

# A Great 'Starting Point' for Student Artist

Artist Karly Burns talks to *Rehab News* about her involvement in Momentum's Mental Health Programme.



*Pictured left: Karly Burns (left) with her mother, Helen (right), and Cathy Jamieson MSP. Ms Jamieson commended Karly for her volunteering work with Momentum and invited her to attend the Scottish Parliament last February.*

**T**WENTY-TWO-YEAR-OLD ART STUDENT KARLY Burns, who is studying for a Master's Degree at the Glasgow School of Art, was commended for her volunteering work with Momentum when she visited the Scottish Parliament during Student Volunteering Week last February.

Karly, who has cystic fibrosis, dedicated her time and energy to running community art workshops for adults who attend Momentum's mental health programme, 'Starting Point', culminating in an exhibition in January at the Glasgow School of Art.

After hearing about Karly's work with the programme, Cathy Jamieson MSP, who is a former Art School graduate herself, lodged a motion in Parliament to commend Karly's work and also invited her to visit.

Karly said, "It's great to have my work and the work of 'Starting Point' service users recognised at the Scottish Parliament. I was delighted to be invited to the Parliament and I was able to speak to a number of MSPs about the work I've been doing and also highlight the benefits that I believe community art offers.

"Volunteering at Momentum has been an extremely rewarding and worthwhile experience for both myself and the groups involved. The experience has also confirmed in my mind that I want to work as a community artist once I finish university in September. I want to make art accessible and enjoyable for socially-excluded groups and give people the opportunity to express themselves through engaging with art."

Karly speaks positively about living with cystic fibrosis and says that it will not stop her from achieving her ambition to become a freelance community artist.

"Cystic fibrosis does present some difficulties but I receive great support from my family and friends. Everyone has their own challenges in life and, like everyone else, I have mine but there are always opportunities for me."

Momentum's 'Starting Point' programme works with adults who are unemployed and who have mental health difficulties to address the challenges that they face and move forward with their lives through engaging with new experiences. ■