THE TOY PROJECT

CHARITY NUMBER 1164282

2023- 2024

ANNUAL REPORT

THE TOY PROJECT

The TOY Project works to ensure everyone has access to play and achieves this through the rehoming anad reusing of toys.

By providing toys to children and families in need, to schools, hospitals, hospices, bereavement services and other community serving organisations, The Toy Project supports everyone in accessing play within their own homes and within educational and community settings.







The Playroom is The Toy Project's dedicated community play-space. The Playroom hosts free and accessible play-based sessions, after-school clubs and holiday playschemes. The Playroom fulfils a key part in ensuring everyone has equal access to play and facilitates play at the community level. Within the last financial year The Playroom's term-time activities had a total capacity of 7,092 and the playschemes had a total capacity of 480. This means The Playroom created 7,572 opportunities for children and adults to access play.







The Toy Project's used-toy shops raise vital funds for the charity, take in donations of unwanted toys from families, individuals and companies, and provide a sustainable option for everyone to buy toys. Donating and buying pre-loved has a significant impact on the environment and The Toy Project's work helps toy companies, retailers and individuals make the best choice for the planet.

DECEMBER 2023

The new Playroom on Junction Road - decorated with balloons - hosted a range of new activities and facilitated a wider capacity at each session and a wider variety of equipment and resources, including a piano donated by a neighbour!







New activities included hosting the Doll Foundry's weekly meet-ups for adults who collect, customise and restore dolls. Supporting everyone in enjoying and accessing the benefits of play and toys is at the heart of The Toy Project's work.



Features

The 12 ways of Christmas

Times are tough for many, but help is on hand – from support with household bills and energy costs, to food and childcare. We can all play our part, too: keeping an eye out for vulnerable people and volunteering at local charities can all make a big difference. Here, we've gathered 12 ways in which you can access support, plus how you can help others, if you're able – all in one handy guide

How we can help you

1 Stay warm in winter

As the weather gets colder, make sure you're using your energy in the most effective way possible. Islington Council's Seasonal Health Intervention Network (SHINE) can give advice on saving energy, accessing grants for heating and insulation, and support with bills and energy debt.

Visit islington.gov.uk/shine or call 020 7527 2121

2 Claim what you're entitled to

The council's income maximisation team (IMAX) can help you get the benefits and tax credits you're entitled to. Contact them on 020 7527 8600 or send an email to claimit@islington.gov.uk

3 With money and debt

If you're struggling to manage your money or are in debt, there's lots of free and confidential advice available. Depending on your situation, you can get help to pay your rent, with childcare costs, broadband and phone packages, energy bills and much more.

Visit islington.gov.uk/advice

4 With food and fun in the school holiday

Islington Council's Lunch Bunch scheme will provide free food and activities for children and young people from 2 to 5 January this school holiday. So, if your child attends a school in Islington and receives benefits-related free school meals, or fulfils other criteria, they can attend all sorts of activities – from sport to arts and crafts, all served up with a free healthy lunch. You need to register your child and book a place.

Visit islington.gov.uk/LunchBunch

5 With childcare costs

The council subsidises childcare at a range of nurseries, so that fees depend on household income. You could also be eligible for free childcare for two to four-year-olds. From April 2024, eligible working parents in England with a child aged two will have access to 15 hours' free childcare.

Find out what you're entitled to: contact the Family Information Service on 020 7527 5959 or email FIS@islington.gov.uk. For more info, visit childcarechoices.gov.uk.

Parents and carers can also get support to return to work, increase their hours or start training. More on p21.

6 With food

Food hubs in Islington can help you get the essential supplies you need, as well as a free, cooked meal. To find support, visit: islingtonfoodpartnership.org.uk or get in touch with IMAX.



