

# INFOCUS

INSPIRING YOUNG PEOPLE CREATING CHANGE

The Official **FOCUS Charity** News Magazine

APRIL 2021

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## Niche Magazine Business Awards

In January, we attended the Niche Magazine Business Awards virtual ceremony. We were delighted to have been made a finalist in the Leicestershire Charity of the Year category. Although we did not win this time, we were proud to be listed alongside two other fantastic charities.

## Unwavering Support

Leicester's business community has continued supporting us throughout the pandemic. We are consistently impressed and delighted by the imaginative ways in which they have raised much-needed funds for us.

For example, Bhavik Popat from Suit Yourself, Leicester's leading bespoke tailors, are offering to match donations made to FOCUS through <https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/SuitYourself> with a voucher for their shop. Each donation for us is retail therapy for you, so click the link above!

Our long-standing funders and supporters, the Garfield Weston Foundation, awarded us the largest grant we have ever received from them in November. Their support means an enormous amount to us and highlights the importance of our work.

## Recent Achievements

At the beginning of 2020, no-one could predict how the sudden pandemic would affect our plans and business operations. However, our hopes for the year never dimmed, and these past few months have justified that.

Finally, we were delighted to have received a grant from St James' Place Charitable Foundation towards our Breathing Space project. Based on our Wooden Spoon Allotment, the project provides an opportunity for young people to improve their mental health while growing fresh fruit and vegetables. Thank you to St James' Place for your generous support.

Follow us on Social Media!

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## Our Projects

Everything we do is developed from the ideas, passions, needs and interests of young people in Leicester. Our current projects include:



### Inspire

Inspire is a year-long personal development programme for adolescents between 13-16 years old. This project uses a range of activities, including residential experiences, community projects, mentoring and workshops, to help teenagers boost their social skills, confidence and aspirations for the future.



### Leicestival

Leicestival is a vibrant and exciting project supporting people aged 13-25. This project gets young people involved with Leicester's incredible calendar of cultural festivals and events. This ranges from volunteering and supporting festival management and helping backstage, to setting up their own attractions and stalls.



### Breathing Space

Breathing Space supports young people aged 13-25 to develop the strategies and confidence to overcome mental health issues. We do this through projects based on our own allotment and in other green spaces.



### START

START is a project that uses mentoring, and environmental and adventure activities to tackle the issues faced by highly isolated young people, who are vulnerable to exploitation.

## Project Highlights

### Community Reach Out

The Covid-19 pandemic has caused a sharp increase of loneliness and food-bank usage in the UK. Over the Christmas holidays, the young people of our START project decided to raise awareness. Thus, 'Community Reach Out' was born, generating food donations for both St Matthews Big Local community food bank and The Leicester YMCA.

The young people were very passionate about this project. For example, Sabrina, created 100 half-term activity packs for children in the community. This inspired us to create cream-tea packs for two elderly care-homes in Leicester. Another young person, Amrit, set up a JustGiving page for the project, which managed to raise £500!

Zainab, who already volunteers for her local food bank, gave the START group great insight into what items were taken in and how they were stored.

***"This [project] helped me understand what was really going on, and helped me raise awareness for others" – Zainab, aged 21***

Community Reach Out gained tons of support from other organisations. Rukhsana Hussain of the Outspoken Project donated £200 for the creation of the cream tea packs. In addition, BNI Loughborough collectively donated £180 towards the children's activity packs. Two of its members, Annette and Cat, kindly collected and dropped off food donations from a local village food-bank. Thank you all for your help!

The magnitude of Community Reach Out drew more attention to the food banks and charities supporting low-income families. Seeing the impact of their efforts really empowered START's young people and taught them the value of teamwork and resilience. Amazing work!



## Supporters Spotlight

Chris Cain, Director of Kazzoo



Kazzoo is an IT support company that supports small companies in and around Leicestershire. Not only do they fix IT problems, but also give advice on how IT will best benefit your business. Chris Cain is the Director of Kazzoo, with over 25 years in IT.

