

Outlook Fund

Case Studies



Cambridgeshire
Community
Foundation

The summaries below are based on the reports that groups provide to CCF to explain the impact of the work funded by grants from the Outlook Fund.

Just Us

Was awarded £5,380 to hold the 2015 awards event for Looked after Children and care leavers. The event celebrates the young people's achievements over the last year and gives them the opportunity to nominate adults who they feel have made a difference in their lives.

This event builds the confidence of looked after young people whose self-esteem can be negatively affected by their early experiences. This can negatively impact their education achievements, attachments and ability to develop positive relationships. Being nominated for an award is seen as something to be celebrated, recognition of hard work and a show of pride. Each young person nominated received a £10 voucher and a certificate, and the night also included a D.J., a balloon model maker and refreshments.

The awards evening also supports positive working relationships with professionals and foster carers as young people have the opportunity to nominate them to acknowledge the support they give. In seeing this, other young people become aware that these adults can offer support and make valuable contributions to young people's lives.

With the increase in nominations each year, the size of the event has grown. This year, the venue was filled to capacity. Also this year the highest number of teachers were nominated by young people, many of whom attended the awards evening. The publicity following this event has been extremely positive and all the senior managers of the Local Authority attended the event and participated on stage with handing out certificates.

Gillian Beasley, CEO of Cambridgeshire County Council attended the event and wrote on her blog:

"Last Friday I attended a very inspirational event at Burgess Hall in St Ives which was the Young People's Outstanding Achievement Awards. There were nearly 500 children, young people, foster carers, social workers and many others attending to recognise the achievements of our Looked After Children in Cambridgeshire. Awards were given for educational achievement, achievement in the arts and also outstanding achievement. Awards were also given to teachers and other adults who have had a significant impact in helping our looked after children and so the event was one of great celebration, a lot of noise and great excitement...It was a great event to end the week with as it meant so much to the children and young people receiving the awards."

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Was awarded £2,000 to run Christmas activities for Looked After children in 2015.

This grant enabled three groups of looked-after children to visit the Snow Dome in Milton Keynes. Each group enjoyed sledding on the snow slope and a Christmas meal and every young person received a Christmas present.

The young people Just Us work with experience very difficult and challenging issues in their lives and with their families. By attending fun activities with other young people in similar situations, it enables them to have enjoy themselves, form good peer group relationships and supports their emotional wellbeing and development.

The care leavers who live in semi-independent / independent accommodation face financial hardship and social isolation which is heightened in the Christmas period. This activity enabled these young people not only to attend a fun activity that they would not be able to afford or attend without the grant but receive emotional and practical support over the festive period.

Case Study:

In one group we have two brothers who were very hesitant about attending the group as they had low attendance at school and did not engage with social workers. We encouraged them to attend the Christmas activity, promising they would not be obliged to attend the group. They agreed and fully engaged with the activity and with others in the group. Since this, they have continued to attend the group and also engaged with some of the consultation work we have done in the groups. Without the activity, it is very doubtful whether these two young people would have been persuaded to join in with the group which has now been able to support them to meet other young people in similar situations and reduce their feelings of isolation.

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KICK

Received a grant of £3,150 in 2015 to allow siblings who are not living together to be brought together for a residential experience.

4 pairs of siblings who have been separated through the care system participated in a 3 day, 2 night residential activity programme with instructors leading sessions of high ropes, sailing, biking, indoor rock climbing, archery, power boats, canoeing and building camp fires (with the obligatory marshmallow roasting).

They also had an evening of craft activities focused around using photos of themselves and their siblings to make a photo collage and decorate frames, as well as painting bags and t-shirts. In their free time they also played Jenga, Connect 4, football and table tennis.

All of these activities gave the children a wide range of opportunities to have fun and spend quality time with their siblings, helping them create positive memories of their time together as well as learning new individual skills and helping them grow in confidence (as some of the children had to overcome their fears of heights). 100% of the children said that they would recommend the project to other siblings in similar situations.

Case Study:

“This has been brilliant for R and A. They live in different counties so sibling contact is not simple to arrange and they normally only get to see each other once every three months for a few hours. R was so proud of his photo frame that he made there with the collage of pictures of him and his brother.”

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Just Us

Was granted £2,700 towards the annual Fun Day for 2015, run for 'looked after' children and care leavers.

400 attended the Fun day including children, young people and adult all enjoying activities like Surf Simulator, basketball dunk, capi marquees, ice cream van, hog roast, bungee trampolines, petting zoo, climbing wall, soft play area for under 5s, and balloon modelling, sensory tent, disco and D.J.

A number of people attended the fun day for the first time including young people, foster carers and professionals. The event helped young people and care leavers to meet other people in a similar position and form new positive relationships. The event also benefits the foster carers as they are able to gain information on the support and services that are available to young people, and get advice from Staff. This is important for carers who are new to the role who may not have this information.

Case Study:

Two new carers remarked: "It is even better than it was described and so much for everyone to do and get involved in of all ages"; "The information you get on the day about what support is available to young people is brilliant and is in such a relaxed and informal way".

A 13 year old male 'John' who had recently come into care attended the event with his foster carer and the other young person in placement with him. John has experienced a difficult transition into care and emotionally has struggled with this. John was persuaded by his carer to attend but was very reluctant and stated he did not wish to join in any of the activities. Initially John followed his carer around and did not participate. However, one of the young people who sits on the Children In Care Council spoke to John and encouraged him to join him. John was then introduced to other young people and got involved in some of the activities, including the arts and crafts. John also agreed to attend a group in August with other young people he met at the Fun Day.

This example demonstrates the positive impact the Fun Day has for the young people - building and developing positive peer relationships, and building confidence skills in participating in future activities and groups. John will be helped in his transition of becoming looked after. In particular John knows that he is not alone and that there are other young people who are experiencing similar issues in their lives.

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Eddies (formerly Cambridgeshire Mencap)

Was awarded £2,000 in 2014 to contribute towards the Young People's Befriending Scheme.

55 young people have benefitted from being matched with a volunteer, with whom they meet up on average once or twice a month, spending 4-6 hours together a month. The young person chooses the activities for them to do together- whether it is going to the pub, watching the latest film or simply staying at home and playing on the X-box.

The result has been an increase in the confidence and self-esteem, and the life skills of the young people. Before being matched with a volunteer, 67% of the young people said they did not experience social interactions or companionship, or if they did, it was as infrequently as once every 6 months. After being matched:

- 83% said they experienced regular social interactions and companionship.
- 94% reported either good or very good levels of confidence, compared to 30% before being matched with a befriending volunteer.
- Over 20% of the young people reported an improvement in speaking to people, ordering food, or independent travel.
- 27% reported an improvement in handling money.

Case Study:

"Simon has increased in confidence in his verbal communication. He is growing in his confidence to choose activities he wants to do without being asked. Anna is able to give Simon the 1:1 support he needs whilst Dad spends time with the other children. Anna is good with all the children, she has a motherly approach which the whole family appreciates."

"The girls adore Jane, they remember her and get excited about her visits. Jane is very calm and relaxing, she is very creative and captures the girls' imaginations. The girls remain engaged 100%."

"Mitch says that Susan belongs to our family. With lots of professionals and therapists involved, Susan is the only person who plays with him 'just for fun' and he loves that."