Christmas at The Toy Project: Santa visited The Playroom's Saturday LEGO sessions and every child there received a gift. The Toy Project was featured in Islington Life magazine to promote the shop and referral process at Christmas





Sorting through donated toys is a labour intensive process and it is key to recycling pre-loved toys, resourcing sessions at The Playroom and funding The Toy Project. Volunteers, like Ana and companies who participate in CSR days give their time to sort and re-package donated Playmobil and LEGO help to ensure this is all possible. The new Playroom hosts weekly volunteer days to engage community members who are able to give back, facilitate the circular economy model of The Toy Project and create Christmas Playmobil scenes and LEGO gift bags!





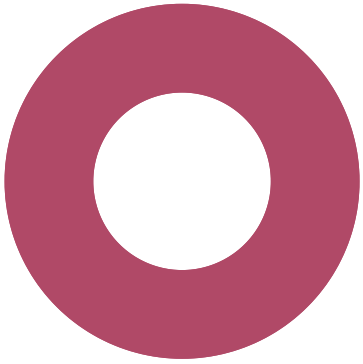
Christmas is a busy time of year at The Toy Project, with referrals going to families in need of toys to help ensure all children receive presents at Christmas. The Toy Project gave presents to 954 children at Christmas in 2023. The photos here show toys going to London East Alternative Provision, Noah's Ark Children's Hospice and to a Food Bank and Community Centre in South Wales. Through a partnership with Islington Council's School Services Team, The Toy Project created a Centralised Referral System for children in Islington and provided toys to 368 children in the borough.



All toys The Toy Project receive and give are donated, toy drives from companies, individuals and groups are vital to ensuring children who would otherwise not receive any toys wake up to presents on Christmas morning. Thank you to all who organised, donated and dropped-off toy collections!

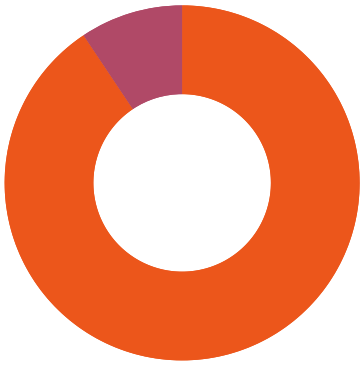
DATA

This year, we asked families to complete an annonymous online survey to help us to capture their experiences and feedback more effectively. This has helped us to collate information on our successes as well as help shape and refine the referral process for next Christmas.



100%

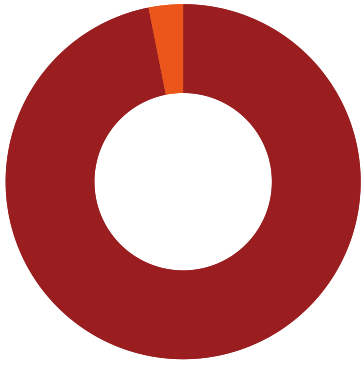
100% of families found the service easy



9.4%

90.6%

90% of the families said this service helped with relieving their financial load



3.1%

96.9%

96% of families said the toys were suitable for thier individual children

995

Individual children given new toys

442

families supported

38

organisations referring families

"SUCH PLEASANT AND DIGNIFIED TREATMENT OF MYSELF AND MY HUSBAND, WE WERE SO PLEASED"

All quotes and data about family experience was taken from anonymous surveys done by the families.

JANUARY 2024







After a hectic Christmas we were excited to open our new gallery space at 99 Junction Road. (put in info about the gallery) Our first artist to exhibit was Miriam Elia who ran exciting workshops in our play room. The children enjoyed creating their own artwork based on Miriam's work.

THE GALLERY AT THE PLAYROOM

'The Gallery at The Playroom' is an eclectic and proactive community art space for adults and children. Here, we host exhibitions of the work of artists, students and members of the community.

The Gallery delivers a channel of artists to share skills, styles and experiences through curating their own shows and running inclusive workshops.

The space gives artists a platform to showcase their work and an opportunity to give back to the local community. This develops a culture of shared creativity by facilitating an exploration of visual arts to locals, giving them the opportunity to engage freely in art they may otherwise not have access to.

