



A.P.P.L.E Annual Report

Jan – Dec 2024



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Chair's Report

Welcome to A.P.P.L.E.'s 2024 Annual Report.

A.P.P.L.E has had a very good year with some difficulties on the way.



A.P.P.L.E. continues to provide a safe, nurturing place for children and young people to play, meet their friends and take part in lots of activities. Our free, open access, drop-in sessions make A.P.P.L.E. welcoming, accepting and easy to be part of. The content of the sessions for children and young people are planned to be engaging and assist in building confidence, developing life skills, and enhance education and work opportunities.

- Food Programme & Eating Together
- Art & Creative Projects
- Sport & Outdoor Play
- Youth
- and Family Support

The story this year

The big event of past year was the building of our new kitchen. It became operational just before the end 2023. The ripple effects of our fundraising efforts have continued to play out into this year; we became one of the LB Ealing's Mayor's charities for the year, this in turn raised our profile and has helped us raise more grant funding.

One of our primary aims over this past year has been to address the ongoing issues arising from Covid and the cost of living crisis, for example, the high levels of anxiety amongst our young people and the effects of low income on housing, food and quality of life.

The high cost of living has exacerbated issues of children and young people's health and wellbeing related to diet and lack of exercise. For example, high food prices and where even the cost of a trip to the local swimming pool is out of reach.

The programme

A.P.P.L.E has provided a wide range of activities, events and experiences over the past year.

A.P.P.L.E knows that the skills children and young people learn at the ARTBLOCK have significant benefits later in life. We know this when our young people come back in their young adult lives and tells us that they know how to shop for food, cook for themselves, use a power tool, plan and prepare many practical things because of time spent at A.P.P.L.E. At the time, they don't realise that they are acquiring these skills or that these skills will be so useful later in their lives. At the age they come to A.P.P.L.E. they are concerned with enjoyment (when they are young) and school/education (when they are older). Later they have greater awareness of their resourcefulness, and that it gives them a confidence and ability to tackle new challenges

Food and eating together

"I really like cooking at APPLE. Before coming to APPLE, I had never cooked before because at home my mum does all the cooking and doesn't let me help her, but here I get to cook and try to make things I have never tried before, like tacos." – Bayan, 9 years old (EA Cooking Club)

"My favourite thing to do here is cooking and skateboarding. I learnt how to skateboard and how to cook stir fry. That was my favourite food that we made. That and the brownies were DELICIOUS. Its super fun here" – Blake, aged 10 (EA Cooking Club)

*"Cooking and skateboarding are the best things about coming here. I tried stir fry here for the first time and loved it! I also really **liked the pizzas** we made last week" – Amiyah, aged 9 (EA Cooking Club)*

Our food projects address all aspects related to food - shopping, budgeting, cooking, healthy food compared with processed food, eating together and hospitality. There have been times during the school holidays when it has been difficult to cook enough food but our new kitchen has made a huge difference. The number of young people forming the Cook Teams at open access sessions has increased. Space in the kitchen has made all aspects of cooking so much easier, from teaching techniques to teenagers hanging out over hot chocolate.



An example of a project organised by the young people was the Bake Off held on Thursday May 3rd with year 5/6 Cooking Club members.

"It was very delicious I had some very good cake. Fatima's Biscoff cake and Jessie's Lemon Drizzle."

Art and creative projects

A.P.P.L.E.'s first activities and events back in 1996 were art and creative projects, a bin bag carnival on the Vale estate, followed by a summer holiday art project. Some 28 years later we have run, John Perryn's After School Art Club, open access art sessions Saturdays and school holidays, and 4 school projects. We have made - Pirate boats & paper maps, Paper birds, Dragon & chameleon hand puppets, **T-shirt printing & tie dye**, Chinese lanterns, **animal paintings**, 3D Animals & Animal masks, Carnival costumes and props, **display props for a 2 day exhibition**.

