



0131 657 5680

077 9856 8218

Portobello  
High Street  
EH15 2AS

Annual  
Report  
2014-2015

# Trustees' Annual Report

From 6th October 2014 to 5th October 2015

## Letter from the Chairperson

This year we are celebrating 12 years of our charity and we are approaching ten years of the Holistic Health Project. We have seen significant changes through the years in these years of delivering a successful service to our community through the dedication, hard work and care from all our volunteers.

The interior and exterior of the building may change, and certainly the administrative procedures and approaches adapt constantly, but what remains at the core are our values and our purpose.

We have recently completed some renovation work downstairs in Portobello and Cláudia Gonçalves and Ana Duarte will be very busy beginning of the coming year preparing a whole new aspect to our services by renewing the main room into a holistic shop to help us become more self-sustainable financially.

Our gratitude to two trustees who retired this year: Tessa McKirdy and Mags Higgins. Both Tessa and Mags were closely connected to the Holistic Health Project and over the years supported it and helped put in place lots of very important procedures that were needed. Tessa will continue as a therapist and supporting our bookkeeping.

I would like to pay special tribute to Ana Duarte for the incredible support she has been giving to our charity. She has been very busy, versatile and creative coordinating volunteers, co-managing the charity, doing a lot of administration work as well as planning the new holistic shop. **Her dedication and service to 'the work' and the community truly is inspiring.**

It gives me great pleasure to write these words as, as always, these new directions are made manifest through our passion to help our community. That same passion which drives our volunteers who we value highly. With this in mind I will certainly look forward to the next ten years!

Mark Halliday



Co-founders Mark Halliday and Cláudia Gonçalves

# Objectives and Activities

This financial year are celebrating 12 years of excellence and being recognised as a leading provider of Holistic Health care in Edinburgh. We strive to provide the best practice, education and promotion of holistic approach to health and wellbeing.

Our services support people, decrease stress, prevent illnesses, improve confidence and self-esteem. It provides support, sense of belonging and community and also prevents people from developing future mental health issues.

The main focus of our charitable work is to support holistically people and families that are struggling with their health and wellbeing and are in a disadvantaged financial condition. They tend to come from deprived areas of Edinburgh. Those living in these precarious areas experience the highest levels of deprivation and suffering.

We help people: re-gain control of their physical, mental and social health; build their confidence; gain greater awareness and understanding of themselves and to help them live a fulfilling life.

The people whom our projects serve are the elderly, the impoverished, carers and people with ill-health. They tend to be on benefits, pensioners or with low to no income. They come seeking help, bringing with them a wide range of challenges, among which, poor mental health, trauma, sleep issues, bereavement, stress, anxiety, unemployment, carer responsibilities, physical acute or chronic pain, isolation, addictions, disabilities and life-threatening illnesses such as cancer and other conditions aggravated by their financial status.

This group face many challenges and disadvantages in comparison with more affluent members of society and are less likely to be able to access therapies which can assist with managing their health and wellbeing.

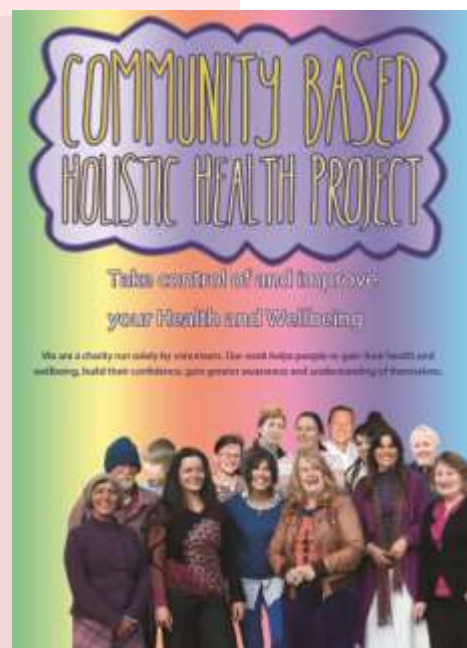
We believe that every human being should be able to access holistic care and connect with nature to have good health, positive mental health and wellbeing. We want to see people getting well, feeling happier and uplifted!