We exhibited at The London toy fair for the fifth time and made valuable connections with new toy companies to partner with including Moose toys, Urban outfitters, Blocks magazine and Orchard toys. A great catchup was had with our existing partners including Selfridges, Rainbow Designs, Epoch, Alley Cat, Playtime PR and Schleich.





Our concession at Selfridges continued to thrive with donations arriving in the 'yellow van' to our shop at 81 Junction road. We ran activities all month at the playroom including baby story telling, arts and crafts, adult lego and well being.





FEBRUARY 2024

February was filled with fun at the playroom with half term activities, adult classes and volunteer days. Our baby classes are a popular start to each week with waiting lists for spaces on Mondays.





Another set of knitted rabbits headed off to India with our friend Poorva who distributed to children living on the street.



We launched our new Fun musical French session with local French parent Marc. Our popular school visits teach children the importance of recycling and giving to others while educating about the history of toys. We look at materials used for making toys in the past compared to the present. Our sessions are run by our in house team of teachers.



MARCH 2024



Thank you to the staff at JoJo Maman Bebe for choosing to volunteer for us. They spent the day sorting and bagging donated Playmobil and Lego in preparation for selling and gifting.





The gallery space was officially opened by The Mayor of Islington and artists ran workshops in the playroom for our after school clubs.







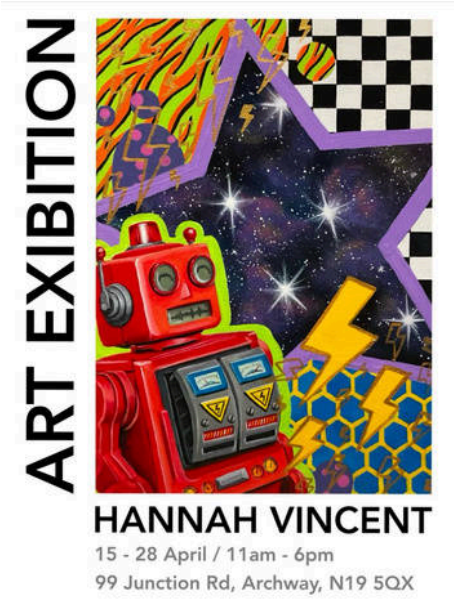
APRIL 2024



Our yearly Easter Play Scheme was a huge success with activities including artist leads workshops, gardening, animation and arts and crafts available to 5 -11 year olds.



Licence to PR Brought their staff for a volunteer day and the gallery flourished with new artists and new workshops.



£2743

spent on staffing and sessions

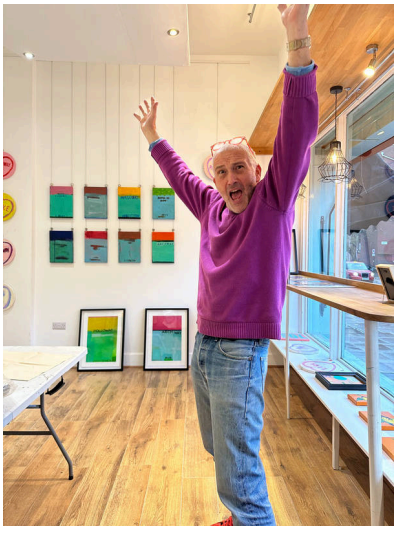
180

spaces taken over 8 days





We held an adult games night with games donated by Allycaat games who were our sponsor for April celebrating the joy of play in adulthood.



MAY 2024

We were the chosen charity for The London Doll Meet, who meet monthly in our playroom sharing their love of dolls. They raised £495 towards workshops in the playroom.



The playroom also hosted 'Nurturing Notes' which is a music therapy group for premature babies under 18 months and babies with additional needs. Connectix tiles sponsored the playroom for the month of May and sent over tile sets for the children to play with and for us to gift.





