




**OTHERWORLD:**

AN ADVENTURE IN ALTERNATE REALITIES

**Hot Chocolate Trust Annual Report 2015**



**WHAT IF OUR  
ACTIONS MATTERED?**

- **WHAT IF I WASN'T SCARED?**

- **WHAT IF THEY DIDN'T  
PRESSURISE ME?**

- **WHAT IF WONGA  
NEVER EXISTED?**

- **WHAT IF GOD WAS REAL?**

- **WHAT IF WE COULD  
BREAK THE CYCLE?**

- **WHAT IF EVERYONE  
WAS EQUAL?**

- **WHAT IF WE COULD  
START AGAIN?**

- **WHAT IF THERE WAS  
AN APOCALYPSE OF  
HORSE-SIZED DUCKS?**

People sometimes assume that Hot Chocolate exists to 'keep young people off the streets'.

Actually, Hot Chocolate exists to create an alternate reality, an 'OtherWorld'.

An OtherWorld in the heart of Dundee where there is safety and freedom and justice and creativity and learning and hope and life in all its fullness.

An OtherWorld that looks and feels like nothing else.

An OtherWorld which makes a real difference in this world.

We've spent much of 2015 asking ourselves a series of 'What if...?' questions.

These questions have had profound impact on the work of Hot Chocolate (HC), and the lives of those involved. What follow are some voices from this incredible community of thinkers and dreamers and activists and partners.

**Welcome to  
OtherWorld:  
An Adventure in  
Alternate Realities.**

It's organised, but it's messy.  
It feels alive - with people,  
with connections, with choices.  
Jack M, 16

I like the **vibe** because it's informal.  
It's free. It's flexible. I never feel  
forced to open up. And that makes  
me want to open up. It really helps  
that I can talk about my problems.  
Sean, 16

It's a home away from home.  
The team **always** asks us what we  
want to do - so stuff only happens  
if we want it and get involved.  
That feels good.  
Rhori, 16

I identify as 'twin-spirited' and 'sexually  
fluid' - it's a bit complicated! But I think  
this place does well at involving and  
welcoming people of all identities.  
I **always** tell people to come here -  
it's great to have choices about what  
stuff we can do.  
Jack R, 19

HC broke my head and my heart into  
pieces, over and over again. And then,  
as a community, we put each other  
back together - but not the same  
as before; **more fully human for  
the breaking.**  
Kim, former Volunteer

A couple of weeks ago I couldn't  
come to the Steeple, and everyone  
was asking where I was.  
**Being wanted, being noticed...  
is good.** When I was at school,  
I had no friends. So when I see  
new people come in to HC now,  
I always welcome them and show  
them around.  
Toni, 18

It's different here - the way it's  
set out and run... **it's effective.**  
MK, 16

It's my home away from home, where  
madness **is encouraged** and **being 'you'**  
**never felt more right.**  
Sam H, Volunteer

WOW

WHAT IF I WASN'T MYSELF?

WHAT IF THINGS WERE DIFFERENT?

## VALUES

**Hot Chocolate Trust** is a creative and innovative youth work organisation based in the Steeple Church, Dundee.

Since 2001, Hot Chocolate has worked with thousands of young people aged 12-21 who hang out in the city centre, building relationships and supporting them towards adulthood and positive futures.

Hot Chocolate is open to all young people without prejudice or distinction of religion, race, culture, disability, gender, sexuality or politics. The only restrictions are of age; from secondary school up to 21 years of age (although we do sometimes continue to work with folks on an individual basis after that).

# HOW WE WORK IS SIMPLE.

There are a few key things we think are really important, and so we always try to do youth work in a way that reflects them. These include...

**1\*** Viewing young people as whole people: supporting their holistic development which realises physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual potential.

**2\*** Growing a community with young people which is open, accepting and safe.

**3\*** Building relationships based on respect and trust, relationships which are voluntary and two-way.

**4\*** Ensuring that plans and activities are owned by young people, adapt with the culture, and bring positive change for all involved.

**5\*** Embracing a culture of reflective learning where we learn from our own experiences (even our mistakes).

**6\*** Knowing what we're good at - and not so good at: working with other people and organisations who can provide specialist opportunities for young people that we couldn't make happen on our own. You'll hear some of these fantastic partners' voices in the following pages too.

### ACTIVITY

In 2015 Hot Chocolate worked with over 300 young people.

There have been:

**168 OPEN SESSIONS**

-

**12 DETACHED SESSIONS**

(meeting 60 young people)

-

**321 1-1S**

(with 63 different young people)

-

**51 GROUPS**

(with 60 different young people)

-

**2 WEEKENDS AWAY**

(with 25 different young people)

-

**17 YOUNG PEOPLE ON YOUTH TEAM**

### IMPACT

Throughout our various activities, we ask young people to reflect on their lives, journeys, experiences, learning - and how they're changing.

These reflections, along with the team's observations, are recorded, letting us understand in more detail about the difference we make.

So, in the past year, we have supported young people to develop in the following ways:

**148 HAVE GROWN IN SELF-KNOWLEDGE**

-

**164 HAVE GROWN IN SELF-WORTH**

-

**166 HAVE IMPROVED THEIR SOCIAL SKILLS**

-

**143 HAVE INCREASED IN UNDERSTANDING THAT THEY CAN POSITIVELY IMPACT THEIR LIVES AND COMMUNITIES**

-

**120 HAVE ACTED TO POSITIVELY IMPACT THEIR LIVES AND COMMUNITIES**

-

**120 HAVE IMPROVED THEIR ABILITY TO PLAN AHEAD AND STICK TO GOALS**

-

**14 HAVE INCREASED IN THEIR AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING OF THEIR SPIRITUALITY**

### POSITIVE DESTINATIONS

Hot Chocolate has also supported many young people to move on to 'positive destinations'...