## Charitable Activities

As a result of our mission, we put together charitable projects that assist a variety of people:

- **HOLISTIC HEALTH PROJECT** - Our Community based Holistic Health Project is a wonderfully warm hearted project, offering support to people who are struggling with the twin challenges of poor health and low or no income. It offers 30 types of Holistic Therapies, all complementary to services clients receive from the NHS. People are given an opportunity to sign up for therapies which they feel most drawn to and if they have children, to come for the nature therapy programme.

This project is based on our belief that effective holistic approaches combined with orthodox medicine enable individuals to regain and maintain optimal health much quicker.



Our project is unique in that all members of staff are volunteers, and sessions are offered on a donation basis. If our beneficiaries cannot afford a donation, they access the project for free. We insist on our services being accessible to all that need it. Therapies were provided for a small suggested donation between £8 and £20 according to what user can afford to donate and often for free. This is 20% of what private therapies costs which is between £40 and £100 per session.

The number of registered users in the Holistic Health Project has risen from 50 to 405 since it first started most of whom self refer through word of mouth or through the “Edspace” website. Doctors have also started to refer people to our project. In the 12 months covered by this report 112 people accessed our Holistic Health project regularly in the year.

The people accessing our project are often in acute distress when they come to our charity and in acute need with ill-health. They are very vulnerable and largely drawn from those living on state benefits, pensions, or very low income. Within a couple of weeks after contacting us, our users have access to 6 months to a year of support. What our project offers is an ethos of supporting individuals to take charge of their own health, wellbeing and recovery.

We are offering a service where money is no barrier and those struggling with ill health and financially can enjoy the support that is usually only the privilege of the better off.



Long term improvements reported by service users include:

**“My shoulder pain is reduced. It is a long term improvement. The treatment has enabled me to continue keeping fit.”**

**“I’m much more positive, I look at things slightly differently...less worry. It really helped me very much.”**

**“It helped with my anxiety issues and slight depression. It cleared my mind. I have more energy, a lot less sleepless nights. It’s been a brilliant help.”**

**“I have more awareness of how the body works and changing attitude towards life. I am now practicing mindfulness and breathing. The pain relief needs me to keep having the therapies though.”**

The generosity and dedication of our volunteers itself is inspiring and encouraging to the people who use our therapies service. There is an ongoing community which reduces isolation and acts as a circle of support for those who need it long term to maintain their recovery. The therapies act to complement and add to conventional support that is available via the NHS. The NHS increasingly acknowledges that being able to access services like ours can make a real difference to people’s recovery and wellbeing in areas as diverse as recovery from cancer and prevention of mental health issues.

- NATURE CONNECTION FOR FAMILIES - In 2012, we started our Nature Connection for Families with children up to the age of 16 yrs old. The project provides opportunities for families to participate in a wide range of outdoors activities that enhance their wellbeing. It serves, not only families users of our Holistic Health Project, but also other disadvantaged families from Edinburgh and other areas in Scotland that are struggling financially and dealing with ill-health.

Providing free means of transportation with a mini bus to and from our project, this makes access easier for families to come closer to nature.

During the financial year of this report, we offered a variety of activities, which included: storytelling; conversations and games about bees; walking meditation; nature games; wilderness exploration and preservation; trust walks, which gently introduce our family and friends to each other and to the wonders around us; nature therapy.



The project helped families to leave their stressful environment, a state of isolation and depression to connect with nature for health and wellbeing. We achieved this by creating **conditions that ultimately led to integration, relaxation, positive changes in people's lives and in our community.** Participants achieved physical wellbeing and positive mental health and a **healthier lifestyle.** We received referrals from **Dr Bell's Family Centre, One Parent Scotland and Making It Work** and a support worker came from their organisations to support their families.