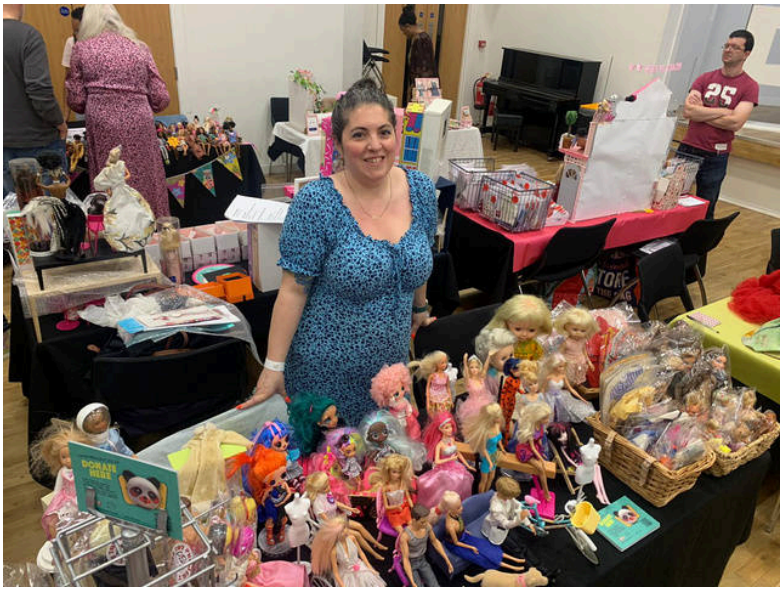


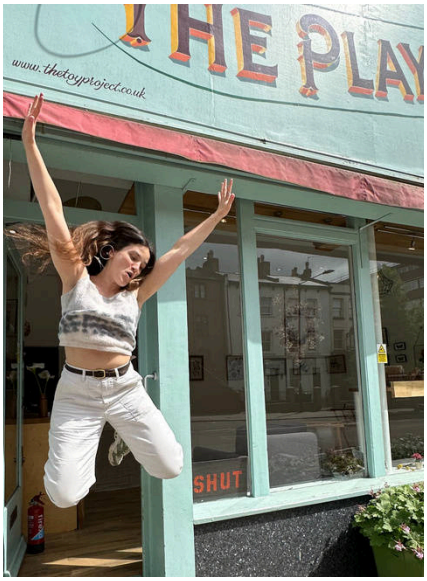
JUNE 2024

Hey Bear Sensory sponsored the month of June at the playroom and our children made a wonderful thank you animation for them.

We launched a successful Jelly cat appeal and took part in the London doll fair selling our most collectable doll donations.







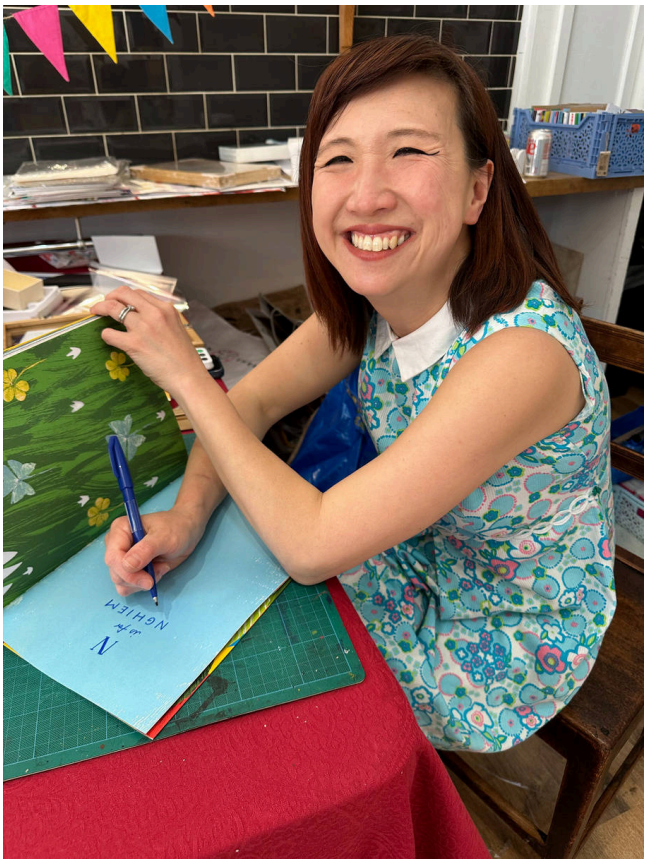


We started a new Pokemon Club to cater to the ever increasing interest in Pokemon amongst our community and continued to give children access to wonderful artist workshops in our gallery.