***“It’s not just about when things go wrong; we’re here to make sure things stay right.”***

I spoke with him about his time supporting FOCUS:

*“I like supporting local charities, so helping FOCUS was a no-brainer. I got involved with them around two-and-a-half years ago. At the time, my youngest daughter was having a bad year in school and was at a bit of a low, so I enrolled her in one of their projects. My daughter really enjoyed the project, and has her confidence back. So I’ve helped FOCUS, and FOCUS has helped me.*”

*“Our immediate needs are for the people in our community, and every little thing we can do is important. There are thousands of charities in Leicester, but you don’t hear about them all. What I want to do for FOCUS and the other charities I support is get their name out there. We want people to know what they do, and how they benefit the community.*”

*“We’ve recently launched the ‘Kazzoo in the Community’ project, and we’re hoping to get FOCUS involved. We’re hoping to teach isolated people how to use Zoom and get them talking to each other. Unfortunately, the lockdown has prevented us from going out in person to teach people the technology. But it’s something we, with FOCUS, are eager to keep pushing forward.”*

## Hot Topic

### Youth Unemployment

Providing opportunities for young people to learn essential life skills is a staple for us at FOCUS. Teaching teamwork skills, problem solving and communication skills all improve young people’s chances of entry to future education, training and employment. But we have seen the difficulties young people have in searching for and sustaining their first job.

The Resolution Foundation in 2020 found that around one-in-five 18-24-year olds (19%) furloughed during lockdown have since lost their jobs – and just one-in-three of those have been able to find work since. This means that the country experienced its highest levels of youth unemployment since the 1980s. The hardest hit sectors - hospitality, retail and leisure - are traditionally providers of a young-person’s first employment opportunities.

### What Does FOCUS do to address this issue?

Supporting young people with applications and editing CVs is something we regularly offer to young people. Our START project works closely with attendees, helping them think about their future prospects and begin to map a pathway to reaching their ambitions. We have seen young people re-enter learning and training with our help, bridging the gap to where they want to be. The prospects of this generation are in danger as a consequence of COVID-19. We at FOCUS are determined to prevent that, and to help them find opportunity in a post-COVID world.



## Meet Our Team



### Minder Bhamra Manager of Inspire

Minder is the manager for our Inspire project, which aims to boost the confidence and social skills of the young people. This fits well, considering her unique and inspiring journey with us at FOCUS. Here's what Minder had to say about her time with FOCUS:

*"I actually joined in 2011 as a young person being supported by FOCUS, and I credit them for getting me addicted to volunteering. I joined the Youth Action Team as a youth ambassador, then became a member of staff in 2015 - when I was only 19. What's funny is that Darren, my Assistant Manager for Inspire, was my youth worker when I was volunteering."*

*"Even though we mainly support young people, we also work with their families and some of the other partner organisations that support them. We're not just a youth club, and I enjoy that. I truly believe that 'it takes a city to raise a child', and I see that happen at FOCUS. FOCUS is 'somewhere to go, something to do and someone to talk to'. That's how FOCUS was sold to me as a young person, and that's what I've seen over the years."*

*"One favourite memory is managing the Soapbox project. I had no assistant, and in my previous roles at FOCUS, I was an Assistant Manager. Sometimes you don't know what you have in you until you do something, and that was one of those experiences. I can really look back and be proud of myself."*

*"My final message for everyone reading: 'volunteering is good for the soul'. That's the hashtag we use on social media, and I think it sums up my journey with FOCUS well."*

## Volunteering at FOCUS



### Jerusha Newsletter Editor

In September 2019, Jerusha joined FOCUS as a volunteer to design and edit our newsletter. Matt Lilley caught up with her to find out why she got involved, whether her role has lived up to her expectations and what volunteering at FOCUS has meant to her.

