



# Annual Report 2013



# Introduction

*Learning for the Fourth Age (L4A) is a not for profit social enterprise company limited by guarantee. L4A's purpose is providing learning services to older people receiving care. We invest any surplus created back into our core work. Our year from May 2012 to April 2013 has been an exciting one with our renewed focus of work locally in Leicester and Leicestershire, as well as starting delivery of our large, innovative SPECS (Silverdreams Project for Empowerment and Creativity in Care Settings) project in that area too.*

We are pleased to have continued working with many of the same care settings across Leicester and Leicestershire that we originally started with back in 2008 and to be seeing some exciting cultural shifts within those homes towards becoming 'learning communities'. We are growing by piloting our work into domiciliary, extra care, sheltered housing units and other settings where older people are 'receiving care'. We have room to grow further across Leicester and Leicestershire.

We were also really proud to have celebrated our official fifth birthday in May 2013. It feels like a significant milestone. This is an important point to reflect on our journey since starting the organisation in 2008 to where we are now with a team of five fantastic staff, a great reputation and a range of exciting projects and learning opportunities.

Our Board of Directors remains strong and unchanged – Toni Fazaeli, Rob

Hunter, Nick Meyer and Alan Tuckett are the volunteer directors and Melissa March leads our team of staff.

L4A is strongly established in Leicester, with a track record of providing high quality, personalised learning opportunities to older people receiving care. L4A makes a real difference to the quality of older people's lives and provides mental stimulus, for example new technologies, and absorbing practical activities, such as gardening, art and music.

The economic environment and significant reductions in public sector budgets continue to make the climate for care homes challenging, and in turn, for L4A. We are pleased that care homes and others still see the value and how cost effective it is to purchase Learning for the Fourth Age services to make a real and lasting difference to the quality of life for older people in care settings.

# Key Achievements during the year

*L4A made a difference by offering learning to almost 150 older people every week. Over the course of the coming year, we are looking to include working with over 50 older people in domiciliary settings – a brand new piece of work, a different environment and a significant pilot for L4A that we hope to be able to build on.*

Delivering the highly innovative SPECS (Silverdreams Project for Empowerment and Creativity in Care Settings) project, which has a focus on digital storytelling and supporting our older learners to tell their stories through their own eyes. We secured funding of £158k for this project from the Big Lottery Fund.

Working with Leicestershire County Council as part of their Innovation Fund to deliver the Community Hubs project. This project pilots ways of breaking down barriers between care homes and the communities around them. L4A attracted funding from LCC at a value of £19,000 for this.

We are currently undergoing an extensive external evaluation of our work. Early signs are showing the impact and the benefits that our

interventions have for older people and for our volunteers too. L4A worked with over 110 volunteers during the year to provide over 8,000 hours of voluntary time to care home residents.

Refocusing our work on Leicester and Leicestershire to develop and build on our existing base here and to link in better with a wide range of other organisations and people locally.

L4A won a United for All Ages awards for consistent intergenerational work.

L4A won a CyberSmart award for keeping older people safe when they are getting online for the first time.

# *Older people have been learning the following topics:*

- ⚙ Film making
- ⚙ Reading groups
- ⚙ Painting
- ⚙ Digital storytelling
- ⚙ Computing
- ⚙ Family Tree
- ⚙ Art
- ⚙ Craft
- ⚙ Poetry
- ⚙ Music
- ⚙ Sketching
- ⚙ Psychology
- ⚙ Gardening
- ⚙ Creative writing
- ⚙ Discussions

*...And lots, lots more!*







# *Case Study:* **John, a domiciliary service user**

John is a retired Parish Priest now in his 80s and living, with his wife, in a sheltered flat complex. I met John through an L4A meeting at the flats at the start of my SPECS pilot and have really enjoyed working with him over the last 8 months.

In a recent life story interview for a film that will be part of the SPECS project, John told me a little about his life. It struck me that he has had many challenges to cope with and not a minute to get bored!

John's childhood was quite tough and like many of his age he left school at 14 years. He worked following that and went on to join the RAF and then decided on Ordination in the Anglican Church. In order to be accepted onto this course he had to first complete A levels as an adult.

Throughout his ministry in the church and since a very early age he has had a common thread running through his life of Music and this is what he speaks of in the film. It is moving to hear of the talent and the enthusiasm that he has for classical music and he brings this to the Classical music appreciation group that he has started with a very little help from L4A in the sheltered housing where he lives.