Users of the Nature Connection made the following comments:

**“It was a really nice experience with nature. Lovely people around here.”**

**“Both me and my son thoroughly enjoyed the session. We learnt a lot of varied things and met some lovely people. All the facilitators were excellent. We would love to come next time!”**

**“Great experience spending time outside the city, fun for children, meeting nice people, learning new skills, relax, very friendly atmosphere, very good for mental and physical health.”**

**“I didn’t realise that I could entertain my children without having to spend any money. After Nature Connection we look for parks and other nature places and have fun together and I don’t have to worry about not having money. The project inspired us to get out of the house a lot more and have fun in nature.”**

- THE PLANETARY BEE PROJECT

We are proud of our new project focusing on bees. These creatures, essential to our survival and responsible for pollinating countless plants, are so much under stress. Due to environmental changes, diseases and the usage of pesticides, their numbers are plummeting around the world. Our new project establishes a strong bee community in our Balerno woodland and permits them to live life as closely as possible to their natural rhythm. Rather than producing honey or renting our hives for pollination purposes, we allow the bees to do what they do best: tend nature in their own way at their own pace.



- HOLISTIC TRAINING – We have been offering throughout the year short courses which are run by our team of therapists. Some training courses are offered throughout the year, such as Reiki and Transformational Breath, while others are offered twice a year, such as Crystal Healing Training and Feather Stone Energy Healing. In the coming year we would also like to offer massage courses.

• VOLUNTEERING PROGRAMME - Our highly respected volunteering programme helps qualified therapists, including former service users, increase their confidence in their professional practise and gain more experience by offering our beneficiaries holistic support, thus contributing to a stronger, more resilient and supportive community.

This is what our volunteers say about our volunteering programme:

**“It helped me by building up my experience of therapies I offer.”**

**“It is wonderful to be able to practice certain therapies regularly”**

**“I have moved into working with people with mental health issues.”**

**“ Volunteering brought me back into the world and I trained as a therapist”**

**“I met the most interesting people. I don’t think I could really live without it”**

**“The project helped me immensely when my husband died....it did wonders. Other agencies didn’t help. I am 71 and retired and I am doing my masters in Reiki. ”**

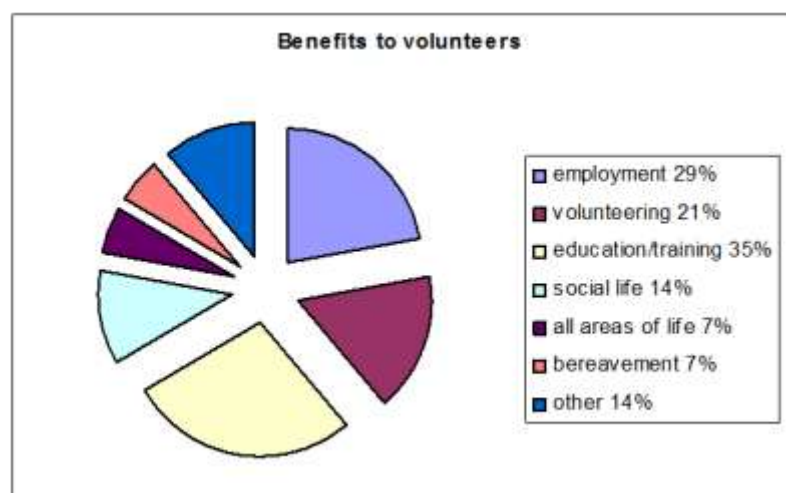
**“I discovered a gift I didn’t know I had: The gift of leadership. Volunteering in our charity also helped me to build my confidence in many areas. Because English is not my first language, been a volunteer also helped me to improve my writing skills big time. “**

**“When you grow in one area it flows through everything you do.”**

## Benefits of volunteering with us

In our latest Evaluation, our volunteers were asked the following question:

Has Volunteering made an impact on other areas of your life?



