



Evaluation for Investing in Children membership

Lumley Duke of Edinburgh

For the past ten years or so the Lumley Duke of Edinburgh group have been meeting at Lumley Community Centre. The group meets every Thursday and young people can come along when they choose, to plan their activities with the support of Christine, Paul and David.

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is a voluntary, non-competitive programme of practical, cultural and adventurous activities, designed to support the personal and social development of young people aged 14-25. The programme has four sections with three progressive levels of bronze (for those aged 14 and over), silver (for those aged 15 and over), and gold (for those aged 16 and over). The sections involve

- service – helping other people in the local community
- skills – covering almost any hobby, skill or interest
- physical recreation – sports, dance and fitness
- expeditions – training for, planning and completing a journey on foot, cycle, horseback or water
- residential project (gold award only) – a purposeful enterprise with people not previously known to the participant

Evidence of Dialogue and Change

Expeditions

There are a number of young people involved in working towards their awards at different levels through the Lumley scheme, and they are able to work at a pace that suits them. Young people can attend the sessions as often or as little as they choose, and on the evening I went along there were three young people at the group. A number of others were taking exams at this time of year and Christine, Paul and David were aware that they may not have a high attendance. Nevertheless, they are there every week for those who wish to attend.

For this evaluation I had the pleasure of meeting with Simon, Mark, Emma Tom, Bethany and Jessica who are currently working on their bronze award. They told me that they enjoy working together, and at the moment they are working on their expedition.

Mark told me, **“We’re planning a day walk.”**

Emma added, **“We all decided where to go.”**

Christine told me that young people are able to choose whether to take part in an expedition in a number of ways – walking, horse-back, canoeing or even sailing. For methods other than walking young people need to be at a certain standard, e.g. Pony Club B test, level 2. Often groups form at the club and young people decide to plan and work together, however if one person is really keen to pursue a different activity the workers find other like-minded young people from other groups for them to do their chosen activity.

Skills

When it comes to young people gaining accreditation for their skills there are many ways that they can do this, and activities range from looking after animals, making jewellery, ballroom dancing, playing an instrument or bell-ringing. There is a booklet available for young people to look through to check whether their chosen activity is possible, or to find inspiration. If a young person thinks of an activity which is not listed then they can write to the main offices of the Duke of Edinburgh Award to get it approved.

Emma made jewellery for her skill section (see photographs attached). Simon said, **“We made model planes; that was class, we threw them and then they crashed!”** I asked whether they thought it was easy to find an activity for the skill section, and Mark told me, **“There’s plenty to choose from.”**

Service

The service section of the award is also very open for young people to decide how they would like to help other people in the local community. Examples of different ways in which young people have accomplished this section have been helping at a residential home for older people, working in a Barnado’s shop, taking part in a First Aid course, or Life Saving Skills and acting as a first aider or attendant at an event. One group of young people currently involved with the group raised money via the Key Fund and have painted the walls in the cloakroom of the community centre (see attached photographs).

Physical Recreation

Again, for this section there are a large number of activities young people can choose from. They may wish to use an activity they are already involved in or to try out something new. If it is a continuation of something they already take part in the young people need to prove that they attend a club, or Christine can meet someone from the club, or go along to a training session. Mark, Emma and Simon have done badminton together. Simon told me, **“It was good. All of us got awards.”** Mark added, **“I was the best!”**

Presentation Night

Young people organise and run their own presentation nights and recently managed to ask former footballer Kevin Ball to come along to present their awards (see attached photograph). Christine, the worker didn’t know anything about him coming to the presentation until the night itself!

The young people invite lots of people along and it can be a good way for others to find out what the award involves and it is a good source of finding new young people who want to take part in the scheme. Recruitment tends to come through events like this and word of mouth. Mark told me he found out about it **“through friends.”**

Tents and Camping Equipment

When the group secured some funding for new equipment Christine organised for Black’s – a camping equipment company, to bring a range of equipment to the community centre for the young people to test out and choose from (see photographs attached). Simon said, **“It was good, but there were no pegs for the tents!”**

The young people found that a number of items that they might have just ordered weren’t as appropriate as they first thought. Mark said, **“We tried different rucksacks out and got in the tents.”**

There were rucksacks which looked good but were very uncomfortable to carry so others were chosen instead.

It is clear that although progressing through the award is structured, it is also very accessible for young people to work on their own interests and at their own pace. Simon told me, **“There’s no pressure to get finished.”**

It is a social event for the young people who attend, Mark said, **“We sit and chat for a bit, then get on with work. When we’re finished we go and play football. We come and meet our friends.”**

The young people I met really enjoy working on their award and also enjoy attending the weekly sessions. When I asked how much of a say they got in their activities they were all in agreement that they were in control of their choices, as Mark told me, **“Sometimes we’re told what to do, but it’s what we need to pass the awards. We’re free.”**

In light of the comments from Mark, Emma, Simon, Tom, Bethany and Jessica, and the clear demonstration of mutual respect between the young people and the workers I would like to recommend that Lumley Duke of Edinburgh receive Investing in Children membership. After reading this report to the young people they are in full support of the group receiving the membership as they feel completely involved in all aspects of the group.

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