Generous £250K Donation Enables NHS Arts and Wellbeing Centre

Tuesday 24 November, 2020

A STATE-OF-THE-ART arts and wellbeing centre will be set up in Manchester to support NHS staff in the city.

The centre will be a “global first” and has been made possible thanks to a £250,000 grant from Barclays, which was donated to Manchester Foundation Trust Charity. The money was part of a £100million Community Aid Package set up by Barclays to support charities that help people and communities most impacted by Covid-19.

Staff, including health professionals, students and trainees, working at Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust (MFT) – a family of ten hospitals and community services in Manchester and Trafford – will be able to access the multi-purpose creative space.

Dawn Prescott is the Lime Art Programme Director and worked with Manchester Foundation Trust Charity in applying to Barclays for the funding. She said: “I’m still in shock – this is such wonderful news, the donation couldn’t have come at a better time.

“The impact Covid-19 has had on the arts and wellbeing has been very hard. The donation presents an exciting and monumental moment in history; the new centre will encourage personal development for our staff and a spirit of engagement across departments and divisions.”

Lime Arts is now in its 47th year and is one of the longest-running art and health organisations in the country. The organisation has received international recognition for its work over the years and it’s believed the new creative space will be of real benefit to users.

Studies have shown that arts interventions in health settings can improve communication, improve mood and psychological wellbeing as well as create an improved environment. (Wilson et al, International Journal of Nursing Studies, 2015). A pilot printmaking project held with MFT healthcare teams before the pandemic was shown to improve staff wellbeing for 96% of participants.

Dawn added: “This custom-built creative space will put MFT at the forefront of supporting NHS staff wellbeing in direct response to Covid-19 and present a ground-breaking global first.

“This will really help MFT staff to gain direct experience of the arts and will complement the excellent clinical care given to patients by our NHS teams.”

Lime Arts has previously worked with staff and patients on a number of notable projects across the MFT sites. For example, many younger patients may have enjoyed the robot and space-themed artwork on the walls of the X-ray department at Royal Manchester Children’s Hospital, which were designed by Lime Art artists in collaboration with the people who use that department.

The new arts and wellbeing hub will be housed in the Peter Mount Building at MFT’s Oxford Road Campus. However, staff from all MFT sites will be encouraged to access it, either in person or remotely.

Some of the Barclays money will also be used to support patient-focused art and music sessions on wards at Manchester Royal Infirmary. These sessions will include sound art, music, performance and live art, dance, creative writing and spoken word and storytelling.

MFT Chairman, Kathy Cowell OBE DL, said: “We’re incredibly grateful to the whole Barclays team for enabling this world first facility for MFT.

“Staff members have previously fed back on the impact access to art has had on their wellbeing and we are excited that the new arts and wellbeing centre will help to enable this offering to be made available to MFT staff in our family of hospitals and community.”

The £100m Community Aid Package was announced by Barclays in April this year. Alongside a colleague-matched fundraising initiative and the £10m pledged through their 100×100 programme, Barclays is donating funds to charity partners across the UK, Americas, Asia and Europe to ensure help reaches those who need it most. In the UK these partners include those who are meeting the immediate

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needs of low-income families, those facing financial hardship, isolated elderly people, NHS staff and key workers.

Nigel Higgins, Barclays Chairman, said: “COVID-19 has created an unprecedented social and economic impact in the UK, with many experiencing greater hardship due to the crisis. Incredible charities, such as Manchester Foundation Trust Charity have been playing a vital role in the UK’s response to the pandemic, ensuring urgent help reaches those most in need of support. As a bank we have been doing all we can for our customers, clients and colleagues, and we hope that by partnering with Manchester Foundation Trust Charity and many other charities across the UK, collectively we can ensure that as many people as possible in the communities in which we live and work are supported through this crisis.”

Company Contact:

Manchester Foundation Trust Charity

T. 0161 701 5114
E. emma.wright2@mft.nhs.uk
W. https://www.mftcharity.org.uk/

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