

War evacuee shares the colourful secret of her long life

Dorothy's lockdown-inspired arts project proves a surprise hit

A 92-year-old World War Two evacuee who refuses to let arthritis halt her passion for creativity has enjoyed a hit with her latest project – making colourful bead bowls.

Now Dorothy McDermott has paid tribute to the staff at Cramond Residence, who have helped her create dozens of the bowls, as orders have flooded in from family, friends, residents and staff.

The arts-loving pensioner, who trained as a silversmith, was inspired during lockdown to experiment with colourful Hama Beads, which were originally created for children, but have proved a global hit with many adults as well.

Dorothy says that creative projects have helped her enjoy a happy and fulfilled life and also provided her with a vital distraction during lockdown – and is delighted with the reaction to her latest works.

She added: “People have been putting in requests for specific styles and colours – I’ve made over 20 in just one month. I’m thrilled to bits that people like them.

“But I couldn’t have done it without the help from staff as my fingers don’t work the way they used to. I have to pick up the Hama Beads with a safety pin due to my arthritis and have to get one member of staff to help separate the brown and black

beads due to my double vision.”

Widowed Dorothy has had a lifelong passion for art and told how her creative streak even helped sustain her as a child during the darkest days of World War Two.

She said: “Art has always been a passion of mine, I used to get my dad to make a hole in silver sixpences and thruppennies so I could get a wire or thread through to make necklaces.

“When I was evacuated from Edinburgh to the home of my auntie and uncle in Perthshire at the beginning of World War Two, I used to gather hazelnuts to paint and make brooches from, to keep everyone’s spirits high and bring a little bit of happiness during a difficult time.

“I’ve always made things, right through school I was painting and making jewellery. I went on to study silversmithing at Edinburgh Art College. It’s fun to see how the creations turn out and makes me feel good to see the way people have appreciated them over the years.

“I like to keep my collections unique, as I feel that makes them special – it means I can offer ‘one of a kinds’ which people quite like, especially the jewellery as no one will ever have the same.”

Dorothy’s passion for the arts sees her taking classes with other residents at Cramond Residence, Edinburgh’s most exclusive care home. This month (SEP) she will lead a course on how to Tie-dye silk scarves, as well as teaching other residents how to get creative with the colourful beads.

Lisa Sohn, Lifestyle Co-ordinator at Cramond Residence said: “The drive and energy that Mrs McDermott has for the creative arts is truly inspiring – proving that age is just a number when it comes to something you are passionate about.

“Dorothy is a very sociable resident, so when her friends

caught wind of her new adventure making bead bowls, many were quick to put their order in. Now even the staff are getting in on the action – from storing keys at the front door to a place for jewellery – everyone has been coming up with new uses for them.

“Dorothy is always busy crafting and making things, which she often gives to people as gifts. We look forward to seeing her wonderful creations every time, as no creation is ever the same.”

The popular mother-of-one, who has lived her entire life in Edinburgh, retired 30 years ago but continued to make jewellery, design clothes and to express herself through painting.

As her arthritis worsened, she moved into Cramond Residence. For the past seven months the dedicated care staff have been helping her continue to unleash her creativity.

Dorothy added: “Making things keeps my mind active, I’ve started becoming a bit forgetful so this gives me something to focus on and I really enjoy it. I’d say I spend several hours every week creating new designs whether it is for a new bead bowl or a painting.”

Cramond Residence is a purpose-build, £12.5m care home which opened in October 2018 and can care for up to 74 older people. It includes specialised, self-contained houses for residents living with advanced stage cognitive impairments caused by conditions such as Alzheimer’s.

Each resident enjoys a luxury room with en-suite bathroom facilities. It maintains a care staff to resident ratio of at least 1:4 at all times. As well as the beautiful gardens, it also offers a library, a hair salon, a private, fine-dining space, a physiotherapy room and a cinema.

Cramond Residence provides a combination of luxury accommodation and the highest quality of care. Places start from

£1850-per-week.. Set in a leafy location, it offers small group-living in nine houses, with all residents enjoying a wide range of amenities and activities, excellent food and bespoke care.

To find out more, call 0131 341 4037 or visit <https://cramondresidence.co.uk/>