

Funding from Ninevah Charitable Trust supported us to deliver a weekly Sunflowers Wellbeing group. The young people who attend have caring roles at home supporting family members with mental health problems, long term chronic illnesses or a cancer diagnosis. Their caring role often impacts their ability to learn effectively or interact socially at school. It can impact a young person's own mental health with anxiety and low moods. Our Educators, who are qualified teachers and trained forest school practitioners, worked with the young people outdoors on activities such as growing, cropping, cooking, art, writing, crafts and mindfulness activities. We provided a nurturing environment where they were able to focus on how to support their own emotional wellbeing, recognise triggers and identify coping mechanisms and strategies that work for them. Crucially we provided young carers with a safe space for them, to consider what makes them happy and gives them enjoyment. Young people have attended bi-weekly sessions in small groups.

Many of the young people we work with face multiple barriers and have numerous and complex needs, alongside the challenges of their caring role at home. These include financial hardship within the family unit, poor mental health and anxiety, special educational needs and we worked with one young person who is a school refuser. Your funding has had a direct and positive impact on these young people. An opportunity to engage in fun experiential learning outdoors in small groups has encouraged them to re-engage with learning in their school setting. They have developed confidence to talk to educators and peers about their experiences and develop their social skills to build relationships. It has provided an opportunity to learn key skills which can be used at home with their family.



*Cooking with the Sunflower Wellbeing Group*

We welcomed 20 young people on the programme, split across two sessions. It was important that we kept groups small to allow for one to one and small group conversations. We monitored the impact of the programme in a number of ways including:

- Recording attendance
- Monitoring students throughout the project using a questionnaire at the start, part way through and at the end of their engagement to benchmark and compare levels of anxiety, confidence, wellbeing, and any increased engagement with learning at school
- We focussed on feelings before and after each session. Using activities to capture comments, thoughts, feelings and feedback.

From our evaluation we have recorded the following outcomes:

- 81 % of young people who attended said they always or mostly do better in school after visiting Tuppenny Barn, 19% sometimes
- 75% of young people who attended said they always or mostly feel less stressed and anxious after coming to Tuppenny, 19% said sometimes.
- 100% of young people said they always or mostly learnt new skills at Tuppenny Barn

### **Feedback from Family Keyworker**

All the activities during the sessions can build a sense of achievement and develop mental resilience by providing structured , safe and immersive experiences. This creates a fantastic opportunity to build self esteem and indeed a sense of pride. The opportunities afforded by Tuppenny Barn have definitely created pride in individuals and the group. Pride in themselves and the role they provide in being a young career. This pride is tangible and creates a positive in what could be a negative life experience.

### **Case Study**

Pupil B opened up to a Tuppenny Barn teacher (during washing up together) about the death of a parent with a long term illness. Due to covid they weren't able to see them before they died. They were angry about how the situation had been handled and said they felt unable to talk to their other parent or family members. The Tuppenny Barn staff member was able to talk with the school representative so that support could be put in place for this pupil back at school. It was also highlighted that the pupil's sibling at another school could do with support too. The pupil continues to feel comfortable to share how they are feeling whilst at Tuppenny Barn in subsequent sessions.

### **Feedback**

"A nice break from the rush of school life, whilst still indeed learning. Coming here has eased my mind from some of the horrible thoughts that I have experienced this year."



*Sunflower Wellbeing Group - Apple Pressing*