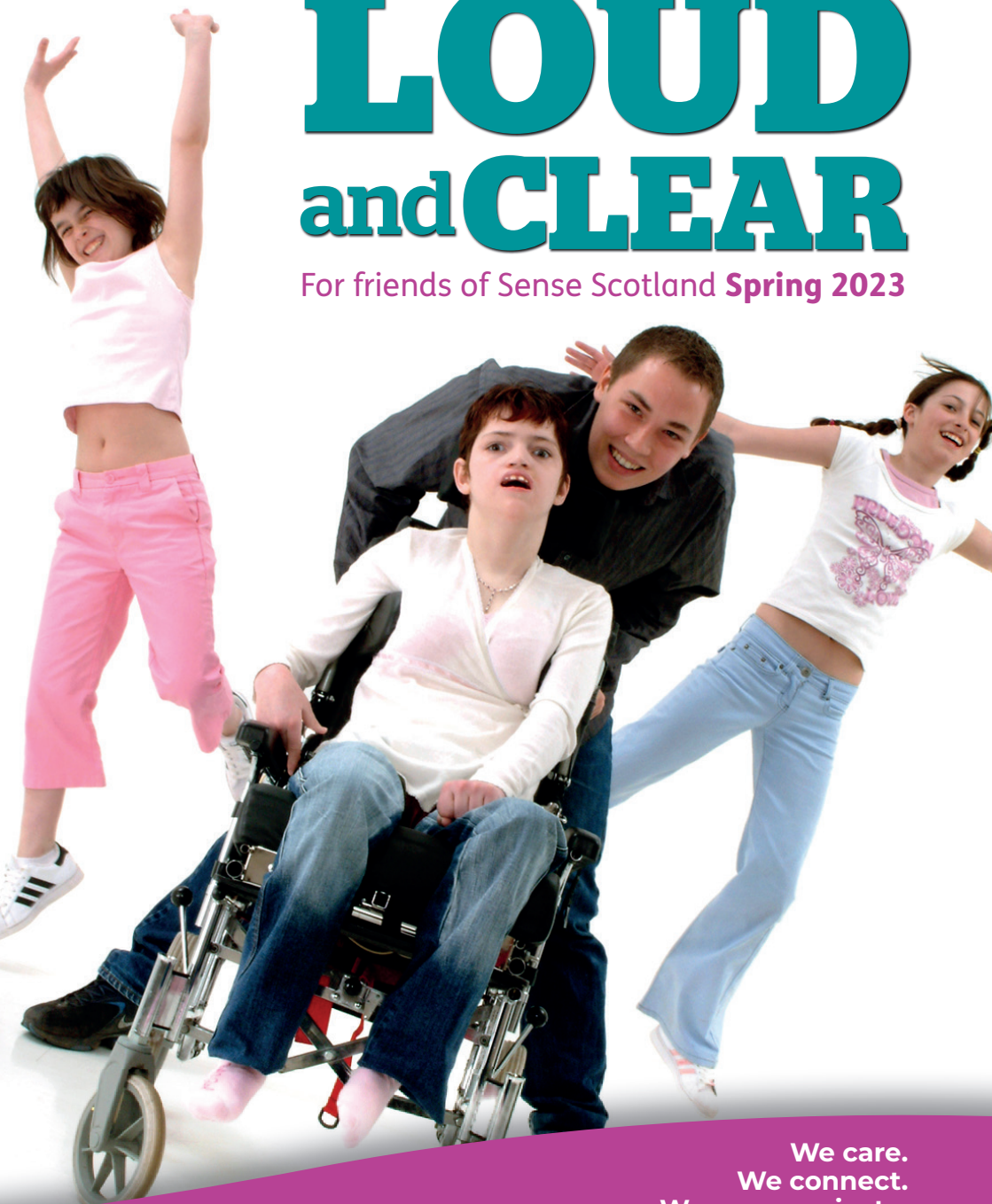


LOUD and CLEAR

For friends of Sense Scotland **Spring 2023**



We care.
We connect.
We communicate.