Art and creative projects offer the children and young people a way to try something new in a relaxed and fun setting where everyone can have a go, even if you think 'I can't draw'



Sport and Outdoor Play

The cost of out-of school sport and physical activities at clubs and organisations puts participation out of reach for many of the children and young people attending A.P.P.L.E. All research points out that physical exercise improves both physical and mental health. Anxiety amongst young people is at record levels. Young girls have a high drop out rate from formal sports. Our emphasis is on physical movement for fun, the aim is to get everyone on their feet- dancing, bulldog, **crazy hockey**, skipping, whatever.

A.P.P.L.E start at each individual's confidence level - simple observation of activities, to joining in with group outdoor games such as dodgeball, or tug-of-war moving on to participation in sports with increasing skill levels, and then to AA Awards, with greater physical challenges.

What can be achieved is

improved fitness

Improved social skills/ friendships

Improved confidence

improved resilience, problem solving, resourcefulness.

A.P.P.L.E offer a wide range of physical activities to give our users maximum choice, from borrowing a bike to use in the park to wall climbing on an organised trip.



Youth

Our youth sessions are well established, and we have a youth cohort of 70, with 30 young people being our most frequent number of users at any one time. Over the past year our focus has been on getting our youth group out and about: countering the effects of Covid isolation. We have made use of as many free activities as we can - a trip to a circus, a QPR match and a photography course at ActOne Cinema.

Our young people have finally got the hang of researching, planning, and organising their own trips with money set aside from various grants, Jack Petchey awards and AAA awards. One example, was when our girls arranged a trip to Virtual Reality Experience (see caption and photo below).

Youth arranged Trips

Escape Room (8) - Abubakar, Yahya, Sami, Leah, Chrystal, Adam, Eris, Nathaniel

Camden Market (5) - Leah, Chrystal, Kate, Molly, Teagan

Shoreditch Market (7)- Leah, Chrystal, Kate, Teagan, Alma, Lorenzo, Ilyas.

Virtual Reality Experience (5) Leah, Chrystal, Kate, Molly, Teagan

Boxing (10) – Omar, Ilyass, Adel, Karis, Leah, Chrystal, Mahdisa, Eris, Bradley, Nathaniel



Family and Community

Our Tuesday food bank is an established part of our programme. City Harvest provide us with a weekly delivery of assorted food. 25 families are registered with 12-14 collecting a mix of food each week.

A.P.P.L.E. are now seeing more families with younger children, this means that we have more adults attending our open access sessions. It is a balancing act to meet the needs of our different user groups but with the establishment of our dedicated youth group it seems to be working. For our families, we are providing specific equipment for younger children, such as small bikes and trikes.

A.P.P.L.E.'s events and trips have been essential to families facing financial hardships, especially in the light of the ongoing cost-of-living crisis. Some children and young people are limited to the activities they can take part in due to financial limitations, and the trips at A.P.P.L.E. ensure new and exciting activities are made accessible to all.

The trips are incredibly valuable to struggling families. One of the most popular trips offered annually is the beach trip to Littlehampton, usually held in the last week of the summer. This trip is open to families (children and their parents) and is a much-anticipated highlight for both. Yearly, members of staff are approached several times within the first two weeks of the summer by parents and children, ensuring a space is reserved for themselves and their families. A 53-seater coach is booked and has been filled completely every year. Attendees are primarily made up of families who cannot go abroad and do not have access to a car, with some families having never been to the beach before.

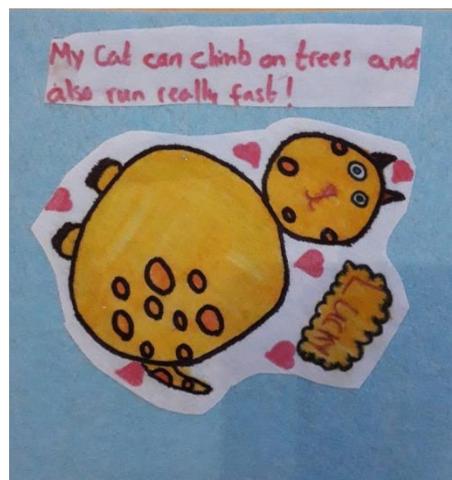
Through the trips and events held over the summer holidays, in which our young people were key to the planning, preparation and running, A.P.P.L.E. were able to continue to provide vital support to the community providing activities and events not otherwise available to families.