We hosted the launch of The Teddy Bear Ladies new book, Bertie Bristle, at the playroom where the held a sewing workshop as part of the launch.



We provided the activities at Camden's Family Pride day in Camden market bringing pantomime dames and artists from our gallery to work with the children.









JULY 2024



In July we had our first meeting with Surreal which was an exciting time to start thinking about Christmas. A team from A Million Ads volunteered with us building and packing jelly cat, build a bear and LEGO!



We sent LEGO to a children's library in Fes in the old part of the town called the Medina. The children had never seen lego before and were excited to give it a try!





With Selfridges launching their Jellycat fish and chip stand we also launched our preloved Jellycats at Selfridges to encourage Jellycat fans to also buy second hand.



We had the team in from Rainbow Designs to saw first hand the impact the toys that they donate have on the families we support as they sat in on one of our interactive baby sessions. The day continued with the volunteers sorting and packing toys. Thank you Rainbow Design for sponsoring The Playroom.







AUGUST





Moose toys sponsored the playroom and sent heaps of toys for the children to play with throughout our summer of calm. We provided a quiet and calm summer scheme for children to socialise, learn new skills while feeling safe and cared for. Inkind direct volunteered with us for the day after a visit to see the children playing with all the Lego they provided.







Inkind direct volunteered with us for the day after a visit to see the children playing with all the Lego they provided.







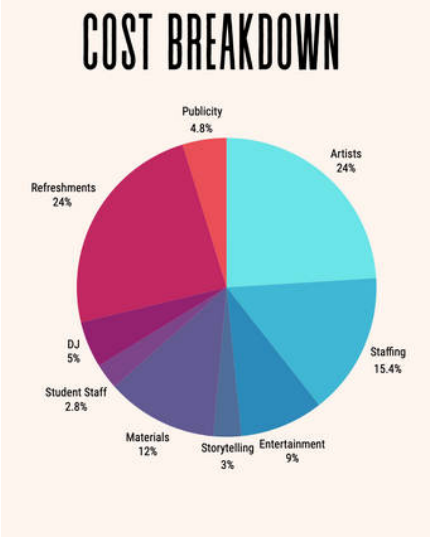


The Gallery hosted a number of group shows, bringing even more artsits into the space and to work with the children and community.

SEPTEMBER

September welcomed our huge street party that brought our three spaces together on the street to celebrate everything that we do within our community. With £5000 from Islington council we provided story telling, artist workshops, free food and drink, music and fun for the whole family. Local artist Wumi created a stunning graffiti piece on the wall of St John's pub as part of our live art event. This free festival was a huge success in the sunshine.





















The Gallery saw some wonderful exhibitions this month with artists bringing many more people to the local area and to visit the charity.

OCTOBER

We made a film with our children and LEGO! Inkind direct in partnership with Lego came in and created a short film to promote Lego's Replay campaign.
"Give your old Lego Bricks A New Life'.











The gallery was filled with doll makers learning new skills from Ayin, our artist in residence. The shop and Selfridges were preparing for a busy Christmas while our playroom sessions ran smoothly through half term.

NOVEMBER



We made it on to the Hampstead and Highgate Monopoly board! We attended the launch at Waterstones and were proud to hear how many people had voted for us.









Channing school held a Jelly Cat collection for us and Surreal came in and volunteered to build and sort. We started working with artist Sharon King Chai on designing our new packaging for soft toys. All paper work went out to schools and we launched straight in to our Christmas referral process as well as celebrating all the wonderful staff at The Toy Project by having our own christmas party celebration.