LOUD and CLEAR

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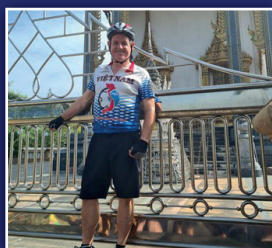
Sense Scotland is a Scottish charity and specialised social care provider supporting people with communication support needs associated with complex and sensory disabilities, and their families, where individual needs and choices come first.

Sense Scotland now supports hundreds of families all across Scotland. We are recognised as leaders in our field and still hold true to our family values, caring for children through adolescence and into adulthood whilst supporting them through all the challenges and opportunities along the way.

We provide registered care services to people with communication support needs associated with complex and sensory disabilities. Every service is tailor-made and designed with individual wishes, potential and independence in mind.

Your donations fund all the things that make Sense Scotland unique. Music, art, social groups, play and communication sessions - fun, fun and more fun. But serious stuff too - making sure people we support are included in decisions which affect their life, are able to choose where they live and how they spend their time.

Massive thanks to super cyclist Ronnie Stewart who completed a challenging 10 day cycle ride in Thailand, covering 400km and raising an amazing £4000!



Thank you for helping us raise an incredible £54,625 over the festive season. This will help children like Jack and his family, who featured in our Christmas Appeal.



Dreams Can Come True



Back in 1985, the Sense Scotland we know today was the ultimate dream of a group of seven families, all of whom had children who were born deafblind as a result of maternal rubella.

There were no specialist services, awareness or knowledge of how to help these children and their families. Many similar children were locked away in long stay institutions and effectively forgotten about. Deemed some of the most challenging people in the country, they were left to live and die very short and unfulfilled lives.

Our founding families were determined that would not be the outcome for their children. Together they created Sense Scotland - an organisation that would care not only for their children throughout their lives and when family are long gone, but also for the children of the future.

Every Life Worth Living

In 1986 this incredible group of parents helped create Carnbooth - Scotland's first ever school for deafblind children. In 1987 they opened the first residential care home for deafblind adults in Scotland - Overbridge. Today we are privileged to support 114 adults to live independently in their own homes, in their own communities, with the support of highly dedicated and skilled staff.

In this issue of Loud and Clear, I am delighted to share with you a few examples of how we continue to realise that dream, by highlighting the work of our registered care services.

Keeping the Dream Alive

But we can't do this alone. Your donations are the foundation on which the dream is realised. They fund the life changing work of our Family Support Team and Operational Support Team who ensure that families and staff are able to effectively communicate, not only with their child, but with the myriad of professionals involved throughout their lifetime, to reach the ultimate goal of independent living. Your donation also funds our arts, music and physical activity teams, whose expertise is instrumental in achieving ultimate wellbeing, happiness and contentment.

I know times are tough for everyone and would like to once again thank you for continuing to support us in whatever way you can. If you can't afford to donate directly, please consider signing up to our Easyfundraising initiative, which is also featured in this newsletter.

Together we will keep the dream alive.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Angela Bonomy'.

Angela Bonomy,
Chief Executive Officer

Raymond's 80th Birthday Bash

When Raymond Holt was born on 11 December 1942, his parents were devastated to be told not to expect him to live into adulthood.

But on 11 December 2022 Raymond celebrated his 80th birthday, with a huge party, organised by his wonderful extended Sense Scotland family and friends.

June Birch has supported Raymond to live independently in his own home for the past 20 years. She explains *"Raymond is a very happy chap, always jolly and very inquisitive. He enjoys life and has a huge love of trains. He wasn't in good health leading up to his Birthday, but took a turn for the better and so we decided to go ahead and throw him a party."*

Raymond lives in our Bridge of Earn supported living service. This comprises two linked bungalows, housing four residents. A team of 16 staff provide 24 hour support to enable them to live as independently as possible, enjoy their hobbies and interests, make and maintain friendships and thrive both mentally and physically. Raymond has a Link Group - four staff who take the lead on organising things for Raymond like holidays, activities,



buying clothes, decorating his home. And throwing parties!