**27 STARTED EDUCATION**

-

**29 STARTED EMPLOYMENT**

-

**9 STARTED TRAINING**

-

**43 STARTED VOLUNTEERING**

(12 gained accreditation)

-

**55 WERE SUPPORTED TO REMAIN IN THEIR 'POSITIVE DESTINATION' DESPITE SIGNIFICANT BARRIERS**

(eg financial, housing, family)

-

**8 HAVE GAINED WORK EXPERIENCE**

-

**72 WERE SUPPORTED TOWARDS EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION OR TRAINING**

(eg writing CVs, interview prep, references)

Think that this OtherWorld stuff sounds a bit fluffy and vague and idealistic? Well here's some stats to make it a bit more concrete!

# KAREN'S STORY\*

Loans have been the worst thing in the world for me.

When I was 18 I hit places like Quick Quid, Wonga - all of them. One day I tried a new loan place, but I didn't read the fine print, and they passed on my details and suddenly all these different places were taking money from me because it turned out I'd signed up for some sort of subscription.

I ended up with absolutely not one penny to my name, nothing. I felt sick, physically sick. And the interest rates are unreal. It's a vicious cycle of borrowing and not paying it back and worrying. You feel like they own you. You're theirs. They send you letters every day, threatening to take you to court. It's such a horrible feeling - it makes you really paranoid. Those loan places have so much publicity - they're everywhere on TV and online. It's just too easy to do it. I don't know anyone that they've turned down. They say they do credit checks, but they don't care. But I think you need to see the other side of them as well.

I think you need to know how it feels when you're in debt and out of control. I think they preyed on me being so young. I mean why would you give an unemployed 18 year old hundreds of pounds? I can't bear to think about what my debt is now, but it's probably around £8000, and I'm only 21. That's a LOT of money. It's just not been worth it, and it's only now that I'm getting to grips with it and trying to start paying it off.

Hot Chocolate have helped me through every stage in my life, be that needing to talk about my new hair style that I hate, to more serious things like debt and depression. I've had times in my life where I feel like I've had no one, but HC has always come through for me. To this day I don't know if I'd still be here without them. I find it hard to talk to people about my feelings but feel much more at ease knowing HC is there to listen, without any judgment. They've been nothing but loyal to me, and I hope to forever stay in touch with them. They will forever be my family.

In the past couple of years, with support from HC, I've worked really hard to keep a job and do as many hours as I could, so that my money was then my money. Earning your own money, that you've worked so hard for, is the best feeling in the world. I wish I'd learnt that sooner.

\*names and identifying features have been changed to protect anonymity

WHAT IF PEOPLE SAW THE REAL ME?

**There's just something about the Steeple.**  
It's a mystery to me, whether it's the infinite supply of hot beverages or the outstanding team that truly give it a sense of comfort normally only achievable in my own home.

I will never forget what the team has done for me over the years. If I was to list the many ways they have helped me, I would be writing this for hours.

Without a doubt, the most miraculous thing about Hot Chocolate is that even after months of not visiting I know with complete certainty I can walk through those wooden doors at any point and still feel welcome.

**Kelsea C, 19**

I was extremely shy when I first came. I found it a bit intimidating. It's fine now though, it's good. I don't feel as shy now. I've got new pals.  
**The atmosphere is good.**  
And everyone's nice.

**Robbie, 14**

When I first came I thought there'd be lots of scary emos. But I found so many nice people and friends and a well-knitted community. The team are so talkative and nice - you can talk to them about anything. If I had to summarise Hot Chocolate in 3 words?  
**Fun. Caring. Exuberant.**

**Ross C, 17**

Over the many long years I have been going, there's been ups, downs, drama, hate, love, friendships... but never judgment from the team. The team has supported me through a lot. I have always felt at home - I could just come in and relax on the sofas, take my shoes off and no one would bother. Because that's what the Steeple is all about: be yourself and relax.

**Kenny, 22**

# ^ NORMAL WEEK

WHAT IF CATS RULED THE WORLD?

## OPEN SESSIONS:

TUE 7-9pm  
WED 7-9pm  
SAT 2-5pm

## INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT:

Normally 5-10 per week,  
arranged by appointment

## GROUPS & PROJECTS

Normally 1-3 per week,  
arranged at times suitable for  
young people

**INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT (1-1s)** is when a team member and a young person meet 1 to 1 to explore issues, interests and ambitions that matter.

1-1s are somewhere I can vent and talk through issues I'm facing. I don't want someone to tell me what to do - I don't want to become dependent on other people. Lauren [team] helps me see new things coz she has a different way of looking at things than me. **1-1s have made a really big difference to me**, especially in terms of how I relate to authority and how I get on at college.

Emily, 17

1-1s give space for young people to think aloud and process where they're at. They can be planned or spontaneous, depending on what the young person wants and needs. **They're collaborative** - I'm not there to give answers, but to learn together, empower them and help them see that the solution lies in their hands. 1-1s are such an honour and privilege!

Ding, Volunteer

**OPEN SESSIONS** are informal and unstructured drop-ins where young people come to build relationships, have a safe place to 'be', develop new skills and explore new ways of thinking.

Open sessions are pure banter. The art room is mellow. The chilling room is a laugh, and is about, well, chilling. The music room is noisy and fun. The sports hall is **A-MAZING** (two words: trick shots!).

The front door is quality banter, plus you can be wrapped up in a blanket and cosy. I go in and out of every room pretty much every session.

Toni, 18

**GROUPS & PROJECTS** are an important part of Hot Chocolate's life, responding to the needs and interests of the community.

It's a beautiful place. There's loads you can do. You can express your inner creativity, or start a new project. You can't really do that elsewhere. It's your choice here - you get a lot of freedom. It's definitely helped my confidence, and made me more sociable. Kai, 16





**YOUTH TEAM:**

A supported and accredited volunteering programme where young people take on extra responsibility and develop skills and confidence.