Our events are always aimed at inclusion for all. The year started with our Christmas Party and has included, Acton Carnival, a visit to the Great Exhibition Road Festival of Art and Science, themed days during the summer holidays, cake stalls, Summer Party, the Littlehampton Trip and Halloween.



A.P.P.L.E takes its work out into the wider community through working with schools. A.P.P.L.E has worked with John Perryn and East Acton Primary Schools on long term clubs, art and cooking respectively. The members of these clubs frequently go onto become involved with our youth group.

This past year we have had activity visits from Derwentwater (2) and Ark Byron Primary schools. (1) and an art workshop day with John Perryn (1)



One of the most important benefits for the children and young people is the opportunity for learning.

The most important skills that A.P.P.L.E provides through the programme are confidence and resilience.

"I'm not as afraid of heights, and also, I proved to myself I can do more than I thought I could. I need to stop telling myself I can't do something because a lot of times, I can if I put my mind to it. I am taking my GCSEs now, and I am more confident that I will do well with them. When I catch myself saying "I can't do something", I straight away try to change my thinking to "I can do this." TS, 16, F, after taking part in aerial activities on a residential course.

Feedback is gained from evaluations/ survey/ interviews. For example, from Cooking Club-Bake Off Thursday May 3rd 2024

"It was good, a fun thing to do after school. A good experience cooking by yourself, so if you wanted to cook for a birthday party it is good because you are learning while you're cooking the food."

"It's really fun to be creative. I have learnt how to cook, I actually didn't know how to cook at all. I can now. I can do all this stuff and its really tasty."

And from talking to the young people how being at A.P.P.L.E has increased their social skills, for example:

N, M, 16, mixed background: "I am more out there, I socialise with people"

A, M, 16, mixed background: "I meet random people"

I, M, 13, Algerian: "...built my social skills and confidence."

Confidence, mental health and fitness are all linked. The multi activity programme and the choice provided for children and young people means that they are in control. They can go at their own pace. The atmosphere we work hard to create encourages 'having a go' at new things. Success builds confidence.

The A.P.P.L.E. Achievement Awards (AAA's) measure a number of areas, levels of engagement and commitment as well as tasks accomplished. The awards are very practical and benefit those children and young people who struggle academically at school.

This year the young people achieved:

3 Jack Petchey Awards

48 AAAs of which:

Art x 17

Sport X 1

Camping x 9

Youth Leadership x 5

Cooking x11

Gardening X 1

Event Management X 1

Member Recognition x 3

There are more underway.



There have also been 146 youth workdays by 53 individuals

"I have learnt to do art and ride a bike at A.P.P.L.E. I don't have a bike at home, so I really like coming to A.P.P.L.E. to use the bikes. I also like cooking. We made brownies, pizza and macaroni cheese." – Nour, aged 9

"Jake is really kind and is helping me make a Roman sword. It looks really good. We are learning about the Romans at school, and he is helping me with my homework. I learnt how to skateboard with Kai, and I like having skateboard races with him." Mousa, aged 7

"My favourite thing about A.P.P.L.E. is the trips, especially to the beach. It is really really fun!" – Yousef, aged 8

"I like making bracelets and necklaces and playing with the bikes. I also like the animal masks we made." – Lujain, aged 6

Our programme assists our children and young people to grow into open minded, tolerant, confident, and resourceful young adults.

The high points over this past year have been:

1. The trips - everything from Littlehampton family day at the seaside including taking a refugee family who had never seen the sea to a small group going to QPR for a match (the youngest had never been to a live match).
2. New kitchen - this has transformed our lives.
3. Food bank- This is a regular and embedded part of A.P.P.L.E now. This is an achievement but nothing to celebrate, the need is a shame.
4. Being part of LB Ealing's Mayor's Fund and the direct support of Hitesh Taylor our Mayor has raised our profile, some funding and introduced us to some great contacts. EASE a charity providing food and support to refugees is based just up the road from us. We are talking together about future projects - possibly a gardening group.
5. Jack Petchey Award Ceremony -
6. Taking part in the Great Exhibition Road Festival of Art and Science by making the props for Queen Charlottes Ultrasound unit in the Brilliant Body Zone.
7. Our at home events – Acton Carnival, the themes days during the summer holidays and a massive Halloween Party.

