keen to allow people to engage with whichever art form appeals to them and bring it directly into their homes. OASIS also presents an opportunity to connect individuals with each other, and it is this ripple effect that excites us. We can't wait to get started and are very keen to develop the idea further in the longer term."

Sandra Bruce-Gordon FRSA, Director & Chief Executive at Paintings in Hospitals, said: "Covid-19 has taught us all the true value of connection with creativity, with culture, and with other people. For many, the arts were a lifeline throughout the long lockdowns. We know people want this in their lives more than ever. With the isolation of the pandemic lingering, and with the winter approaching, now is the perfect time for Paintings in Hospitals and Reconnections to bring culture and connection directly to vulnerable people's doors through the OASIS project."

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ABOUT PAINTINGS IN HOSPITALS

Paintings in Hospitals is the first and only national charity of its kind. Founded in 1959, the charity uses art to transform care spaces and inspire better health and wellbeing for patients and carers. Paintings in Hospitals is partnered with 315 care organisations across the UK, lending its artworks and facilitating creative workshops. The Paintings in Hospitals collection holds over 3,600 artworks, including pieces by Bridget Riley, Antony Gormley, Maggi Hambling, Yinka Shonibare, Helen Chadwick, Anish Kapoor, Elizabeth Blackadder, Anni Albers, Ben Rivers, Catherine Yass, Alexander Calder, Dame Elisabeth Frink, and many more. In 2019 Paintings in Hospitals partnered with the National Gallery to bring a rare 17th-century masterpiece by Artemisia Gentileschi to a GP surgery in Yorkshire. And in 2020 Paintings in Hospitals partnered with Google Arts & Culture and artist Tom Croft for the global Healthcare Heroes virtual exhibition. The charity has previously partnered with the V&A, Arts Council Collection, Wallace Collection, and Hayward Gallery. Paintings in Hospitals is a Registered Charity (1065963).

Website: www.paintingsinhospitals.org.uk

Twitter: @artinhospitals

Instagram: @PaintingsinHospitals

ABOUT RECONNECTIONS BY INDEPENDENT AGE

Reconnections by Independent Age launched in January 2020. The team work within local communities to enable residents to feel more socially connected, improving health and wellbeing in later life.

Website: www.ReconnectionsLocal.org

Socials: @ReconnectionsGW

Independent Age is the charity behind Reconnections. They offer regular friendly contact, a strong campaigning voice and free, impartial advice on the issues that matter to older people: care and support, money and benefits, health and mobility. A charity founded over 150 years ago, we are independent so older people can be too.

Website: www.IndependentAge.org

Company Contact:

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