I've met great people, and done great things through Hot Chocolate. One of the many experiences I had was being on Youth Team where I got to write songs, teach some art to other young people, and I even went to a conference with the team about psychology which I hope will help me develop my career.

Andy, 21

I just joined the Youth Team. I wanted to do it so I could try something new. It's really good to have regular support too when you're going through stuff.

Jemma, 16

**HOSPITALITY:**

We love having visitors, and we host a lot of people each year. These people might be partners, funders, students, politicians, church leaders, or other youth workers, but they'll all experience the legendary HC welcome...

When visitors join us, they get to see what we're really like when we're round the table for food - with some childish banter before we kick in to professional mode for session. It makes people happy - and my food's damage! This year I've made chicken lasagne, normal lasagne, pasta bakes, chicken curry, soup, chilli. I've learnt about dietary requirements like vegans, lactose intolerant people and vegetarians - they like their eggplant! I've cooked meals for open sessions and for giant Exodus meals. We've had some great conversations round that table.

Dazz, 21

WHAT IF WE COULD CHANGE THINGS?

# EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION, & TRAINING

I do a lot of paid work as a juggler. I'm doing very well just now - I've got a couple of sponsorship deals. Ultimately, I want to do it full time, and I think I might make it. So the sports hall is really helpful for me - not a lot of places have its height, or let me have access to that kind of space. Without it my skill level would really drop.

Luke, 18

This place means everything to me. It's changed my life for the good. If it wasn't for here, I wouldn't be in college. It gave me motivation. It gave me hope for the future.

Jenna, 16

We went to visit TAG games. I was the one that made the trip happen and arranged it through the HC team. It was very interesting to hear everyone's points from the gaming company and how they got into their jobs. I'm unsure if game design is something I would want to do in the future, but it has definitely piqued my interest.

Taylor, 16

They've really helped me with employment by CV-building with me and references.

Danielle C, 16

In a world where it can be hard to find your place and purpose, a key part of Hot Chocolate's work is to support young people towards learning and employment opportunities.

This happens through a wiiiiide range of ways, from CV help to interview prep to providing juggling practice space (yes, really)...

Being a young person can often feel directionless without knowing what opportunities are available. The support provided from both HC and Princes Trust gives motivation and options of routes to take. I benefitted massively from this partnership - HC referred me to the Get into Retail course which was really good for me, and I've moved on to work for the Princes Trust. It's now my job to let young people at HC know about the opportunities and training courses coming up. It's exciting to think that they could grow and develop as much as I have through this partnership.

Cameron Price,

Job Ambassador, Princes Trust  
(and former HC young person)

WHAT IF EVERYBODY COULD GET A JOB?

## PAUL'S STORY\*

I was bullied a lot as a child. I coped by isolating myself, and damaging myself with alcohol, drugs and a bad lifestyle. I always focused on everything in my mind - I never wanted to get physical with people and be the big man. My dad never understood that - he thought I should just hit the bullies back. But that wasn't my personality. The bullying was such a big part of my life for a long time. And my dad gave up on me a long time ago. I think that's affected me for most of my life. I got caught up in drugs and addiction, and I ended up in prison. I've been in and out of prison most of my teenage years.

The last time when I was in prison, I used every bit of my time to get better, to feel better about myself. I used education, I exercised, I ate healthy. I was already out in my head before I was released. Every morning I woke up I thought about the day I'd be free; settling down and stopping messing around.

I never got scared in there, but I did get lonely. After meeting so many good people at Hot Chocolate in 2012, it was really hard being in there alone. One day I was told by one of the officers that I had an agency visit, and I thought it'd just be my lawyer. But it was Glen, and when I saw his face it was so good. I didn't expect it at all. His visit made me feel that I was wanted, like someone cared. He meets so so many youths every week and yet he took the time out to come and see me - it was really touching, really nice.

I actually got out earlier than expected. I was feeling quite on edge - it's hard when you first get out. When I came out I'd walk to a door and wait 'til someone opened it for me. I'd ask permission to go to the toilet. I wouldn't eat anything because I was so used to people telling me to eat. It's hard to adapt.

But when I got released, I met a bunch of my friends outside Boots and they were all excited that I was out. And then Charis walked past and saw me. She was really surprised - she'd visited me the week before, and had heard that I wasn't getting out. But there and then she told me about a job available at Hot Chocolate, and asked me to come for an interview for it.

It felt really good to get a job - especially at Hot Chocolate. It felt safe, even though it was disciplined and strict. But that was really good for me, because now when I go for jobs I know what's expected. I'm glad I was treated as a proper employee. I've had three different short term jobs since then, and I'm looking for work again. And I'm doing a lot of music, seeing people a lot. I'm doing ok. I've not been in trouble at all since 2012. Prison is definitely not a place I'd want to go back to, and I really don't think I will.

\*names and identifying features have been changed to protect anonymity

WHAT ARE YOUR DREAMS?

TO MOVE TO BARCELONA  
AND START A NEW LIFE THERE.

TO EAT THESE CROISSANTS.

ARDEONAIG

TO STICK IN AND GET A GOOD  
EDUCATION SO I CAN WORK ON  
THE OIL RIGS DOING ENGINEERING.

TO WIN THE LOTTERY... NAH. I WANT TO BE  
A YOUTH WORKER. AND JUST BE A NICE PERSON.  
HAVE A FAMILY. AND SURVIVE THE ZOMBIE  
APOCALYPSE WHEN IT HAPPENS.  
BECAUSE IT WILL HAPPEN.

Every year we embark on a massive adventure weekend away at the stunning Ardeonaig Outdoor Centre, and this year was no exception.

