

What is **Touch Trust**?

Stacey Koseoglu tells about Touch Trust, its work and its impact on people's lives. The article was originally edited by Emma Louise Sorano

Touch Trust is a charity based at the Wales Millennium Centre in Cardiff Bay. We provide a movement programme for people with profound and multiple needs which aids everyday actions and development, gives physical relief, health and expression. It also increases movement skills, develops self confidence and social expression.

'Not to have confidence in one's body is to lose confidence in oneself'

Simone de Beauvoir (1974)

Leila's Journey

As a session leader with Touch Trust for the past five years I have assisted with the training of student session leader and in the Autumn of 2010 Leila Bebb came through our doors.

'A Person with Downs Syndrome who can do equal things to everyone else' (Leila Bebb, 2012)

Leila is a 25 year old young lady with Downs Syndrome who lives independently in Swansea, and in her own words "has a very busy life"

Leila's hobbies include dance and drama, which she assists with the teaching of in The 'Unusual Stage School', based in Cardiff. This has three productions a year, and the latest production was filmed by the BBC.

Leila also works as a teaching assistant with a company called 'Take This', an inclusive capacity



Leila: right

dance company, who are performing at Hijinx's Unity Festival this year. She has also been lucky enough to be chosen by Wolfgang Stein as an apprentice who specialises in visual movement.

Last year Leila was invited to Oxford to assist Cecilia Mcfadden in preparing 36 students in a 3 night performance.

Coming to touch trust

Dilys Price founder of Touch Trust approached Carol Brown of Tan Dance looking for a Student who could both lead sessions and assist in others. She was given Leila's name and Leila started her Touch Trust training in November 2010.

After progressing through stages one and two with confidence, hard work and plenty of enthusiasm, Leila now comes in one day a week and assists to lead sessions. She is a very popular part of the team, showing a deep empathy and sensitive support.

What is wonderful is that Leila is now sharing her experiences, for example, she was working with Jen Angharad in community dance, and was asked to teach a movement. Leila chose to teach

'mirroring', which is something that we promote at Touch Trust, as a way to develop our guests confidence, Leila showed this as a way of 'bringing out personalities' [her own words].

Altruism

As if this is not enough, Leila is also an active participant in raising money for all the charities that she already volunteers her time to. She utilises her creative energies and creates cards, self portraits and prints, which she packages and sells, or donates to the charities themselves to sell.

By Christmas 2012 Leila is hoping to publish a cookery book which will have all her own recipes in.

Leila has a horizon that is glowing with dreams, ultimately she would love to have her own multi arts centre and is currently working towards just that:

'HOPING THAT HER DREAMS WILL COME TRUE!'

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