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THE SHARE FOUNDATION PREPARES TO LAUNCH ITS UK-WIDE PERFORMING ARTS COURSE 'STEPPING FORWARD' FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN CARE

Pioneering course will support personal development connecting young people in care to a wide network of performing arts resources and organisations

PRESS RELEASE — AYLESBURY, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE — 15 OCTOBER 2024: The Share Foundation, in partnership with Tring Park School for the Performing Arts and the Rothschild Foundation, is developing a first-of-its-kind, nationwide, online performing arts video course to provide young people in care aged 13-17 with an accessible introduction to the performing arts. This initiative aims to bridge the gap for some of the most disadvantaged young people in the UK by offering creative outlets that foster confidence, resilience, creativity, and potential future career opportunities.

Arts enrichment is now widely recognised for its benefits for young people, particularly those in the care system. The performing arts can offer skills with core benefits, helping to redefine their perception of themselves, building confidence, self-esteem, and improving well-being, and this is the first step to shaping the resilience they need both now and into adulthood.

Featuring performances by notable actors such as Emeka Sesay (Top Boy, The Power), Zoe Lister-Jones (Hollyoaks, The Worst Witch), Pandora Christy (Heart Radio), Mo'Nique (The Voice UK), and soprano Jennifer France, the course brings together industry experts to inspire young audiences and demonstrate the possibilities for them within the performing arts sector.

Running alongside The Share Foundation's Stepladder Plus life skills programme, a financially-incentivised online learning programme for young people in care aged 15-17, the course will not only support personal development but also connect young people to a wider network of performing arts resources and organisations at the local level. Developed with Tring Park School and produced by media company Particle6, this pioneering course will act as an initial access point, routing young people to local performing arts education organisations and identifying future opportunities for those interested in pursuing the arts.

Gavin Oldham, Chair of Trustees at The Share Foundation, commented: "The performing arts are special in their ability to combine enjoyment, opportunity, and a positive experience of social relationships — all key antidotes to the insecurity and despair faced by many young people in care. We believe this new course will provide an excellent complement to our Stepladder Plus life skills programme, offering hope and new opportunities for care leavers as they transition into adulthood."

Simon Larter-Evans, Principal of Tring Park School for the Performing Arts, said "We have been planning this extraordinary collaboration together since the summer of 2023. It is a significant marker showing our joint commitment to making the performing arts accessible to all. This is just the beginning."

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Eline van der Velden, CEO/Founder of Particle6, explained: “At Particle6, we believe in the power of creativity to transform lives. The performing arts bring joy, build confidence, and offer hope to anyone, and we’re proud to contribute to this important initiative. Through this course, we aim to inspire care-experienced young people, giving them access to the arts and opening up new opportunities for their future.”

Following an extensive feasibility study conducted by Lucy Perman MBE and Imogen Ashby, backed by a total investment of £260,000 supported jointly by The Rothschild Foundation and a Charities Aid Foundation Donor Advised Fund, the course will serve as a platform that connects young people in care with performing arts education resources across the country. It will act as the glue uniting national organisations such as The Big House, Care to Dance, and Tring Park School, as well as supporting the work of the National Association of Virtual School Heads and The Mighty Creatives.

Scripts and filming for the six-step online course were completed over the past three months with guidance from a focus group of young people in care and an advisory group chaired by Andy Wright OBE, Trustee for West Midlands Children in Care Foundation, Chair of ARC and ASCL Council Member. The programme is scheduled to launch in early 2025 and will be available through local authorities across the United Kingdom. For more information please visit: www.sharefound.org/steppingforward

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About The Share Foundation

The Share Foundation has operated the Junior ISA scheme for young people in care throughout the United Kingdom on behalf of the Department for Education since 2012 and the Child Trust Fund scheme for young people in care since 2017. It has developed the Stepladder Plus life skills programme as an incentivised learning course to run alongside these starter capital accounts, accessible throughout the United Kingdom. Over one thousand young people have participated thus far with 64% completing at least four of the six steps. Survey analysis of these is showing that their NEET rate at 19 years old is less than 24% compared to the average 38% for adult care leavers. <https://www.sharefound.org/>

About Tring Park School for the Performing Arts

Tring Park School’s vision is to be the pre-eminent centre of excellence for training and educating the next generation of the most versatile performance artists. Offering world-class vocational training in dance, musical theatre, acting and commercial music, the boarding and day school based in Hertfordshire UK offers a pathway to industry alongside a robust academic provision. Welcoming pupils from 7 to 19 years old, the school aims to provide this unique breadth of education and training to talented young people from all backgrounds and extends its specialist facilities and teaching experience to children and young adults across the wider community. www.tringpark.com

About Rothschild Foundation

The Rothschild Foundation is a charity supporting arts and heritage, the environment, and social welfare by awarding grants, fostering dialogue and debate, and through our support of Waddesdon Manor. The Foundation is Chaired by Dame Hannah Rothschild DBE, and managed by a board of Trustees, including other members of the Rothschild family. The Rothschild Foundation offers grants for the benefit of Buckinghamshire delivering our commitment to address the needs of local communities. Beyond Buckinghamshire, the Foundation supports major initiatives which encourage enjoyment of the UK’s rich cultural heritage. For more information about the Rothschild Foundation and its grants programme, visit <https://rothschildfoundation.org.uk/>, or follow on Facebook or LinkedIn.

About Particle6

Founded in 2015 by Eline van der Velden, Particle6 connects diverse audiences with content that's educational, provocative, and exciting. By blending its team's backgrounds in science, comedy, and drama with cutting-edge technology, Particle6 creates innovative storytelling experiences. Their viral successes include the Gender Bias Riddle (14M views on BBC Three) and Putting It Out There (10M views on BBC Three). They regularly collaborate with BBC Bitesize and BBC Teach, with credits including the Imperial War Museum's WW2 series and Ivy's Plant Shop. Particle6 has won a Gold Telly Award and a Best Online Comedy Lovie Award. As an eco-conscious company certified by Albert Sustainable Production, it is committed to reducing global carbon emissions through storytelling. Recognised as a Pact Future30 company, a BFI Global Screenfund Awardee and they have been part of the Channel4 Emerging Indie Fund and Creative UK's Female Founders scheme.

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