Twenty young people and thirteen team played wide games in the dark, tackled obstacle courses, climbed ridiculously high things, worked as teams, faced challenges together, persevered under pressure, and overcame fears. And together, we explored the concept of 'dreams'.

TO LIVE A HAPPY AND LONG LIFE,  
WITH A FAMILY AND KIDS.

TO HAVE A CAREER THAT I'LL ENJOY  
AND BE HAPPY IN - NOT STUCK IN AN  
OFFICE BEING A SUIT MONKEY.

TO MAKE SURE I TRAVEL TO AS  
MANY PLACES AS POSSIBLE.

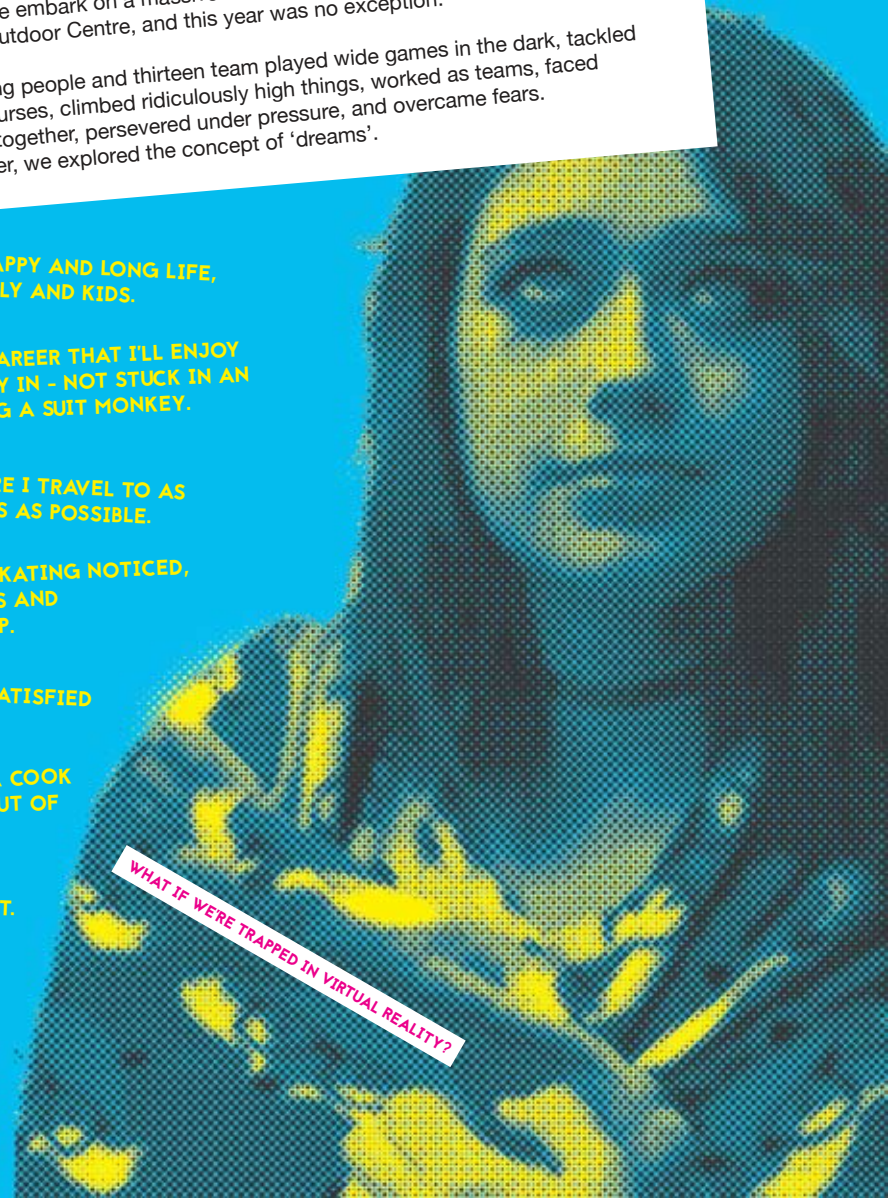
TO GET MY SKATING NOTICED,  
WITH VIDEOS AND  
SPONSORSHIP.

JUST TO BE SATISFIED  
IN LIFE.

TO BECOME A COOK  
AND MOVE OUT OF  
DUNDEE.

TO STUDY ART.

WHAT IF WE'RE TRAPPED IN VIRTUAL REALITY?



"THAT  
FEMINISM IS  
SEEN AS A JOKE"

"3.5 MILLION CHILDREN  
IN THE UK LIVE BELOW  
THE POVERTY LINE"

"POTENTIAL IS IGNORED  
FOR EXPERIENCE"

"JUDGMENTAL PEOPLE"

"BULLIES"

"THE EDUCATION SYSTEM"

"DISCRIMINATION IN MY  
OWN COMMUNITY"

"THAT SOME PEOPLE THINK  
THAT MUMS ARE MORE  
IMPORTANT THAN DADS"

### PHOTOGRAPHY PROJECT

Everyone was asked to write down what made them angry and then to hold it up for a photo as a protest. We created a **wall of injustice** in the Chilling Room with the prints - which became quite a focus for the discussions through the rest of Exodus.

### TRIPTYCH

We created a big piece of art on three panels. The outer panels were about 'What if there are things in the world that we could change?' and the central panel focused on 'What if things could be the way you wanted them to be?' My favourite times were when I saw people creating together, trusting each other and sharing personal experiences - like when someone shared that they were thankful for the way their family member was looked after in hospital.  
Lauren, Arts Engagement Worker

WHAT IF IT WASN'T INEVITABLE?

# EXODUS

You might have noticed that running all through this wee book is a series of 'What if...?' questions.

Well, these questions came directly from the young people, and these created the focus and programme for this year's Exodus theme: **OtherWorld**.