# Fundraising Events, Funders, Supporters and other income

We organised 8 busy and successful fundraising events throughout the year, raising a total of £2,541.

We also held a Fundraising Holistic Festival in October in Balerno raising another £1080. Due to the success of this event we have decided to hold this festival yearly to help us raise funds.

We are grateful to our funders and to those who supported us with time and expertise. We would not be able to make a difference in the lives of those who need the most help without them.

This year we were financially supported by Santander that gave us £4,752 towards costs of an administrator twice a week and Awards for All who supported the Nature Connection for families and training for our volunteers.

In addition to external funding we also self-generate income by renting out the therapy rooms for private therapists, the yurt for workshops and sales from our corner shop.



## Financial Review

We manage to keep the costs of our services to a minimum thanks to the generosity of **the volunteer team which, in this year's account contributed in kind donation a total of £75,404.50.** This was made of £40,320 (therapists), Management (£24,500), Day to day coordination (£12,800), Board of Trustees and fundraisers (£10,300) plus £2,460 in kind by volunteer of the Nature Programme. The project therapy in Portobello also benefits from the donation of rent free premises equivalent to £9,500 per annum from the co-founders.

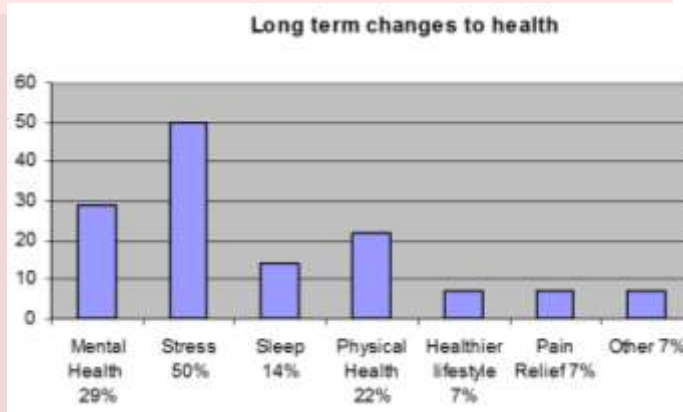
In the 12 Months covered by this report, our charity received income totalling £24,946 (2014: £25,738), primarily from our charitable activities, grants, fundraising and donations. The total expenditure was £31,611 (2014: £18,950) which resulted in a surplus of £6,665 (2014: £6,678).

A percentage of our Holistic Health Project sessions were given free to those who were in acute need when they indicated that they could not afford the smallest donation. Our charity is the only holistic centre in Edinburgh that offers therapies under £20 to those restricted financially, which makes our project unique in Scotland.



# What we achieved this year

Our Holistic Health Project was open for 42 weeks. We worked and supported 112 people who had health issues and were financially restricted. We delivered 305 holistic therapy sessions. Our latest evaluation showed that 79% of people interviewed reported lasting improvements to aspects of their health and wellbeing subsequent to attending therapies with the project. Many reported multiple benefits across a wide range of issues.



The Nature Connection for Families ran between April and October and delivered 10 Friday sessions. We helped 26 families composed of 28 adults and 35 children; these families were financially restricted or on benefits. We received referrals from Dr. Bells Family Centre in Leith, One Parent Scotland, Making It Work and self-referral from various families from our holistic community who took part on our programmes.

We refurbished our Yurt, held the Nature Connection within this space, and a few times rented it out to members of the community for workshops to help pay for our core costs.

In April, we had a Planning Day. Our volunteers came together to envision and dream a self-sustainable Planetary Healing Centre which has its own building and land. The dream is beginning to manifest and we are already taking a few steps towards self-sustainability by looking into setting up our holistic shop in Portobello soon.

