

everyBODY dance

The Impact of everyBODY dance

everyBODY dance aims to inspire, create and explore great dance experiences with disabled and non-disabled people of all ages in unexpected spaces.

We create a safe environment in which each individual can thrive personally, creatively and socially, using a teaching approach developed by Lead Artist Rachel Freeman, over 25 years. Ensuring the quality of projects and the integrity of the everyBODY dance approach is key and we limit the number of projects each year to those which Rachel can personally lead or oversee.

“Rachel was highly motivating. She gained the girls’ confidence immediately and they wanted to achieve the highest levels of performance....The students gained much more than completing a dance workshop – new friends, expertise, broadened horizons, maturity and a sense of personal achievement which they will never forget.” Nancy Haley, Head of Performance Faculty, North Bromsgrove High School

The combination of aerial dance, an inclusive approach and working outdoors is unique to everyBODY dance and each enhances and builds on the other.

“I would like to thank and congratulate Rachel and her team for all their work, care, understanding and love shown to these people to bring out skills they probably never knew they had and giving them the opportunity to take part in an all inclusive situation.” Parent / carer, Beyond the Pond participant

Aerial work facilitates and amplifies movement for everyone, including the most severely disabled people, and encourages those who are nervous of dance to ‘have a go’.

“It was amazing, I know about dance but I didn’t know it was possible in the air” Chadsgrove Special School participant, Voices & Visions project

“The ropes were really good and I tried new things to do on it ...I was doing handstands with arms, and then without arms and I was going up and down and stopping and I kept on spinning around...it was really fun on the ropes”
Participant with mild disabilities, Lovely Bugs Ghulevelt Park Worcester project

- Working outdoors encourages safe risk-taking, an openness to new experiences and helps manage more problematic behaviours.

“They love being outdoors. It’s nice that they’ve got the freedom...we’ve taken a few [participants] up the path to the field, it’s nice that they’re safe and it’s all

enclosed.” Staff member, Malvern Special Families, Beyond the Pond visual arts workshops

- Bringing people with and without disabilities together helps develop awareness and understanding, facilitates innovative creative work and promotes learning of all kinds for both groups.

“The range of things it brings to a piece when someone has a different physicality and is looking for adaptations and other ways of perhaps approaching traditional movement, it brings something new to the work and that’s what I really enjoy about working with a whole range of different physicalities” Disabled Participant, Beyond the Pond inclusive dance performance project

- everyBODY dance’s rural farm base in Herefordshire connects people to the natural environment, providing an outdoor haven where participants’ creativity can flourish and a relationship with the natural world can be built.

“The environmental setting of this is something that really adds a special flavour to this project, it’s such a beautiful place....it’s absolutely wonderful, and doing [the project] in the barn is great. Teacher, Specialist College for Disabled People, and Participant, Beyond the Pond,

Participants in everyBODY dance projects enjoy a memorable, fun dance experience while simultaneously developing physical, social, emotional and cognitive skills.

“What an amazing performance and experience!! The pupils were fantastic they worked hard and well as a team they grew in confidence in their abilities after each session. Many many thanks to Rachel at Everybody Dance for her guidance and understanding on this project. Well done all, I feel very proud.”
Lorraine Binns, Chadsgrove Special School, Voices & Visions project

The benefits of everyBODY dance are now supported with hard evidence. In summer 2014, we worked with an External Evaluator to find out more about the impact of everyBODY dance on participants. We evaluated four projects and, while we have to caution for differences in evaluation methods across projects and small sample sizes, our quantitative evidence supported by qualitative evidence showed that the following significantly improved across all projects:

- Inter-personal skills/attitudes including ‘working with others’, ‘feeling part of a group’ ‘communication skills’ and ‘team-working’

“The project shows the importance of working with other people, listening, discussing which way to do it and making sure everyone can do it the same

way, I think that's good. It was a positive experience. Participant, Chadsgrove Special School, Voices & Visions project

"It was lovely to see people of all ages and abilities come together and work as a team. I was also amazed to see what my daughter had achieved and how much pride she took in the performance" Parent / carer of Beyond the Pond participant

"I'm more confident in my ability to succeed. Also working with people I don't know and performing in front of lots of people." Participant, Chadsgrove Special School, Voices & Visions project

- Confidence levels – evidence showed the confidence of participants improved more than any other measured skills/attitude/ability across all four projects.

