



## Re- Evaluation for Investing in Children membership:

### W.A.S.H (Woodhouse Acting Silly Harry's)

W.A.S.H continues to run as a successful young people's drama group on the Woodhouse Close Estate in Bishop Auckland. Jane Crawford of Daisy Arts runs the group for Children and Young People who want to be creative. W.A.S.H was set up in 1997 and this year celebrates 10 years of achievement.

**Evidence of dialogue and change** continues to be provided by the young people who are part of W.A.S.H. Many young people have been involved over the last ten years; the group I met with on Thursday was made of some "old" members and some very new. Katherine has been a member of W.A.S.H for many years, Anthony too, others include Sophie, Caitlin, Amy, Jenny, Louise, Chloe, Becca, Ginny, joined by two new young people on their first visit to the group Becca and Joanna.

The young people were eager to tell me about the plays and dramas they have been involved in.

Cupids Beauty and Beastie – **"we were in the paper"**. (Please see attached)  
Desperate Pan – **"this has been going for ages we just change who does it"** (Amy)  
Dance through the Decades – **"we dressed up to do the dances"** (Ginny)  
Stars in their Eyes – **"I sang I am the One and Only"** (Anthony) (Please see attached)  
Snow White Whiter than White

**"We have all been in something"**. Amy, Ginny and Becca were rushing off but Amy told me **"when we are doing a production we are here all the time because we have to practice, otherwise we just come and go"**.

The weekly sessions continue to run on an informal basis. The group come together during the evening and decide, **"what we are going to do, we do some drama, we talk, do some planning and some improvisation."** Katherine told me that she **"usually helps the young ones to do some sketches"**.

After our chat, Jane came back into the group and talked about what they wanted to do for the rest of the session. Sophie said **"Can we all work together?"** **"Yeah"** everyone decided. **"Lets re do that sketch Katherine wrote for the festival"**. It was agreed. Jane and I left the room for the young people to create their masterpiece. A few minutes later Becca came out **to inform us they were creating something totally new.**

During this time I was "entertained" by Shelly, Georgia, Marie and Jane, two workers from the Auckland Youth and Community Centre who attend the session to support Jane in her work, and a parent who often stays behind. All the adults provided that same environment, relaxed and informal which enabled the young people to get on with it and do their own thing. Twenty minutes later the "Murder Mystery" was ready. A great little drama which the young people enjoyed creating.

They told me that the reasons they come to W.A.S.H are:-

- **"It's great"**
- **"It's Fandabidozee"** – Sophie repeated this throughout the evening – I think I got the spelling right!
- **"It's Fabulous"**
- **"Jane just gives us a topic and we get on with it."**
- **"We can make our own stuff"**
- **"It gets you out the house"**
- **"It gives you something to do"**

- **“Keeps you off the streets”**

The group have also become designated “litter pickers” for the estate. A new venture they are involved with Joanne Whorley from Groundwork. As part of the bargain the group are being given T-Shirts to identify themselves when they are out on the estate. The group are excited about this and are looking forward to designing their own, and putting on their W.A.S.H logo. On my second visit to check out my evaluation the group are now fully-fledged ‘rubbish warriors’ (a name they chose) and have completed their first mission. All of the group were really buzzing.

During holidays the young people also enjoy joining in creative sessions offered in the centre. They learn new skills which they use and share in their community such as:-

- Making mosaic tiles (which are now in the library)
- Keepsake cushions
- Dream catchers
- Drumming
- Easter chick baskets
- Willow constructions (which they hope to use in the local parade/carnival)

Please see a more detailed programme from one holiday period attached.

If there is a festival W.A.S.H are there, if there are opportunities to perform, W.A.S.H are there. They perform in variety shows at Woodhouse Close Church and Community Centre, the local clubs and Bishop Auckland Town Hall. The young people from W.A.S.H enjoy being involved. Some young people form other groups if they have a particular interest e.g. three W.A.S.H girls have formed a dance group “Fantasy RNB”, and some of the older young people are looking at film making.

At my second meeting the group were joined by two more new members Richard and Chantelle, alongside two volunteers from the local community who had been to one of the groups performances and were keen to come along and help. After the group finished their drama session they sat down to discuss with Jane their ground rules. The original ground rules were set 10years ago. Although the group thought a lot of them were still relevant they wanted to add a few and change some of the wording. This is a work in progress and something I will look at next year.

Richard, Chantelle, Caitlin, Jo, Rebecca, Grace, Anthony, Amy, Ginnie, Jade, Laura, Sophie, Kathryn, Jennie and Chloe were all happy with my report and all agreed that Jane supports the young people in what they want to achieve. The young people join in lots of things and from those experiences they make and shape their art and drama and enjoy sharing it. I have one challenge for Jane, Anthony would like to do some graffiti art. I look forward to seeing this artwork next year. However until then I am pleased to recommend that W.A.S.H continues to be an Investing in Children member in recognition for all their continued achievements and success.

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