June said *"We are Raymond's family now and everyone wanted to celebrate with him so we booked the village hall. It was a great turnout - around 50 - 60 people, all Sense Scotland staff and their*

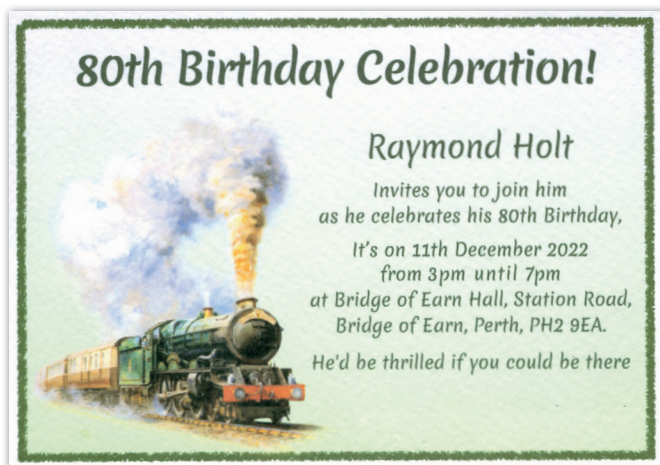
families as well as people we support in other services attended. The party was train themed of course – the invitation, the cake, the decorations. Raymond loves Scottish music and we had booked a piper to pipe him in to the party, but he couldn't make it at the last minute so we improvised instead. Bill (one of our Managers) was the DJ and he played a great tune whilst we all clapped and cheered his grand entrance.

Raymond had a fabulous time. Although he finds it difficult to communicate, he understands everything going on. His smile was huge and he was shouting random words in excitement. He loved opening all his presents, which were of course train themed! It was a great party”.

For anyone to reach their 80th birthday is an achievement, but more so for Raymond who has lived with multiple disabilities and communication support needs since birth. This is all down to the great care he receives from the team at Bridge of Earn. He lives a full life and with access to a car gets out and about a lot, but also enjoys spending time in his large shared garden with the other residents.

June said “I love my job. It's a great wee place to work and everyone works together for Raymond. He is a pleasure to support”.

Since the party, Raymond's health has remained good and staff are now planning a holiday for him. Which will involve trains of course!



We care.

Living Life to the Full

Yvonne was born on 18th January 1984, looking every inch the perfect, beautiful baby girl. But all was not as it seemed.



Unable to swallow or suckle, mum Gillian was shown how to feed her via a tube directly into her stomach. Together, they spent her first 3 months in hospital.

At age 18 months, Gillian was told quite bluntly by a doctor at her local hospital *"Your child is both mentally and physically handicapped. Just take her away."* So Gillian did. Realising that there was no help for her daughter there, she took her to Yorkhill Children's Hospital. This proved to be a

pivotal moment for Yvonne's future – she was referred to Stanmore House in Lanark, a specialist school for children with complex needs, offering a multidisciplinary combination of teaching, nursing and therapy.

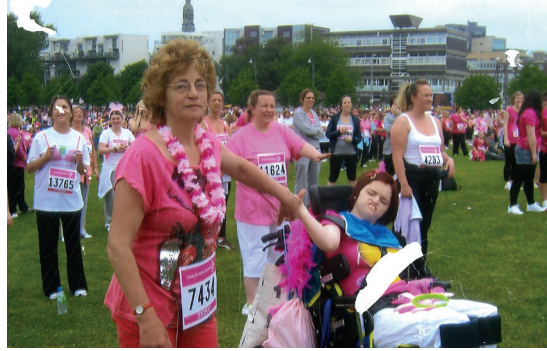
Gillian and Yvonne packed up their life in Balquhiddel, Perthshire and moved to South Lanarkshire. *"From the day she started at Stanmore, aged 2, till the day she left, aged 18, we never looked back"*. A bright and happy child, Yvonne was always on the go. Unable to walk, she would either shuffle

on her bum or bunny hop on her knees to get to where she wanted to go and get up to all sorts of mischief. And though unable to talk, she understood every word she heard and hated missing out on conversations. In due course, Yvonne was given a full diagnosis of her health conditions alongside treatment plans and strategies to enable her to thrive.