(Exodus is our three week summer programme, planned by the young people and jam-packed with art, discussion, projects, songwriting, film-making, trips, parent groups, and cooking meals together).

# EXODUS

## DISCRIMINATION

As part of the discrimination theme, I wanted to use my knowledge of basic level one British Sign Language to help people communicate with a Deaf person in their life. So I taught people the alphabet, which led to a quick run through of fingerspelling then going on to teach "My name is", "My age is", "What is your name?", "What is your age?". I felt that it went well considering myself and teaching just do not mix in the slightest! [Hannah G, 20](#)

## LGBT RIGHTS.

Me & Chantelle did a sexuality and gender identity workshop for the team at the start of Exodus. We taught them about language, spectrums, the 'genderbreadperson'. I'm LGBT myself and I think people can be quite ignorant about it. I once got assaulted on the street and called a 'faggot'. It was pretty scary and it hurt. **But here's safe - no one cares if you're different.** All the team are now much more aware about the complexities and how to help people feel safer and more welcome. And more people are coming out. It was decided in training that we should allocate a gender neutral toilet, so we made a sign for the door and it's made people feel much more at ease. [Beth, 17](#)

## OUR CITY

We invited Jenny Marra MSP in one afternoon to hear about what made us angry, and what we want to see changed in our city.

Hot Chocolate is the most committed and empathetic project I have had the pleasure to get to know. The staff are committed on a personal and professional level to improving lives and the atmosphere of tolerance and respect they create for the young people is quite inspiring. [The myriad of difficult emotional challenges that are experienced by the young people at Hot Chocolate is vast but in its complexity and messiness, you can see hope and optimism shining through.](#) Hot Chocolate is a community in the truest sense – supporting each other with tears and laughter as they grow. I am very grateful that Hot Chocolate does the work it does for young people in Dundee. [Jenny Marra, MSP](#)

WHAT IF I DON'T FIT WITH THE NORM?

WHAT IF WE COULD CRASH THE SYSTEM?

### POVERTY

To help us understand poverty better, seven groups of young people were given £10 and asked to shop for a bag of food to donate to Dundee Food Bank. On their return, they discussed their choices with Ewan Gurr, Regional Development Manager of Trussell Trust.

**"This is the most serious we've ever been about anything."**

**"It feels really good, helping people, making an actual difference."**

**"We've decided that when we start earning money, we want to donate to the food bank."**

**"I bought Haribo for the food bag, coz everyone loves Haribo - those people deserve to be loved."**

### TRIPS

We went fishing and caught loads of mackerel (I thought they were called mavericks). And I mean loads, like 50 or something. The bag was bursting we caught that many. When we got back to the Steeple we had to gut them all and then we cooked them on some BBQs. They smelt horrendous but they tasted pretty good - although my hands stunk of fish for weeks! **Toni, 18**

### PROTEST SONGS

We wrote a few songs together, expressing our justified anger. Here's one of them:

BE OPEN MINDED,  
IT'S NOT MY FAULT  
IT'S NOT YOUR ATTENTION  
I'M LOOKING FOR  
REJECTION IS HURTFUL,  
IT'S NOT WHAT I NEED  
I FEEL WHAT I FEEL,  
SHOULDN'T HAVE TO PLEAD  
RISE UP AND BE HEARD  
CHANGE MINDS  
WITH YOUR WORDS!  
I'M NOT AN OBJECT,  
MY MIND IS MY OWN  
DON'T MARK ME OUT OF TEN  
I'M NOT A PRIZE,  
I'M NOT ANOTHER SCORE  
RISE UP AND BE HEARD  
CHANGE MINDS  
WITH YOUR WORDS!

Written by Andy, Rachel, Gordy & Nicole.

# CREATIVE

## WHAT IF THERE WAS NO SOUND?

**ART & MUSIC** have continued to thrive this year. Nicole was appointed as our Youth Worker (Music) for 18 months, so there's been a real buzz around the music room. The art room has never been busier either - with lots of new young people and new kit. There's been a lot of collaboration between the art and music too - such as the creative weekend away (with a fantastic performance & exhibition at Tin Roof, Dundee). We're also delighted to have been selected as one of Creative Scotland's 'Time To Shine' projects for 2016. **Yup, it's been a pretty busy year!**

Hot Chocolate does so much with music - you give a lot of young people opportunities to be heard. I didn't realise how good I was until you guys pointed it out to me. No one else has ever done that. Music has helped my recovery. It's replaced what I used to do in the past. I'd feel really empty without music. Before I used to get high to find peace. Now I use a guitar.  
Lee, 23

I'd only written one song before going on the weekend away. It's given me confidence and skills to write more. I also collaborated with a couple of groups for the final performance. When we played in the house, it felt safe coz it was with people I knew. But when we performed in Tin Roof with strangers, I was really nervous. Afterwards though I felt pretty great - like I'd achieved something.  
Jack M, 16

I've done a lot of music stuff this year, like the weekend away. We used the theme 'powercut' and it worked really well. Making music every day, jamming out every day. I don't get to do that anywhere else. **Music for me is a getaway from other things. It's really important.**  
Rachel, 15

The wider value of music has certainly been revealed through Hot Chocolate as some young people have felt that music has had a significant impact upon their lives. This was particularly valuable for those with personal issues to overcome as they are able to express themselves. The main learning from Hot Chocolate is to put young people first and allow them to lead. The co-production ethos is key to the success of the project... **young people get the most out of it by making the decisions themselves.**

Excerpt from an Independent Evaluation undertaken for the Youth Music Initiative (Creative Scotland)



WHAT IF THERE WERE NO MIRRORS?