"I was so confident, I could do anything!" Participant, Beyond the Pond project

" [the project benefited] my confidence and I feel less stressed out...it's calmed me down a bit as well. I've noticed the change in me since I finished the project." Participant, North Bromsgrove High School, Voices & Visions project

- Concentration and listening skills.

"I concentrate more because I want to get it right" participant, Beyond the Pond

"The project shows the importance of working with other people and listening, discussing which way to do it and making sure everyone can do it the same way, I think that's good.... It was a positive experience." Participant, Chadsgrove Special School, Voices & Visions project

While the biggest impact was made on these, there was also strong improvement in the following, where they were measured:

- Openness to new challenges and experiences

"There were surprises....one child who is normally very lacking in self-confidence, very shy and timid, reluctant to take part, stilted and jerky in her movements.....seeing her on the rope.... we've never seen her so free, animated and relaxed before and that was really lovely to see" Teacher, Brockhampton Primary School

- Improvements in mood. 85% of evaluated participants reported an improvement of mood after an everyBODY dance session, with none reporting a deterioration of mood.

"[The project helps] them to focus more...our children are autistic and have trouble focussing....improved eye contact, the fact that they're more relaxed"

and taking it in, in their own way.....it's the fact that they're happy, and I don't think we got any negative behaviours...in a normal day when they're here we expect certain behaviours every day. Teacher, Rowden House Special School

"I feel happy today" Student, National Star College, Lovely Bugs project

- Motivation and energy levels

"It improved me emotionally.....being able to achieve something, working for it for so long and knowing you've got to keep going and then achieving it and not giving up...or saying I can't do this, I can't do it as right as they are, keep going and hoping that I'll be as good or as near as good as they are." Participant, North Bromsgrove High School, Voices & Visions project

"It was lovely to see students being challenged in such a creative and physically demanding environment. They wanted more !!" Nancy Haley, Head of Performance Faculty, North Bromsgrove High School

Tolerance and understanding of the challenges other people face

"The children thoroughly enjoyed the day and it gave them the opportunity to interact with children from another school, which they would benefit more often. The skills of everyBODY dance are excellent and we were very impressed with the adaptations for the individual child." Teacher, Fort Royal Special School, Lovely Bugs project

- Dance and movement skills and embodiment

"If we weren't doing it 100%, they wouldn't say it was ok, they'd keep telling us how we could make it better so we'd keep on trying harder...we'd always try to do it better"

"Makes you feel stronger" "I felt like I'd done about a 1,000 sit ups at the end of it!" Participant, North Bromsgrove High School, Voices & Visions project

"I think physically the real value of working with the ropes is it really builds basic dancing strengths, core strength, balance, spatial awareness...." Participant, Beyond the Pond project

- Creativity

"A very warm atmosphere. Group members were always encouraged to support one another. Exercises and warm-ups were taught with confidence and a sense of fun. Safety was always taken seriously too. Great inclusion of all group members. Fantastic emphasis on personal creativity and improvisation." Adult participant, Beyond the Pond project

“The children really enjoyed the few days they had, it improved their creativity and the mix of the dance and the rope and swinging on the ropes, they really, really enjoyed and..... it did them lots of good with their confidence” Teacher, Gorse Hill Primary School, Lovely Bugs Ghulevelt Park Worcester project

“He really enjoyed taking part in this project. Meeting and working with new people and with [another Participant] who he loves to work with. It gave him the opportunity to express himself and use his creativity and just dance for the pleasure of it. This increases his confidence & makes him happy.”
Parent / carer, Beyond the Pond participant.



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