But school days don't last forever and, as Yvonne's 18th birthday drew near, Gillian had some serious decisions to make: *"At the back of your mind is always, 'who will look after her when I'm gone?'. My house was never going to be suitable for her. She needed her own place. But it wasn't going to be easy."*

Yvonne had been boarding at Stanmore, only returning to the new family home in Glasgow at weekends. Whilst it was manageable for a few days, it was not a long term option. She cherished her independence and needed wheelchair-friendly accommodation. Options were limited – a shared house in Rothesay was too far away and a purpose-built new build was disappointingly vetoed by the community.

By an incredible stroke of luck, a ground floor flat became available



in a sheltered housing complex, only 10 minutes away from Gillian's home, and Sense Scotland were able to provide the 24 hour specialist care that Yvonne would need. Gillian was delighted.

Yvonne has now been living in her own wee house since 2002. Specially adapted to meet her needs, she has lovely friendly neighbours and a Sense Scotland care team of five – Liz, Laura, Joyce, Lynn and Ethel. Yvonne requires varying degrees of support in all aspects of care in her life. The team know her very well and work in shifts providing one to one 24 hour care to support her to live independently.

Laura has been supporting Yvonne for the last 6 years:

"Yvonne is a brilliant person to support. She is very sociable and loves getting out and about, so no two days are the same. She knows exactly what she wants and makes sure we do too by using her communication book."

We communicate.

The book was developed with the support of a speech and language therapist and Sense Scotland staff.



Laura explains *“So it’s all pictures. The first page we would go to is categories which includes people, mood, weather, days etc. She’ll point to the category she wants to talk about. So if it’s people, you would turn to the page with people and she would choose from the pictures on that page which people she would like to talk about. So if she pointed out Mum we would ask her questions like do you want to call your Mum? Or do you want to see your Mum? And she would say yes or no by using her hands.”*

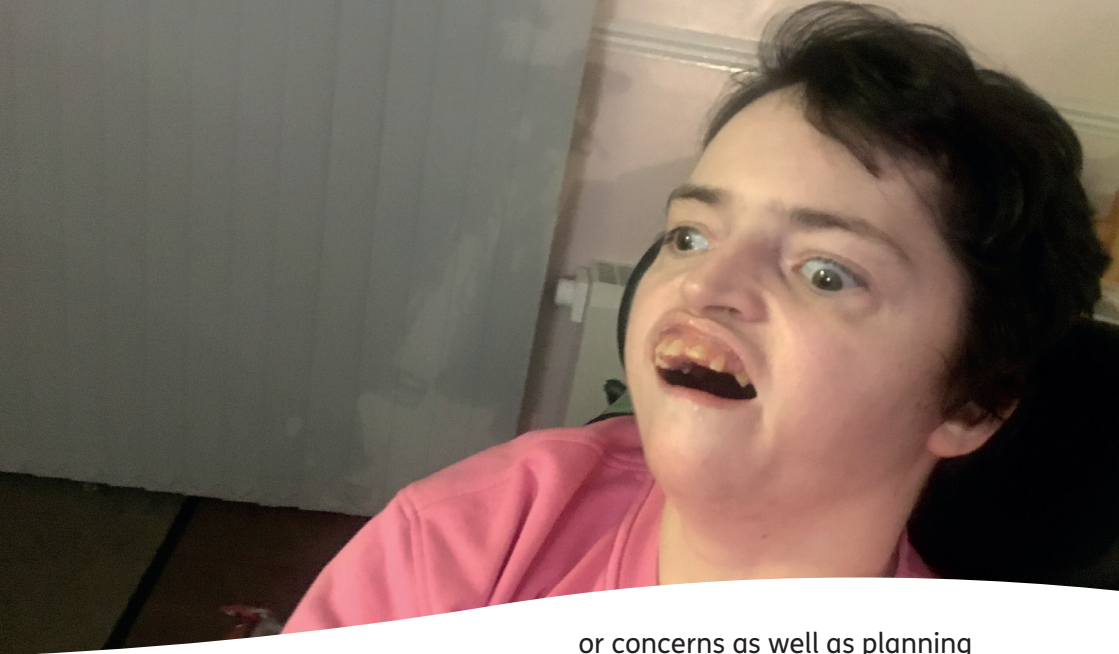
Using the communication book, staff are able to plan Yvonne’s week. She might go swimming, bowling or to the cinema, or meet up with her best friends, many of whom she has known since her school days, but also new friends she has met through Sense Scotland. Gillian said *“Yvonne has a better social life than me!”*

