

# **The Yard – a “happy place” for families raises thousands**

**A charity for children with special needs has raised more than £80,000 at its annual fundraising ball.**

The Yard is a charity which supports children and young people aged 0-25 with disabilities, and it hosted the formal event at Prestonfield House Hotel on Saturday.

The ball, called The Big Fun Raiser, was attended by nearly 300 people and raised the funds through ticket sales, a raffle and a silent auction.

The charity hosts various programmes for disabled children, including creative and play activities, sessions with schools and disability training.

Celine Sinclair, CEO of The Yard, said: “Since opening our secret garden at Canonmills in, Edinburgh, our dreams have taken root and flourished. We’ve grown, extending our arms to over 2600 young people annually across Edinburgh, Dundee and Fife.

“Now, we’re actively working towards spreading our unique model of family support and service excellence even further across Scotland. Thanks to the incredible generosity shown at The Big Fun Raiser, we can unlock the potential of countless more families across Scotland by expanding The Yard’s reach and opening the doors to even more secret gardens of support, joy, and friendship.”



Edinburgh Mum Megan Davidson addressing guests. Credit: Vicki Watson Photography

Megan Davidson, whose 5-year-old son Toby attends the Yard, spoke at the event about what the charity meant to her family.

She said: “Toby is unique, creative, fun and loving, and big brother to Phoebe who is two, going on 25. Toby is also autistic and has a chromosome duplication. When he started playgroup, Toby really struggled, and his behaviour was challenging. Although the staff were amazing, I dreaded pick-up and what they might say. Then, one day, a member of staff told us about The Yard. At that point, he hadn’t been diagnosed but that wasn’t an issue and, what’s more, I could take Phoebe too.

“From our first visit, the nerves began to get lighter and Toby was having so much fun. I was no longer the odd one out – everyone got it. They offered us support, advice and friendship. There is nowhere else you will find such selfless people – the team are 100% there for the children and he adores them. The Yard is his ‘yes’ place, his safe space, his

happy place where he can be himself and celebrated for who he is.

“It’s also a place where Phoebe is included alongside her brother. Her experiences and the friendships she is forming are making her an advocate for inclusion. I wish all children had the opportunity she has had. The Yard saved me; it gave me a place to heal when I needed it the most. It has educated me and, most importantly, made me see just how beautiful our children are and that the world is better for having them in it.”

[www.theyardscotland.org.uk](http://www.theyardscotland.org.uk)