He continues to compose and enjoy learning and describes the work he is doing for the group as 'therapeutic' as he copes with the ups and downs of older age and ill health.

# Staff

**Julie Hodder** joined us in September 2012 as a Development Coordinator for our residential care settings. She is working on our SPECS project. Julie Hodder has worked for a large variety of organisations including the NHS, Carers' Action and Care Home Selection. Julie is our Project Coordinator for SPECS in residential settings. She is also a volunteer for the Crohn's and Colitis UK.

**Melissa March** continues to lead the team in Leicester and Leicestershire. Over the past year she has managed the changing shape of the organisation well and been very successful in expanding the scale and range of services with older people by attracting funding for L4A to supplement the charges made for services.

**Clare Miles** works for L4A as a Development Coordinator, piloting our work into domiciliary and other care settings as part of our SPECS project. She is a qualified nurse and midwife and has experience of a variety of voluntary work, including work abroad. She is a proud mum of three and is involved in her local church (where her husband happens to be the vicar!), as well as various voluntary groups connected to that.

**Community Hubs Development Worker, Fiona Smith**, joined the team in April 2013. Formerly marketing manager of a retail bakery company, after taking a childcare break, Fiona has most recently been leading a voluntary organisation for physically disabled adults in Market Harborough.

Community Links is a pilot project funded by the Innovation Fund, part of Leicestershire County Council. The project aims to assist the integration of care settings and their residents into their community, involving them in local activity in their neighbourhood.

Given her other role as the parish clerk of her village, Fiona has a strong appreciation for the value of the local community.

**Dr Denis Tanfa** has a doctorate in Criminology and has worked in Cameroon, South Africa and the UK. He has been involved with L4A since 2008 as a volunteer and as part of our staff. Denis leads on our IT work in the care settings, works as a Development Worker on our SPECS project and, in his spare time, is involved in Restorative Justice initiatives.

# Professional Training and Development

*L4A continues to be committed to professional training for our staff and volunteers in order to enhance the high quality services provided to older people receiving care.*

L4A continues to be committed to professional training for our staff and volunteers in order to enhance the high quality services provided to older people receiving care.

Our Development staff have been busy on a range of different courses. These include a Prepareing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector at Voluntary Action LeicesterShire, an Introduction to Trust Fundraising with the Directory of Social Change, safeguarding updates, Arts and Health with Creative Leicestershire and Dementia Friends.

We have been working very closely with Seed Creativity to deliver training for our SPECS projects around digital storytelling, film making, interactive editing workshops and lots more.

We have been working with groups of health and social care students at Gateway College and South Leicestershire College to train them about the value of learning for older people receiving care.

There is ongoing training for L4A's team of learning mentors and volunteers, including specially designed resources to support them. Training events and support include phone help, counselling, training events and workshops. Our newly developed Volunteer Introduction Training is proving very successful and it covers the care home setting, safeguarding, case studies from volunteers, lone working and how to overcome some of the barriers older people receiving care face to learning.







# Resources to support older people's learning and engagement

*L4A brings new technologies to older people receiving care in order to enhance and improve their quality of life, provide a new way of accessing information and improve independence, as well as bridging the digital divide by supporting older people to use the latest technologies.*

Building on our successful partnership with Apple, L4A now shares 12 iMacs with our partner care settings, 13 iPads and four Apple laptops.

As part of SPECS, we bought a range of digital technologies to test and trial with older people to create films. We have 7 new flipcams and 5 pairs of SPECS glasses. We also have a new screen and projector to use to share the films with older people.

Other technologies that we are using include tablets, accessibility hardware, kindles and a portable printer.

We also have three digital cameras and 6 flip cameras, which residents are using to make their own films, tell their life stories and to learn about different ways of communicating with other people.

# Volunteers and Volunteering Bureaux

*L4A has recruited and supported over 110 volunteers during the year who make an invaluable contribution to our learning services for older people. Combined, our volunteers contributed over 8,000 hours of voluntary time to older people across Leicester and Leicestershire during the year.*

The experience of volunteers with L4A has increased intergenerational contact and understanding and volunteers build up a range of knowledge and skills in working with older people. Several have moved into related employment.

L4A is proud to have had a volunteer base with almost 80% made up of people aged under 25, and from a wide range of different backgrounds and walks of life. We have been working to diversify this by attracting a range of over 25s to join us as volunteers and this is having increasing success as the new volunteers add value to L4A in other ways, including training and mentoring.