But Yvonne also enjoys chilling out at home. *“During Covid we were really worried about how she’d cope with lockdown. We thought it would affect her badly as she is always out and about, but she was really great. Staff planned new indoor activities like arts and crafts and we realised she quite liked a wee chill day as well as putting a film or music on.”*

But her favourite activity is Come Dine With Me. Every week she meets up with Mum and friend Bill, sometimes going out to restaurants for a meal. Although Yvonne is unable to eat due to her dysphagia (difficulty in swallowing) and relies on PEG (Percutaneous Endoscopic Gastronomy) to deliver sufficient nutritional support, she enjoys the company and change of scenery.

Yvonne keeps staff on their toes. *“She has a great sense of humour, enjoys a carry on and likes to take the mickey. For example, when she’s with me she loves to listen to Boyzone. But never with Joyce. She chooses what she wants to do and can be quite demanding at times!”*





In addition to supporting Yvonne to live a full and active life, staff also ensure that she keeps physically well. Medication and PEG feeding is administered twice a day as well as some physical therapy in the form of stretching and hand massage, essential for anyone whose free range of movement is limited.

Although Mum Gillian has welfare guardianship of Yvonne, and Sense Scotland financial guardianship, everyone works together to keep Yvonne as well and happy as possible. Staff accompany Yvonne to frequent regular and specialist healthcare appointments related to her complex needs which also include diabetes, epilepsy and cerebral palsy. At the end of every shift, staff give a handover report and share any highlights

or concerns as well as planning ahead for the next few days.

Like every person we support, Yvonne has a live Care Plan which is updated on an ongoing basis and reviewed annually. She also has an Outcomes and Support Review every 6 months which is attended by Yvonne, her care team and key people in her life eg family, social workers, physiotherapists. Everyone has an equal voice and it's an opportunity to look back on the past 6 months and plan for the next.

Laura says *"Supporting Yvonne is probably one of the best jobs I've ever had in the 16 years I've done care. It's nice and relaxed as well as fun. It's not the same routine every single day, there are lots of different things to do and the team are always up for new suggestions to make life even more interesting for Yvonne."*

Happy Campers

Living your best life is different for everyone.



For John, who is supported to live independently by our Highland and Lochaber Care at Home service, his best life is being outdoors. John walks - every day, for miles and miles, in all weathers. It's his thing.

Keeping up with him are Support Workers David and Ray.

Although John is autistic and non-verbal, he has a good understanding of spoken English and is an effective communicator, using Makaton and photo boards when needed. David and Ray know

him well, having worked with him for many years. They can tell by his whole demeanour how he is - what they see is what they get.

David and Ray felt that John would benefit from expanding his horizons, taking his love of the outdoors to a whole new level. John likes routine and change can be difficult for him to cope well with. However, with the full support of John's family, who helped to purchase equipment, they started planning and risk assessing his first ever wild camping trip!

With no shortage of amazing places to go in the stunning outdoors surrounding Fort William, choosing their final destination took some time and deliberation. Arisaig, an area John had visited before, seemed the ideal location so off they set one fine sunny morning.

Taking the scenic route (although there is really no alternative) the three amigos reached Mallaig around lunchtime and stopped for a look round and a fish supper. Arriving in Arisaig late afternoon, they put on their backpacks, gathered their camping gear and



supplies, and hiked to find the perfect spot to pitch their tents overlooking the beach.