In June 2015, Luisa Gonzalez donated a bee hive to our Charity. The hive has been held in our woodland in Balerno. We are testing a more natural method of bee keeping called the Peroni Method and this is a pioneer project in Scotland. Our co-founder Claudia Goncalves is also chairing and supporting the Bee Forum in Edinburgh.

In 2015, 9 of our volunteers were supported with training worth £150 to £300 each with grants received from Awards for all. Plus we delivered 11 Induction training for the new volunteers who joined us in 2015.

We have initiated dialogue with the Royal Edinburgh Hospital in order to extend our volunteer services to their patients. In this coming year, we hope we will be able to further our relationship with the Royal Edinburgh Hospital and start delivering hand and feet massage in the hospital too.

After 6 Months of communication with the council to put all legal requirements in place, we were awarded licence to offer acupuncture at the project and privately.

To support the private therapies service, we created a leaflet and an online booking system which has been fully operational since Oct 2015.

## Our future plans

1. **We plan on creating a new programme called "Employees Wellness"**. The whole idea is to begin a partnership with other charities and private companies in order to offer a day of holistic therapies to their employees with the objective of supporting those who work in stressful environments. Income generated with this service will help support the core costs of our charitable work.

2. We plan on further developing the Nature Connection Programme into a longer programme for families.
3. We will also develop a social media marketing plan, which will grow our online presence and social media activity.
4. We are in the process of recruiting more trustees to support our charity in 2016.
5. We will seek funds for a part-time project development worker and also a part-time administrator.
6. We will continue to develop the bee project and amalgamate it with the Nature Connection Programme.
7. Our focus for the year ahead is to continue our work supporting those who find themselves with health and wellbeing issues specially those in a critical financial circumstance.
8. We intend to become more self-sustainable financially, set up a holistic shop to support our charitable work and promote our private therapies and employees wellness programme.
9. We will continue establishing our current partnerships with Dr. Bells Families in Leith and the Royal Edinburgh Hospital and seek to establish new partnerships.

## Thank you to our volunteers and funders

Volunteers are at the heart of what we do and our charity could not run its services at such a low cost without a team of over 35 volunteers. Since 2009 we have maintained Investing in Volunteers accreditation. Volunteers carry out a wide range of tasks, from delivering therapies and training, office and admin roles, coordination, reception duties and cleaning and maintenance roles.

Advisors/elders: Alma Shearer, Stewart Keith and Emily Boyd (All served on the Board of trustees for 9 years before).

Co-founders: Cláudia Gonçalves and Mark Halliday

Board of Trustees: Mark Halliday, Cláudia Gonçalves, Margot Daru-Elliot, Tessa McKirdy, Mags Higgins and Rowan Morrison.

Co-managers: Ana Duarte and Cláudia Gonçalves

Project Coordinators: Anna Bell, Jeany Butterfli, Sophie Albrow.

Volunteer Therapists: Ann Fowler, Rodica Pamphilon, Maria Hawkins, Anne-Marie Birch, Dorothy Forest, Lara Curran, Piotr Drapala, Aiysha Hamid, Julie Talbot, Teresa Workman-Noble, Pamela Jo Proudfood, Kamila Banaszewska, Stuart Brown, Dhyana Huggins and Ana Duarte.

Nature Connection: Cláudia Gonçalves, Adele Clark, Stewart Keith, Ana Duarte, Louisa Gonzales and Dhyana Huggins.

Planetary Bee Project: Luisa Gonzalez, Cláudia Gonçalves.

Library Coordinator: Ana Duarte

Induction Training/support and supervision volunteer: Cláudia Gonçalves

Open days / fundraising events: Ballie Dhariwal, Mark Halliday, Anna Bell, Ana Duarte, Cláudia Gonçalves, Jeany Butterfli and many other volunteers.

Woodland and yurt Maintenance: Roddy Jonhstone, Mark Halliday, Stewart Keith and Cláudia Gonçalves

Funders: Santander and Awards for All

Supported by