*"I'm a writer and editor - that's what I do. So I was looking for a volunteering opportunity to help me develop experience in those fields. The role of newsletter editor at FOCUS sounded ideal. I was really nervous at first, and doubted that I would fit in at FOCUS. I didn't know what to expect at all. But, I took the leap and it's been great. The role is professional, but the atmosphere is relaxed and friendly. The staff really put me at ease."*

*"I've been in my element in this role. I enjoyed the design-work at the start. Once we had that in place we just stuck with it. That enabled me to focus on getting the right tone of voice for the audience. The process is much smoother now and the deadlines aren't such a challenge."*

*"Conducting interviews with staff and external partners really tested me. But, I've loved hearing all the stories of how FOCUS has helped people to grow. I was inspired by Harsha telling me that she never saw herself being in a leadership role until she was offered her job at FOCUS. Hearing her story was really big for me addressing my self-confidence."*

*"The best thing about my role has been that it's something I'm responsible for. When I see the finished newsletter, and the staff say, 'You've done such a great job', I think, 'Wow, did I really do that?'"*

*"I'm glad that I've managed to create something that everyone seems to like. It's what every writer is trying to achieve."*

## Where Our Money Comes From

Everything we do for young people is free to them. We rely on grants, donations, sponsorship and similar support from a range of individuals and organisations to fund our work. Without their generous support, none of it would be possible. Every donation, no matter how large or small, enables us to provide our vital services to young people, and we are always interested in talking to anyone who would like to work with us to achieve our goals.

In 2020, our major funders are the National Lottery Fund, Michael Bishop Foundation, Garfield Weston Foundation, KFC Foundation, Home Office, EEM, Wooden Spoon Charity, and Openwork Foundation.

From every £1 that we raise, 84p goes directly to support young people. We use the other 16p to keep the lights on, pay our bills and raise another £1.



# FOCUS

ON BUSINESS

## BECOME A MEMBER AND HELP SOME OF LEICESTER'S MOST VULNERABLE YOUNG PEOPLE

**£25<sup>pm</sup>**  
Standard Package

**Standard package includes:**

Use of our FOCUS On Business logo on your website | A membership certificate | Annual statement for tax relief benefits | Monthly e-bulletin updating you on the impact your support is having | Printed version of our inFOCUS Newsletter | Copy of our annual impact report | Access to all FOCUS On Business events | Exclusive Early Bird Tickets to our Annual Black Tie Dinner | Recognition on the FOCUS wall of supporters and influencers | Members networking events | Thank you message on FOCUS Charity social media posts on becoming a member

**Contact: Emily Taylor for more information**  
[emily.taylor@focus-charity.co.uk](mailto:emily.taylor@focus-charity.co.uk)

## WANT TO HAVE MORE OF AN IMPACT?

Upgrade your support through either a donation or fundraising activities

**Provides a vulnerable young person with weekly one-to-one mentoring support**

Feature in our monthly e-bullition | Bronze FOB logo | Support for your fundraising events | Video Thank you message on FOCUS Charity social media posts | Enhanced recognition on the FOCUS wall of supporters and influencers

**BRONZE MEMBERSHIP**  
RAISE OR DONATE AN ADDITIONAL  
**£500**

**Provides a young person with a place on a community action project**

Video Thank you message on FOCUS Charity social media posts | Updates on what impact your support has on the charity six+ mentions during the year | Additional promotion/promotional opportunities, including having materials at FOCUS events, and a FOB pull up banner for your reception/office | Opportunity to host and a be the Keynote Speaker at one of our FOB events | Recognition as a silver member on the FOCUS wall of supporters and influencers | Feature in our regular e-newsletter

**SILVER MEMBERSHIP**  
RAISE OR DONATE AN ADDITIONAL  
**£1200**

**Provides a place for a young person on a 'life-changing' year-long personal development programme**

Video Thank you message on FOCUS Charity social media posts and twelve+ mentions during the year | Recognition as a Gold member on the FOCUS wall of supporters and influencers | Facilitated half day team building session for your staff | Exclusive Staff Volunteer days for your company

**GOLD MEMBERSHIP**  
RAISE OR DONATE AN ADDITIONAL  
**£2700**

## Want to Support us or get involved? Get in Contact:

0116 251 0369 | [admin@focus-charity.co.uk](mailto:admin@focus-charity.co.uk) | 73 Church Gate, Leicester LE1 3AN

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