

Youth Mentor Group Update February 09

How we are spending our Cashback for Communities funding

We now have a group made up of 8 individuals who have committed to taking part in the programme offered. The programme includes a variety of evening, indoor sessions, which are held on Monday evenings at Castleview Community Centre and a range of outdoor activities that take place after school on Friday afternoons. Some of the activities we have done so far are rock climbing, raft building and orienteering also a social event where we went to laser quest and pizza hut for a Christmas treat. We have a series of activities lined up for after the half term holiday, which include mountain biking, bush craft, canoeing and X-sailing. When the clocks are altered at the end of March and the temperatures pick up a little we will be taking part in more water activities such as kayaking, canoeing and sea kayaking.

We have recently started working through a structured mentoring programme during our evening meetings, this is to enable the youngsters to have an understanding of what a mentor is, roles & responsibilities, and a chance to role play some scenarios regarding group work. We are also having a ready steady cook competition, this takes place as part of the evening session and is an ideal opportunity to teach cooking skills, educate regarding nutritional foods, healthy living & hygiene.

The Easter holidays are fast approaching and it is part of the programme accepted by the group members to help out the younger children of Craigmillar during the Craigmillar Youth Challenge (CYC). Each individual will volunteer 2 half day sessions during the Easter holiday period. Their role will be to aid and assist the adult staff in charge of the session and where space permits they will be able to fill any spare places on activities.

Between the Easter and Summer Holidays we will be continuing the mentoring sessions to further develop the individuals understanding of looking after younger children, help build confidence and self esteem and therefore allow them to play a more involved role within the CYC summer programme.

We are committed to delivering the Bronze Youth Achievement Award and the Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award, this will take place over a 12 month period. These awards will be extremely beneficial towards the development of these youngsters and will add to their accreditation when it comes to the end of schooling.

At present we are fundraising to enable the group to take part in an expedition they will never forget, we are hoping to travel up to Fort William and set off into the wilderness for a week. We will begin with two days of sea kayaking on the northwest coast, setting off from Arisaig Bay, visiting Princes Cairn and finishing at Loch Ailort, this will be followed by two days walking in the hills near Loch Morar and Glenfinnan

and a final day sea kayaking along Loch Eil, this will take us back to where we started and we will then return to Edinburgh by train the following day.

The group are very excited at the prospect of completing an expedition of this nature and have therefore begun coming up with fundraising ideas, the first of which is a letter to local businesses asking them to donate towards their ventures. If you are able to help the youngsters with a donation of any size, please see the letter, written by some members of the group that is located in the reports section of the website. We have also submitted funding bids to three trust funds that would help cover the basic needs of such a trip, though these bids are by no means definite. If we were to secure major trust funding, any other funds raised would be put to good use to help expand the current programme, allowing us to take part in more activities. If we were not lucky enough to secure major funding, then a less expensive expedition will be arranged more locally.