Ray said “John settled in really nicely. It was the perfect location for him as he loves water and the ocean. He helped set up camp, making sure his tent was pegged tightly into the ground. At night time we sat round the camp fire with snacks, sweets and drinks listening to Abba (John’s favourite). We toasted marshmallows and John enjoyed picking out which colour of marshmallows we ate. John stayed up later than he normally would and we all enjoyed

watching a beautiful sunset over the sea. David and I took turns at sitting up as John can be a restless sleeper and often wakes in the night. We didn’t want to lose him! It was a really fun trip for us all and I was amazed at how well John coped with the total change in routine”.

For the next few days John was positively skipping, making happy noises, singing and very relaxed. The benefits were so profound staff organised a second wild camp a month later, this time at Loch Morlich and can’t wait till summer to take John on more camping adventures.

We connect.



Since launching our Sense Scotland Lottery in September, we have had winners almost every single week - unfortunately not the top prize of £25,000 (yet), but we have our fingers and toes crossed! It's only £1 a week to play - sign up at www.sensescotland.org.uk/lottery or call the Fundraising team for a sign up form. **Tel: 0300 330 9292**

It's a Win Win!

With our Weekly Lottery, you could win a cash prize of up to £25,000 whilst also donating to a good cause.

With easyfundraising, you could be instantly sending us donations whilst doing your weekly shop - at no cost to yourself!

What are you waiting for?
Sign up now!



easyfundraising - turn your online shopping into everyday magic

We're now registered with easyfundraising, which means you can help us for **FREE**. Over 7,000 brands will donate to us when you use easyfundraising to shop with them - at no extra cost to yourself!

All your favourite brands will donate when you spend. So whether you're doing the weekly shop, ordering takeaway, renewing your car insurance or even booking a holiday or short break, you could be raising money which helps change the lives of disabled people across Scotland.

These donations really mount up and you can see at any time how much you have raised on our behalf.

It's easy and completely **FREE!**

1. **Visit www.easyfundraising.org.uk**
2. **Search for Sense Scotland**
3. **Visit a participating retailer, make a purchase and they will donate to us**

There's also a handy app you can download which will let you know if you are on the website of a participating retailer so you don't always have to remember to go to the easyfundraising website.



**Don't delay –
we need your donations today!**

Fundraising Round Up

Kiltwalk 2023

It's almost impossible not to feel good when you're walking outdoors - it's an everyday mood-booster and a tonic for your mind and body. Why not boost your wellbeing by joining Team Sense Scotland at one of the Kiltwalks in 2023?

- **Glasgow 30th April**
- **Aberdeen 4th June**
- **Dundee 20th August**
- **Edinburgh 17th September**



Don your tartan bunnet, scarf or kilt and pick from three different distances to raise funds for Sense Scotland. We will pay your entry fee, you just need to fundraise on

our behalf. Sign up here: <https://www.sensescotland.org.uk/kiltwalk/>

On your marks....

Get your running shoes on and fundraise for Sense Scotland at the 2023 Edinburgh Marathon Festival. Choose from a half or full marathon or 5km or 10km run. Kids can get involved too with special runs including ones for 3 - 6 year olds.

Date: Saturday 27 May & Sunday 28 May

Ben Nevis Night Trek

Could you take on the challenge of Ben Nevis by night? Sign up today for this unforgettable unique experience and enjoy the breath-taking beauty of the Scottish Highlands as you watch the sun rise from the 1345 metre summit of Ben Nevis.

Date: 19th – 20th August 2023

The distance of this challenge is approximately 18km and takes between four and five hours to ascend. The Night Trek is led by qualified guides.

Registrations are now open with a flat fee of £65 together with minimum sponsorship of £290 or self-funding £145. Ask the fundraising team for more info!

Ladies' Lunch **SOLD OUT**

Our 2023 Ladies' Lunch event in March was a complete sell out! Over 300 guests were entertained by the one and only Susan Boyle and the fantastic Edward Reid. Our best Ladies' Lunch yet!

Don't Miss Out Next Time

Be the first to know about our next amazing event – our fabulous Ball in **November** and Gingham and Glitz in **January 2024**. Contact

the fundraising team to make sure you receive your invitation first. Email: fundraising@sensescotland.org.uk





Smells Good, Feels Good

Welcome to the Sense Scotland Family – Mecoco!

