

Wolverton Parish Grant report

Background to the Charity

Charity Number 1173289

Get Involved Volunteering supports vulnerable young people, particularly looked after children, to develop new skills and self-esteem by getting involved in volunteer projects in their community. GIV recruits post-16 student mentors and adult volunteers to support the young people in their volunteer journey.

Grants and fees from schools help pay for the first stage of the programme which involves the recruitment and training of volunteers and 6th formers, who are helped to take on the role of supporting the younger children; learning about safeguarding, health and safety, conflict resolution and leadership. Funds also allow us to provide teambuilding activities at The Caldecotte Centre and/or The Parks Trust and provide opportunities for community liaison to identify appropriate projects.

'It was great to see them take on things out of their comfort zone - and enjoy them'

Teacher

When it comes to the second part of the programme which involves the children volunteering in their community, we all take part in fundraising activities and make local applications for funds to pay for the materials and tools we require to complete the tasks.

Background to the programme

The project has four beneficiary groups; (i) the young children, from Radcliffe School who grow in confidence and self-esteem, (ii) the local 6th formers, who come out with new skills to enhance their CV and (iii) Radcliffe School which will have opportunities to engage in projects in their immediate community (iv) the community whose projects we help to deliver. (ie Wolverton Community Orchard and Camphill) Other schools work on different projects but we sought funds from Wolverton Parish Council, specifically to support the work which the children undertook from the Wolverton Parish. We worked to ensure that funds raised from the Parish were of direct benefit to the children and projects in the Parish.

The volunteering activities take place between May and July and it is for these projects that we requested funding. We did fundraising challenges to raise additional funds but funding from the Parish helped us buy materials to deliver the project (plants, paints, overalls etc) . The funds also helped us pay for a drama/dance specialist to work with the young people in the run of the show.

What we did and what we achieved

'It was the best thing ever' Student

Radcliffe School selected students who they felt would benefit from taking part in the programme and who needed an opportunity to boost their self esteem and confidence. During the Spring Term these young people worked alongside their mentors, taking part in a variety of team building activities with the Parks Trust and the Caldecotte Centre and they took on a fundraising challenge, creating pot plants which they sold in school to raise funds for their community projects.

'It gives them the opportunity to see staff in a different light - (to see) we're human too!' Teacher

In the Summer term we began working with volunteers at the Wolverton Community Orchard. We learnt about the history of the garden and were set the task to help tidy the space in readiness for the Summer activities what would take place. We were also asked to refurbish and paint a dragon in the orchard. For this we needed protective clothing, sanding wire, brushes and paints, seeds and plants, all of which the Wolverton Grant helped us provide. The children spent three days at the orchard, working together and learning new skills. Several of them returned after school to continue helping at the orchard, they took part in the events there and helped the volunteers to prepare for the Summer open day.

'It was great to see them enjoying getting their hands dirty' Teacher

The children also took time out to rehearse for their final community activity which involved volunteering at the Camphill and working alongside other schools and the residents of Camphill, (adults who have special needs). We worked together in the craft workshops and in the bakery, making cakes and biscuits for the final celebration. Our aim was to put on a show for the community as part of our reflective celebration. The event took place at Camphill Theatre on July 12th. We were delighted that The Mayor, Ansar Hussain was able to attend and see first-hand what the young people had achieved. It gave people a chance to learn from each other, to reflect on what they had achieved and to meet and network. The Headteachers met with the volunteers, the community activists, the young people, the Mayor and the staff and parents from the schools.

'I cried when I saw them up on stage' Teacher

Our work has been independently evaluated and the findings are very encouraging. We are already in discussion with the Urb Farm and with Roger Kitchen as the representative of the Secret garden about working with them next year, and of course we intend to build on the relationship we have developed with the Community Orchard and continue to volunteer there.

'Can we do this again next year?' Student