L4A has continued our strong links with Contact and the Student Development Zone and the University of Leicester.

We thank them for their ongoing support. As well as advertising our opportunities to a wider audience, they have also booked out space for L4A to induct, train and CRB check volunteers.

L4A has built on the links we have created with DMU Mile 2 and hope to continue working with the project to match local DMU students with older people receiving care who are living within the set area. We thank them for supporting our work, particularly on social media and in their publication.



# *Case Study:* **Layla, a volunteer**

I got lots out of volunteering with L4A! I feel so privileged that I have been able to spend time with such inspiring residents; listening to their stories is heart warming and I have been taught pearls of wisdom that will remain with me forever.

Volunteering with L4A has enabled me to develop a wide range of valuable skills - communication, empathy, teamwork, organisation and time management to name a few. I am now in my first year of medicine and already I find myself using my experiences with L4A to guide me in my learning.

Volunteering offers so much - the chance to give something back to the community, the opportunity to meet individuals from all walks of life, a great way of developing confidence.

Some people find it strange that I still volunteer with L4A despite 'proving' myself for medicine. However, I enjoy it so much that it would be crazy to give it up now, at the beginning of my journey to becoming a doctor.



# Accommodation

*In September 2012, L4A moved into a new office base at Citibase, St Nicolas Circle, Leicester, LE1 4LF. This provides a base and supports our operations throughout the city and the county. We have also continued to benefit from space at the University of Leicester for training events for volunteers.*

# Financial Report

*“Over the course of the year, L4A made a small loss as we tried to reach a point of sustainability. This position was achieved in spite of the very challenging economic climate, which saw continued and significant local authority cuts to adult social care. We are in a strong position with our free reserves and in a good cash position for the coming year.*

*Underlying financial challenges have been confronted during the course of the year: this includes developing better processes for identifying and chasing debts as well as changing our pricing structure and systems. Whilst we are proud of the real achievements made by L4A in Sheffield and Leeds, sadly it became clear that despite much hard work, our position in both of these cities was not financially viable, given the external climate. As a result, the L4A Board agreed to plan to concentrate work in Leicester and Leicestershire.”*



# Future Prospects

*The directors at L4A are positive about the future of the organisation. Having celebrated our fifth birthday in May this year, we are looking forward to a period of consolidation, steady growth in the context of a very challenging funding environment for the public and social care sector.*

Tightened financial times are inevitably having an impact on all areas of society, including the social enterprise sector, even when the need for services is just as great, if not greater. There is also fierce competition for funds available from grant makers and trusts.

However, L4A still aims to run self sustaining core services and to concentrate on growing our income streams in order to develop over the next five years. Our income has increased somewhat and this has led to L4A consolidating and concentrating our work in very positive ways in Leicester and Leicestershire.

L4A priorities for the coming year are to:

- continuing providing learning opportunities to older people receiving care
- try and grow the number of beneficiaries
- provide better quality support and training to our volunteers
- roll out the successful domiciliary pilot to enable it to become something self sustaining
- pilot into new settings within Leicester and Leicestershire, such as day services.

# Personnel

## Directors

Toni Fazaeli – Chair and Secretary

Rob Hunter

Melissa March

Nick Meyer

Alan Tuckett

## CRB & DBS checks

All volunteers and staff working with vulnerable adults have enhanced CRB checks with thanks to Roy and Helen Harvey at Helping Hands, who carry out the processing of these for L4A. In June 2013, this changed to DBS checks but this report is until the end of May 2013.

## Staff

Julie Hodder – Development

Coordinator (Residential)

Melissa March – Chief Executive

Clare Miles – Development Coordinator  
(Domiciliary)

Fiona Smith – Development Coordinator  
(Community Links)

Denis Tanfa – Development Worker

## Want to know more about L4A or get involved?

Learning for the Fourth Age provides personalised learning services to older people who live in social care settings.

See [www.l4a.org.uk](http://www.l4a.org.uk) or  
email us at: [info@l4a.org.uk](mailto:info@l4a.org.uk)

There are plenty of opportunities to volunteer, to let us know of care homes that might benefit from L4A services, to make a donation, or to let us know about care home residents or their relatives who may be interested in L4A services. L4A is proud to be focusing our work in Leicester and Leicestershire.

## Accounts

Our accounts are prepared by Michelle Reynolds from Collaborative Business Support