It can be hard to put feelings into words, but the art room helps me express these. Especially with me being a carer, and having a lot of college work to do, art is an important escape. I draw a lot - sometimes even a wee sketch can have a lot of meaning. It's obvious that Jo and Lauren love running the art stuff too - that has a huge positive impact on us.  
Cait, 17

The art room is chilled. You can concentrate. You can doodle, paint, make lanterns, do stencils. I made my wee sister a chair and I tie-dyed the fabric for it. It's really cool and she loved it. The art room inspires me about what I want to do in the future. I want to go to art school!  
Tammie, 15

I designed one of Hot Chocolate's Christmas cards this year. I did a lino cut. I'm really happy it was chosen as a design - I didn't expect it. My sister's really good at that kind of thing - her stuff's been selected for things before. So it feels really good that mine's been selected too!  
Rebecca, 14

I find art a really important release. I spray painted for the first time on the creative residential, and the exhibition at the end was so good. My mum came down and really liked it. I didn't want it to end!  
MK, 16

I know it's not really what you are primarily about, but I just love your aesthetic. You are so able to articulate what you're about. That was one of the best installations I've seen this year. I worked my way around nearly every film - they were just so powerful. They really challenge the wider picture that is painted about young people at the moment.

Clive Gillman, Former Director of Dundee Contemporary Arts,  
now Director of Creative Industries for Creative Scotland  
(Speaking about an installation at our open night, featuring films telling the stories of former young people)

Even though I've been coming here for years, I can't believe how we can still keep coming up with such new and brilliant ideas like this projection.  
Cat, 18

# TIME TO SHINE

We've had the amazing opportunity this year to work with Creative Scotland's digital art project 'Time To Shine' - first with a small pilot project, and then with a much larger project which will run until the end of 2016. There's been a lot of experimenting with new techniques and technologies, with help from our new games designer pals Mal, Tom and Albert. So far we've done some digital 'jams', a huge-scale projection onto the outside of the Steeple, and a big exhibition in partnership with the One World Centre, with much more planned for the year ahead...

I'd like to learn editing - cutting footage down and adding effects. That's what I'd like to get from this Time To Shine project. And projecting it onto the walls - I think that's pretty awesome. It's going to be so big. The Steeple's a pretty key landmark in Dundee, and having art projected onto arguably one of the most important places in the city is pretty cool.  
Dylan, 16

My art idea from the creative weekend away became a huge installation for the exhibition with the One World Centre. I helped set it up and take photos. I feel really proud of it.  
Beth, 17

There's so many opportunities to get involved in. The Time To Shine stuff is amazing - we've not had much digital art before, so it's really good to be learning new stuff.  
Cait, 17

WHAT IF I WOKE UP AS SOMEONE ELSE?



WHAT IF YOU COULD GET RID OF HATRED BUT ONLY BY GETTING RID OF LOVE?

# LOVE

I've been coming for 8 months and it's been one of the best things ever. I feel safe, comfortable, myself. I feel welcomed and loved.

I've been able to open up more, to grow in confidence.  
MK, 16

HC tamed me and taught me how to love again and to be loved!  
HC was my sanctuary, the only stability I had in my life.  
HC was there in my destitution and brokenness, with forgiveness and love!!!  
HC gave me **HOPE** for my future.  
Former young person.

Working with HC on the Relationships Matter project has been **heart-warming, fun and thought-provoking**. It's added very authentic young voices to our work, and reminded us of everyday experiences, not just experiences that are seen through the lens of service provision.

Hot Chocolate supports open, inquisitive and appreciative conversations - and they have the energy, experience and knowledge to make things happen, but never without action being led by the young people they work with. A very inspiring organisation.  
Gayle Rice, Project Manager  
(Innovation & Improvement), IRISS

This year we have worked with the fantastic Institute of Research and Innovation in Social Services (IRISS) on a project called 'Relationships Matter' - which seemed right up our street :)

Throughout this project, we explored the idea of love as a community: what it means to young people and what it means for professionals.

Our conclusions?

- 1\*** That you cannot create an **OtherWorld** without love
- 2\*** That it is a fundamental human right for every young person to feel that they are loved
- 3\*** That professionals need to get over themselves and reclaim the word 'love'!

I was on the Hot Chocolate website the other night and I've been thinking about how it started... It's amazing to think that something so big and meaningful has happened just coz someone gave out a cup of hot chocolate on the grass. [MK, 16](#)

I'm bored most of the time, so I can come here and play pool and cards. I've been coming since Exodus - I give it a 9/10! [Conal, 13](#)

It gives me space. I know that someone's always going to be there. It helps me relax and unwind. It's a freedom - a place to be myself. [Verena, 15](#)

Every time this place is open I play football. It always makes me feel better, gets my energy out in a good way. [Jordan, 14](#)

Here, I can sit. I can sleep. I can stay reasonably out of trouble. I can laugh, watch drama happen, go on trips, chat to the team. [Rhuri, 16](#)

I genuinely believe if it wasn't for Hot Chocolate I wouldn't be where or who I am today! [Tommo, 22](#)

Hot Chocolate provides a safe place for young people to just be themselves. There's no judgement here. It's been part of my life for almost 13 years now and no matter where I am in life, all roads lead back to Hot Chocolate. [Linsey, Volunteer & former young person](#)

HC has helped me grow into the man that I am today. Helping me still with many challenges that we all face in life: death, love and everything in between. [Ryan, Volunteer & former young person](#)

WHAT IF THEY ACTUALLY CARED?





# GAVIN'S STORY\*

At the age of 13 I was having a lot of problems with my family, school and pretty much anything social. One night things got far too much for me and I didn't know what to do. I needed some sort of release so I could get out a lot of the anger, sadness, emotional pain. I hated myself. I wanted to hurt myself. So that's what I did. I got a broken piece of glass and I cut myself. No-one knew about it, and it became a habit, a very long and secret habit.

