



Re-evaluation for Investing in Children membership

Benwell Youth Project

North Benwell Project continues to be a valuable resource to young people in the surrounding area. Since my last evaluation the make up of the staff has changed, young people have changed, but the principles behind the project remain the same.

Evidence of dialogue and change within North Benwell is provided for my evaluation by the young people I met with. I talked with girls from:-

- Star Girls
- Global Girls

and other young people from the magazine group.

Star Girls- have recently been re named. Sharnie suggested this title for the group and everyone agreed. I chatted with Sharnie, Donna, Georgia, Chloe, Tommy, Shannon, and Laura on the evening of the keyfund panel.

The group have applied for keyfund money to redesign/redecorate the yard of the project. The girls wanted to create a colourful bright relaxing environment outside for the benefit of all young people who use the project. The group were asking the keyfund for £250 to help them with their Graffiti Art Project. The girls talked to Tom, and myself about what they wanted to achieve. Tom talked them through the 12 skills of the keyfund and although they didn't realise it they had fulfilled quite a few, because of their preparation, team working and commitment to their project.

Tammy told us that they "plan a twelve week programme". As a group with staff they "think about what we want to do, this means we have plenty of time to plan it". Tammy continued "we made the decision about what would be the best project".

The girls were successful in their keyfund bid for £250. They did really well considering that earlier in the evening they were let down on their matched funding and artist. Nick who works as an Arts Development Officer on behalf of the City Council told Laura from the group that support for "Graffiti Art" is no longer supported by the council; meaning Nick would be unable to help with the project.

The girls weren't too disappointed, they will go with what they have and get more funding later.

Next on the agenda on the 25th June was activity planning. The group are off to Hawkhirst for a nights camping in July. Hawkhirst is a residential camp offering fun and adventure for the young people who stay there. The group voted for the activities they would like to do when they are there. Climbing and abseiling won the overall vote but other things might be on offer. All the girls were excited about the residential. The idea of camping – well – they are still getting to grips with that one!

After all of the "official" stuff I sat and chatted with the girls about their involvement in the project. Georgia said "we come here every single Monday, I look forward to it".

Sharnie said “it’s boring” but I get the feeling she wished she hadn’t.

Donna, well Donna did try to speak up once or twice but the others did it for her. I asked Donna if she enjoyed coming and felt listened too. Donna said “yeah”

Shannon told me that she is “annoying, aggravating and class, and that North Benwell Youth Project is lethal”. Infact Shannon felt that most stuff was “lethal”.

The girls told me about some of the things they have been doing:-

- Gardening
- Music
- Making keyrings

Georgia said that “sometimes we decide what to do and other times we get surprises, but we always like the surprises “its proper wicked”.

Lauren said “When we are at the girls group, John comes into annoy us if he doesn’t go to football. “He makes funny noises” (was this a compliment? Apparently yes!) “He makes us laugh, he makes the project laugh”.

John Devis is the Project Co-ordinator assisted in the project by Sam and Margaret facilitating the girls group. Other workers include our long lost friend Michael Bell, Rob another youth worker and Terry. Terry was a young person from my last evaluation.

The Global Girls Group is a mixed group of girls. Mixed is that it began as a Czech girls group, but after much debate it became an open group. Allowing girls to look at the world together. Laura showed me the up and coming programme, which the group has planned for the next 12 weeks.

Benwell Chit Chat Group is a newly formed group. This group have also had a successful keyfund grant of £250 to set themselves up. Benwell Chit Chat are about to launch a community magazine. Laura told me that this was an idea that she had and that “the staff took my idea and made it happen, that’s why I’m grateful to the project because they listened to me. I’ve been other places and they don’t listen and tell you to shut up they’re not interested”. The group are going to redecorate the little room, Laura showed me around the little room! They have bought a computer and want to decorate the room.

Laura also told me about their plans to tell everyone about the project by introducing the idea of a community event. The girls are making a mosaic to highlight aspects of what will be in their magazine for example love/holding hands/flowers/butterflies.

Other sessions offered by North Benwell Youth Project include:

Football and Fitness Sessions

Approx 50+ young people turn up for the football sessions that happen at the centre for sport.

Detached Sessions

This gives young people in the area informal access to workers and the resources and knowledge that they have. Often when relationships with the young people develop worker can signpost them on to more relevant services.

Young People's Management Group

Established in the past and about to be reformed. As young people move on things/groups end.

However new young people form new groups and this is an exciting time for the new young people's management group.

Young people participate in the programme development of North Benwell Youth Project. What they want to do, they can do. Workers will even use other building if something is not possible at Ellesmere Road, as in cooking; the group went to Dolphin Street.

North Benwell Youth Project provides a relaxed and safe environment for young people from North Benwell Terraces. Groups come and go as the wants and needs of the young people change.

I look forward to the development of the young people's management group. This will definitely be a starting point for my next evaluation. However for this year I would just like to say a big thank you to Margaret for supporting my visits to the project. John for the love heart and Sam and the young people for letting me take part in their session and taking time to chat with me.

It is on behalf of the young people that North Benwell Youth Project becomes an Investing in Children member once again.

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Investing in Children
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