.....and difficulties

There have been some considerable staffing issues over the year, (illness/paternity and compassionate leave, plus a member of staff leaving). This has meant we have been, on occasions, short staffed. While we have been able to run the sessions, it has put a strain on the staff. We have brought in more freelance session staff, but this can be difficult with availability.

Low staffing levels has many effects. Although we can keep the doors open and provide a welcoming and safe space for our children, young people and family members the content level of the sessions suffers, and we are unable to run as many trips and events. In the summer holidays we struggled on some days with the numbers attending, particularly providing enough food. This is not a funding issue but a series of circumstances. We are now actively recruiting additional staff.





Stats 2024

Total number of sessions: 231
37 Tuesday Art Clubs/Food Banks
30 John Perryn Art Club
34 East Acton Cooking Club
39 Youth Nights)
39 Saturday Sessions
52 School Holiday Sessions

240 total attended at least 3 times this year

Males: 129 / Female: 111

Under 7's: -17%

8-11 years: 42%)

12-15 years: 29%

16-17 years: 12%

Ethnicities:

White - 21% / Arab– 23% / Asian– 10% / Mixed – 15% - Black - 22% - Other– 9%

Summary

This has been a very good year. We have had financial stability (almost the first time ever) thanks to 3 long term grants.

Our youth group is growing, and we are keen to develop this further.

Looking forward, A.P.P.L.E are planning to strengthen the on-site management and reduce the work now undertaken by Vicki Barker as Project Coordinator. Abigail Leitao, one of our lead managers is taking on a more extensive role as Acting General Manager. Part of long-term plan is to make our social media, data collection and general on-site administration more efficient. As Abigail's administrative work has increased this has created an additional strain on staffing. The addition of a new member of staff will address this.

A.P.P.L.E would like to thank all those who have put so much into the organisation over this past year

David Thaddeus
Chair

APPENDIX 1 - A.P.P.L.E. STAFF, COMMITTEE AND TRUSTEES

A.P.P.L.E. is a registered constituted charity with a Management Committee of Chair, Treasurer and Secretary and six trustees.

There is a core support group of staff. A.P.P.L.E. has a large group of volunteers ranging from regulars to those who come and help for specific projects, e.g. carnivals.

Committee:

Chair: David Thaddeus **Secretary:** Sharon Duce **Treasurer:** Tessa Swithinbank

Trustees: Deborah Catesby, Amanda Mason, Edward Parkinson, Rachel Pepper, Dilys Tisshaw, Kit Harington, Faisa Sharif, Carise Norman

Project Coordinator & Co-founder - Vicki Barker

Acting General Manager– Abigail Leitao

On-site Project Manager - Sam Barker

On-site Building Manager – Jake Barker

On-site Safeguarding Officer – Nella Novy Johnson

Off-site admin support - Jessica Mason, Sheila Farrell

Lead Youth and Project Workers

Jake Barker

Nella Johnson

Sam Barker

Abigail Leitao

Project Staff

Kai Thomas Lewis- lead for Sport and Outside Paly

Doran Halliday – lead for Cooking and Eating Together

Gardener

Neville Capil

APPENDIX 2 - FUNDING ORGANISATIONS AND CONTACT LINKS

Our work this year has been supported by:

