

## Inspired by the next generation

# Sores, Spores and Sickly Bugs

**Ros Croker** (Centre of the Cell)

Over the last year at Centre of the Cell we have been working with a group of 14–18 year olds from East London to support their research project into the East End's medical history (funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund). Aiming to understand and translate key changes in practice and knowledge to share with family audiences at Centre of the Cell, the group committed to weekly workshops with additional school holiday sessions and museum visits over the course of a year.

The group worked with the team at the Royal London Hospital Museum and Archives to investigate archival material and uncover fascinating facts and stories to inspire their workshop for families and related webpages. They visited medical exhibitions at the Wellcome Collection, Hunterian and Old Operating Theatre museums to gather further stories of medical practice, past and present, and developed an understanding of how art can be used for the communication of science. The team selected four aspects of medical history they found particularly interesting, and each was used to create a station for the workshop: 'Anaesthetics', 'Children & Disease', 'Equipment & Antisepsis', and 'Disease & the East End'.

They took part in training with the Centre of the Cell's learning team to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding of how to design and lead sessions for family audiences and then worked as a team to create scripts, costumes and props. After a lot of practice, confidence building and communication skills soared and a nervous but well-rehearsed project team tested the workshop at live family audiences at the Watney Market Idea Store.

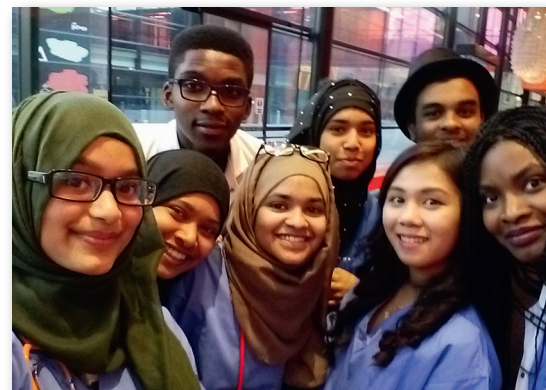
The two tester sessions attracted over 100 participants, who hugely enjoyed the interactive games and quizzes and gave useful feedback for developing the workshop further. After further rehearsals and making changes to the workshop the team launched the workshops during the Easter holidays, which proved very popular with families.

Following their success, the team created and delivered an intensive training programme to train a team of young people from Centre of the Cell's Youth Mentoring Scheme to lead the workshop over the summer holidays.

They described the experience as 'challenging but so much fun', and they all gained a deeper understanding of what is involved in organising event and working with a team, as well as developing their communication and presentation skills. They had to work together overcome issues such as time constraints and audience members talking over them, and as a result they developed new friendships and met a huge variety of people, which they described as 'exciting and a completely unique experience'.

To find out more about Centre of the Cell's 'Sores, Spores & Sickly Bugs' project, and the read the website content the young people created, visit [www.centreofthecell.org](http://www.centreofthecell.org) ■

*Centre of the Cell have recently been awarded another grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund to support young people in researching and creating activities to disseminate ideas around medicine and innovation during WW1.*



Project team at the launch event



Visit to Wellcome exhibition - Medicine Now



Visit to the Royal London Hospital Museum