A few years later, I started coming to Hot Chocolate. But things in my life were harder than ever. I was going through hell - I'd been kicked out of home, I had money problems, I'd lost my girlfriend and I hit rock bottom. I started drinking on my own, but the more I drank, the worse I felt. I got to a point where I just didn't want to be here any more... and ended up in Ninewells. I didn't know whether I felt happy when I woke up or not.

I knew I needed someone to speak to, so I messaged the team at Hot Chocolate. They were so supportive and so understanding. They encouraged me to speak to my doctor. They helped me express my feelings. They helped me make positive plans and think about my future again. They gave me opportunities. They listened. They were there. I remember one time Andy was worried about me and asked me to come to the Steeple, but I was in Perth - so he came and picked me up... How amazing is that?!

Hot Chocolate began to feel like a second home. I knew I wouldn't be judged there. I felt free. With the continued support of the team, I became so much happier. I've now got a job that I love, I've reconnected with my family, and I've got great friends. I've had my bad times since then, but I now know how to deal with them in a different manner.

I guess what I really want to say is that for anyone else who might be going through a bad time: don't hesitate to speak to the guys at Hot Chocolate about it. [Life can suck, but things can get better. They might take a while, but they really can.](#)

\*names and identifying features have been changed to protect anonymity

# THE BOARD

## Charity Trustees / Directors of the Board

Mr Tony Boffey \_Chairperson  
Mr Richard McCallum \_Treasurer/Vice-Chair  
Mrs Amy McDonald \_Vice-Chair  
Mrs Rebecca Brawley  
Mr Stephen Elwell-Sutton  
Mrs Deborah Farley  
Ms Lynda Forte \_retired December 2015  
Mr Joe Lafferty

I am pleased to report the continuing positive contribution of the Board this year in aiding and overseeing our work. The Directors have taken up greater delegated responsibilities for scrutiny within the Board Sub Groups.

This, together with revised agreed procedures for conducting Board business, has allowed us increased time for discussion and reflection on the key areas of youth work development, our vision and Board governance responsibilities.

We continue to value the expertise of Board members, staff and volunteers who each in their own way help us deliver the quality of youth work that attracts participants and meets their needs.

We are enormously appreciative of the support from the Rev. Robert Calvert, the Kirk Session and friends at the Steeple Church together with the help from external sponsors and donors who contribute generously in time and resources to enable us to realise our objectives.

WHAT IF THERE IS MORE THAN WE CAN SEE?

We have broadened our local and national impact in the production of innovative media-based youth work training resources, learning and consultancy services and the marketing of IT-based performance management systems. Young people have been actively involved in this development work and have contributed a positive dimension to the quality of the finished resources.

We say goodbye to Lynda after a long period of valued service and welcome a number of new members currently undertaking induction familiarisation.

Looking forward, the year ahead will be challenging financially as we seek to try and consolidate our longer term budget support and development. We regularly see examples of our youth work changing the lives of young people and their personal relationships to family, friends, their communities and their personal aspirations.

We look forward to continue to serve our vision with and for them.

In His service,  
Tony Boffey  
(on behalf of the Hot Chocolate Board)

- Asda Foundation
- Avian Communications Ltd
- Bank of Scotland Foundation
- BBC Children in Need
- CashBack for Communities
- CashBack for Creativity
- CCS Datacare
- Church of Scotland
- Community Innovation Fund (NHS Tayside)
- Creative Scotland: Time to Shine Digital
- Creative Scotland: Youth Music Initiative
- Dundee Alcohol and Drugs Partnership - Innovation Fund
- Dundee City Council
- Dundee Christian Youth Trust
- Faith in Scotland Community Action Fund
- Help for Kids
- Inchroy Trust
- Inspiring Scotland
- Lloyds TSB Foundation for Scotland
- Miss AM Pilkington Charitable Trust
- Miss EC Hendry Charitable Trust
- People and Communities Fund
- RBS Community Cashback
- Ridhard Young
- RJ Larg Family Trust
- Robertson Trust
- Saints and Sinners Club of Scotland
- Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations
- Souter Charitable Trust
- St Katharine's Fund
- STV Appeal
- Tay Charitable Trust
- The Christina Mary Hendrie Trust
- The Moffat Charitable Trust
- The Steeple Church: Dundee (Church of Scotland)
- The Tillyness Trust
- The Tudor Trust
- WM Sword Charitable Trust
- and all our individual donors

At Hot Chocolate Trust, we couldn't do what we do without the generous grants and donations from our funders and donors. Most of our money is spent on salaries, as in order to build and deepen relationships with young people, we need to spend time with them. As with most charities, we need to do a lot of fundraising so we can continue to respond to the young people's needs. At Hot Chocolate, we have been grateful to receive funding, donations or donations in kind during 2015 from the above funders, fundraisers and donors:

# FINANCES

New accounting practices are required for all charity accounts this year so we are still working on our full accounts for 2015 as we go to print.

These rounded figures are from our draft accounts and may be subject to change. Our full accounts will be available on our website in due course.

Analysis of Income 2015  
Total Income **£324K**



Analysis of Expenses 2015  
Total Expenses **£309K**



Funds at 31 December 2015  
Total Funds **£129K**



Our community has changed a lot in the past 12 months, with lots of older young people moving on to bigger and better things, and lots (and lots!) of younger young people arriving and making Hot Chocolate their new home-from-home.

## CENSUS

So at the end of the year, we undertook a massive piece of research with the young people (the 'HC Census') so we could better understand their lives, ambitions and needs. Coz you can't create an OtherWorld without acknowledging the reality of ThisWorld... Here's some of the headlines.

### NEW YOUNG PEOPLE.

69% of all young people at HC started coming in the past year.  
62% are aged 12-16.

It took a wee while for the new ones to settle in, mostly because of age difference, but we somehow became cool with each other. I made sure they knew they could **100% be themselves, and that kinda helped them settle in.** Hot Chocolate is so unique and it's the most homely place ever - accepting to everyone.