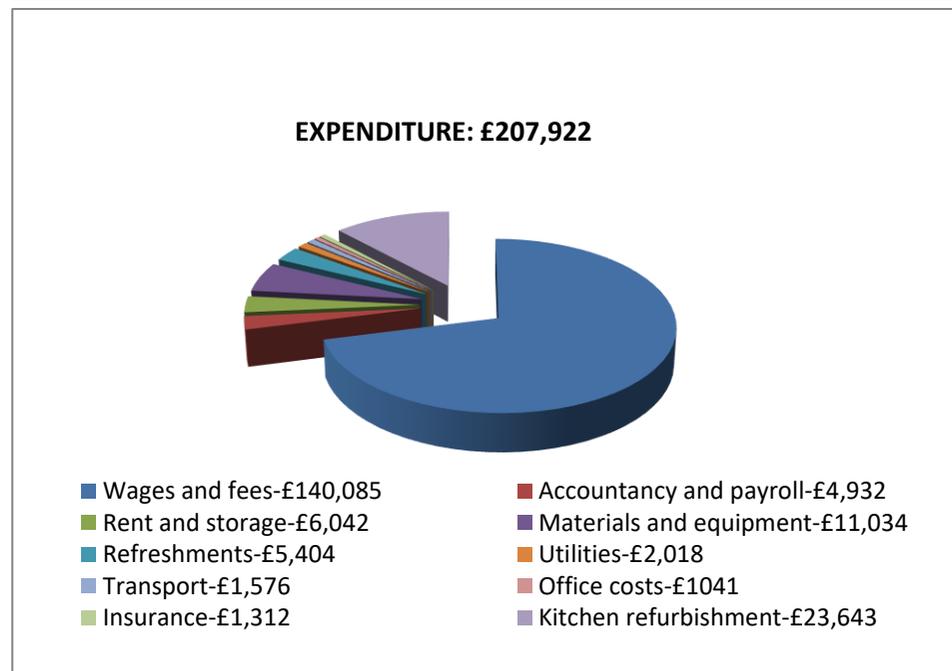
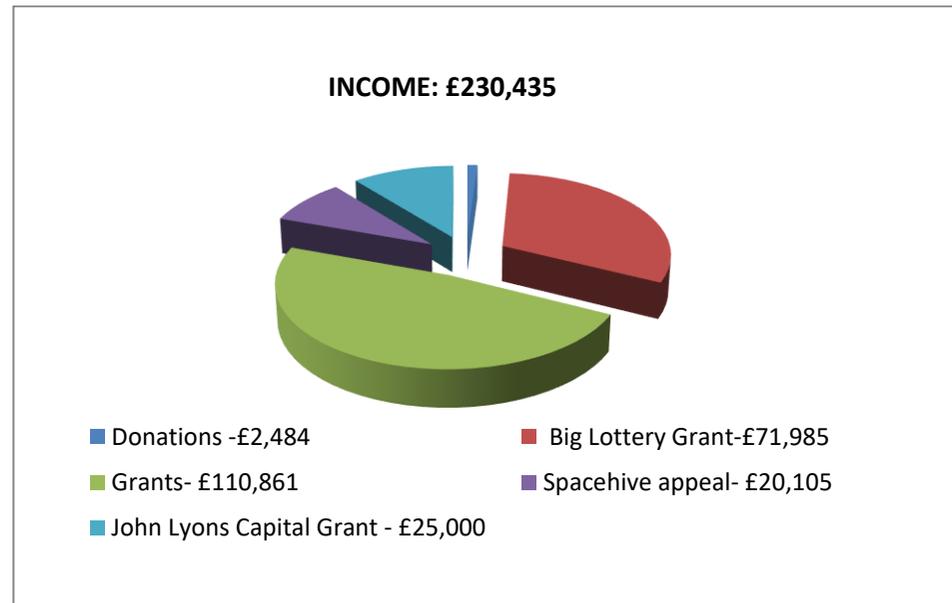


CONTACT LINKS - A.P.P.L.E. has connections with many local organisations.

- We work closely with 2 of our local our local primary schools. We have run an After School Art Club at John Perry Primary School for over 20 years and Cooking Club with East Acton Primary School for more than 10 years.
- Organisations we collaborate with include: John Perry Primary School, Derwentwater Primary School, East Acton Primary School, Artificiation, LB Ealing: Parks and Leisure, Children's Services, Youth & Connexions, Young Ealing Foundation, Ealing Skateboarding Association, London Youth, City Harvest, ActOne Cinema.
- We have received donations from Churchfield Community Association
- We take part in and put on local events such as, Acton Carnival and Halloween and Summer Parties.

APPENDIX 3 - A.P.P.L.E.'s Annual Accounts for the period 1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024

Accountants: Clarke and Co, Acorn House 33, Churchfield Road, Acton, W3 6AY





www.appleplay.com

A.P.P.L.E. Contacts

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