In October 2022 we started working with Mecoco, an innovative social enterprise based in North Ayrshire which makes candles, reed diffusers and other fragrance products. The business was founded in 2019 by Jenny, whose son James was getting ready to leave school. For James, a young person with complex needs, and Jenny, this was a daunting time. Jenny felt strongly that all young people should have the opportunity to do something meaningful with their time.

At Mecoco, inclusion doesn't just mean all disabled people, it means all people. Colleagues work together, some disabled and some not. Friendships are formed and a new understanding created.

As of April 1st 2023, Mecoco became part of the extended Sense Scotland family, offering employment, work experience and social opportunities for the people we support and the wider community.

All products are hand made and use high quality ingredients including sustainably sourced soy wax, paraben free fragrances and plastic free packing.

With scents including “Bless Your Cotton Socks,” “Full of Beans” and “Snug as a Bug” which will be your favourite?

Why not try for yourself? The scented tealight selection box features one of each of the current 10 fragrances and can be ordered using the order form overleaf or direct from our online shop:

www.sensescotland.org.uk/shop

For the full range of products or more info see:

www.mecoco.org.uk



Special offer!

Spend **£30 or more** and get **10%** off using code **“Sense10”** at checkout. You will also be entered into a raffle to win a year's free subscription of wax melts.

Give to Live

By purchasing from our online shop, or sending a donation, you help support our life-changing work. Order form and donation form overleaf or shop online at www.sensescotland.org.uk/shop



Mecoco Selection Box - £9

Contains 10 tealights featuring current fragrances. Ideal for gifting.



Memory Box - £20

This large memory box is the perfect keepsake for storing happy memories of a special person, place or time.



Flower Seedbombs - £3

Add a pop of colour to any garden with these bee and butterfly friendly seedbombs. Plant in one place or scatter across an area then wait for the beautiful wild flowers to grow.



Charm Bracelet - £9

Delicate and elegantly wrapped, includes the inspirational Helen Keller quote: "If you can dream it, you can do it".



Magnifier Glass - £3

Handy-sized magnifier for reading books or labels with teeny, tiny writing. Features a bright white LED light. (Batteries included).



Pocket Fan - £4

Keep cool wherever you go with this handheld fan which can also spray mist water. (Batteries included).



Multi-Use Keyring - £2

This handy keyring not only keeps your keys safe, but also features a trolley coin and LED light. (Batteries included).



Incredibly Useful Eco Pen - £2

The handiest pen you will ever own! Not just a pen, also has a screen cleaner and phone stand.



Microfibre Screen Cleaning Cloth - £3

Easily removes dust, finger prints and greasy marks from smart phones, tablets, cameras and sunglasses.

Order Form



Item	Price	Qty	Total
Tealight Selection Box	£9.00		
Memory Box	£20.00		
Seedbomb	£3.00		
Charm Bracelet	£9.00		
Magnifier Glass	£3.00		
Pocket Fan	£4.00		
Multi-Use Keyring	£2.00		
Eco Pen	£2.00		
Microfibre Cloth	£3.00		

Payment method I enclose a cheque payable to Sense Scotland or please debit my Visa / Mastercard / Switch / AMEX / CAF Card
Or order and pay online:
www.sensescotland.org.uk/shop

Sub-total	£
P&P	£2.50
Donation	£
TOTAL	£

Card Number

Expiry Date Valid or Issue Number Security Code

Tick this box if you pay tax ☐ *giftaid it*

I want Sense Scotland to treat all my gifts made in the last 4 years and in the future as Gift Aid donations. I confirm that I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax in the current tax year than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Tel No:

Email:

Signature:

If you'd rather we no longer stay in touch via post, please tick this box ☐

Keeping in Touch If you would like us to stay in touch via email, please provide your email address above. If you would like to donate by regular Direct Debit or make a donation by phone, please contact the Fundraising Team on **0300 330 9292** or complete the form on our website: www.sensescotland.org.uk/donate-now