Cat, 18

### WORRIES, PRESSURES & RESPONSIBILITIES.

- 47% worry about money a lot/always
- 22% of their families have had their benefits sanctioned
- 70% have been bullied at school
- 32% have/have had carer responsibilities
- 62% have lost someone who's close to them
- 66% have experienced some form of mental health difficulty

WHAT IF THINGS WERE DIFFERENT?

Young people can find it hard to engage with formal services, and we know that there's lots of young people at HC that simply don't go anywhere else. HC is a very important thing for Dundee. It feels so different - the young people feel like they really belong here. I love it. **It feels like life.**

Jackie Fitzpatrick, Senior Sexual Health Nurse, The Corner



## LGBT.

49% are gay/lesbian/bisexual/other/unsure  
18% are transgender/gender neutral/non-binary

Hot Chocolate is one of the very few safe spaces for LGBT young people in the city. It plays a vital role for many young people who are marginalised in their communities.  
Barry Jordan, Youth & Community Development Worker, LGBT Youth Scotland

## SPIRITUALITY

38% believe in God/the supernatural  
27% think about faith/belief a lot

32% maybe believe in God/the supernatural  
55% think about faith/belief sometimes

## WHAT IF OUR ACTIONS MATTERED?

Spirituality can be an awkward subject (along with discussing sex or politics at a dinner party, right?) We know that first hand, as assumptions are often made about what it means for Hot Chocolate to be a Christian organisation, based in a church building. And we do realise that we're a bit unusual. We don't do 'God slots'. We don't try to convert young people. We don't try to get them to church on Sunday. Only about half of our team would identify as Christian. But we are interested in the young people's spiritual needs, which the census results clearly show are real and important to them. For us, being a Christian organisation means giving space for young people to explore their spirituality, if they choose to. It means following Jesus' example of getting alongside people that are excluded and oppressed and helping them find life in all its fullness. It means turning power on its head, refusing to manipulate or impose our own agendas. It means learning from one another's experiences of faith. It means living out the gritty realities of love, hope, justice, mercy and forgiveness every single day. It sounds a bit like OtherWorld in fact...

Spirituality helps me because it gives me the belief that there is a higher power. I think people think about it all the time, asking 'What if there is? What if there could be?' I think it's healthy for people who are deep thinkers to explore religion and spirituality. Young people don't like to be forced, but they do like to be intrigued. We're curious.  
Former Young Person, 23

Hot Chocolate does not hesitate to be 'earthy' in the best sense of the word.  
Wes White, Lecturer, Scottish School of Christian Mission

I'm not very sure what I believe, but I like reading and researching a lot of stuff about this. I think it's really important to have a space like here to explore my spirituality. It's important to me. Chantelle, 17

Hot Chocolate is like what I think church should be, when I read about it in the Bible. It's quite simple really - it's about being with people, giving them a safe space to be and explore - not doing ministry to them. I've learnt a lot about God from this community - like how our vulnerability can actually be our strength. Debbie, Volunteer

# AMPLIFY

The stories and experiences featured in this wee book matter. They really matter. They need to be heard, and they have the power to change the way that our systems and structures shape our society. Over the past year or so we've been capturing some of these stories as short films, aiming to amplify the voices involved, and improve the outcomes for young people in Scotland.

Momentum is really building around this, with rapidly growing interest from youth work professionals, managers, media, and politicians. So watch this space in next year's annual report to see how this continues to grow.

Hot Chocolate has created an impressive portfolio of films that cover many of the issues affecting young people today. The interviews are with real people, relating their experiences. Consequently, they are both intensely honest and moving.

This charity's ability to enable young people to open up and share their experiences on film has provided a valuable resource to others struggling with similar issues, such as drug abuse or mental health. The realisation that they are not on their own and are able to share their feelings is a valuable first step on the journey to recovery.

Hot Chocolate's initiative has already gained the support of stakeholders who work with young people. It is important that the valuable information gained from this resource is shared nationally. **The lessons learned can contribute towards delivering more effective counselling and health policy in the coming years.**

Andrew Jones, Pro-Bono Supporter with Inspiring Scotland, Media Consultant, BBC Audience Council Member & Justice of the Peace Advisory Committee Member.

WHAT IF I'D NEVER MET MY FRIENDS?

People sometimes assume that Hot Chocolate exists to 'keep young people off the streets'.

Actually, Hot Chocolate exists to create an alternate reality, an 'OtherWorld'.

An OtherWorld in the heart of Dundee where there is safety and freedom and justice and creativity and learning and hope and life in all its fullness.

An OtherWorld that looks and feels like nothing else.

An OtherWorld which makes a real difference in the world.

Still sound a bit vague and fluffy and idealistic?

Tell that to Kirsten, who, despite leaving Hot Chocolate seven years ago still says...

This is the OtherWorld.  
We invite you to join us in it.

"HOT CHOCOLATE TAUGHT  
ME MUCH ABOUT THESE  
THINGS:  
COMMUNITY

- CREATIVITY
- REALITY & AUTHENTICITY
- BROKENNESS
- THE UNEXPECTED
- BEAUTY IN UNEXPECTED PLACES
- PERSEVERANCE
- FRIENDSHIP
- LOYALTY
- UNCONDITIONAL LOVE
- COMPASSION
- CREATIVE EXPRESSION
- STEPPING OUT OF COMFORT ZONES TOGETHER
- DEEP THINKING
- CHALLENGING OF BELIEFS
- SPIRITUAL JOURNEYING...  
I COULD GO ON."

**Design Team:**

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All fancy pictures and big words by the Hot Chocolate family.  
Stories collected by Charis "It depends" Robertson.  
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WHAT IF WE COULD START AGAIN?



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