

INFOCUS

INSPIRING YOUNG PEOPLE CREATING CHANGE

The Official **FOCUS Charity** News Magazine

SPRING 2022

Registered Charity
No 1068467

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Guarantee 3491993



Named Charity of The Year Twice

We are delighted to have been named Charity of the Year for both the East Midlands Chamber and Futures Housing. These are exciting opportunities for us to work with two highly respected organisations, who provide vital support to the business sector and social housing tenants, respectively. We have been discussing with both organisations how we will work together to raise funds for our work, and how their staff can offer their knowledge and expertise for the benefit of young people.

As our existing five-year strategic plan comes to an end, we have begun to develop a new plan that will take us through to 2027. Our Strategy Day, involving our staff team and trustees, sparked lots of ideas for how we will continue to demonstrate our commitment to meeting the needs of Leicester's young people. Central to our plans is a recognition that the world around us, as has been starkly demonstrated by the Covid-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine, is unpredictable. We will become more agile and ready to respond to young people's needs. We will accept change, invite opportunities to learn, embrace the difference of those around us, and give greater control to our staff and volunteers to adapt our support.

Recent Achievements

Spring often means new beginnings. For FOCUS, it has meant relationships with new supporters, and the development of innovative ideas in the ways that we support young people.



Follow us on Social Media!

f @focuscharityleicester **t @FOCUScharity**

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

Heritage Action Zone

For the past year, our Leicestival project has been working in collaboration with the Heritage Action Zone programme. Our participation, called the Church Gate Consultation, aims to help in the programme's revitalisation of Church Gate, where our HQ resides.

The national High Street Heritage Action Zone programme is a grant-giving scheme that aims to breathe new life into high streets across England, fuelling economic, social, and cultural recovery. As a part of the Heritage Action Zone, Leicester was awarded £1.5million, to restore important historic shopfronts and buildings on Granby Street and Church Gate. We proposed for our young people to be regularly involved in and influence the design and delivery of a program about Church Gate.

While typically youth and history do not mix, our young people have created some fantastic ideas for getting involved. They plan to create a virtual tour of the area, and we have partnered with the brand-new Beta X - which opened opposite us on Church Gate - to create a thematic art exhibition.

Our young people will also be taking part in summer events like "Open Streets" to capture public opinions, by interviewing local residents and businesses. The data collected will assist with forming a new strategic vision for this historic area of the city.

We are coming to the end of the first year and we have run some amazing sessions, such as:

- Photography workshops,
- Telling and re-enacting ghost stories,
- Visits to libraries street events,
- Communicating with businesses, and locals
- Art workshops
- Creating a virtual tour

Our young people's art exhibition is being finalised as you read this, and the virtual tour will be launching in spring, so keep an eye out for details.



Supporters Spotlight

Chris Cain, Director of Kazzoo IT,
Silver Focus on Business Member



Chris Cain, Director of Kazzoo IT Solutions, became our first Focus on Business Silver Member last December. This was after raising an astounding £2144.89 for us during his 2021 Christmas Charity Quiz Night on December 3rd, 2021. The festive evening event challenged attending teams with eight rounds of fun yet puzzling questions.

"I've been running quizzes and other fundraisers for charities for the last seven years," Chris told us

that night. "This year, because of Covid, I've done a separate event for each charity I've chosen to support. I've done six in total, and they've raised a couple of grand each - it's been amazing."

The event also featured a competition for the best Christmas jumper, and a raffle featuring a bounty of prizes - from vouchers from several sponsor, to several bottles of wine and even a Christmas Wreath from Taylor's Florist.

"I just enjoy the look on people's faces when they're having so much fun that they don't realise that they're raising money. They're just here to have a night out, but that enjoyment is making such a difference. And the more people that are having fun, the more money we raise."

Chris has been supporting us for over three years and joined our Focus on Business community as one of our founding members in 2021. We later asked Chris how it felt to be our first silver member:

"Every business owner is competitive; it comes with the job they're in. I may be the first silver Focus on Business member, but I'm surprised no-one's tried to beat me and get Gold. For me to be the first, that's amazing, but what's next?"

Hot Topic

Youth Mental Health

In 2021, one in-eight young people had been diagnosed with a mental health condition by the age of seventeen. Young women were found to be twice as likely as males to develop a mental health disorder. 4.6% of the nation's 15-19 years olds experience anxiety disorder, while depression affects 2.8% of the same age group.

Across all our FOCUS youth projects, we are engaging with young people who experience isolation because of the lockdowns. We have seen increased referrals from city agencies of young people who have poor mental health. We are contacted by desperate families who cannot get the help their child needs and have turned to us. Mental health's impact is a daily issue for our organisation to address. It has a negative impact on their lives, family, social relationships, and education.

What are we doing to help?

Throughout the pandemic, we managed to maintain consistent contact with many of our service users. Staff and volunteers support young people online and in small, protected face-to-face groups. Our team has had to learn on-the-fly what works to make sure young people did not feel despondent or alone.

We aim to connect young people to their peers and communities, through social action projects organised by young people themselves. Our planned fundraiser hopes to have the message: 'for the better mental health of young people' and focus on such. We are also designing new projects that will empower young people and young adults who are suffering emotional turmoil to achieve brilliant things for the community.

Youth mental health will be a core form of operation for FOCUS in 2022. If you want to help young people overcome barriers, get in touch today and find out how your experience and abilities will help FOCUS meet more needs this year.



Meet Our Team



Luke St Denis Project Manager for START

“Hello, my name is Luke. I’m the Project Manager for the START project. I work with young people aged 16-25 that are not in work or education, building their employability skills so that they’ll have the experience they need.

“When I was younger, I was part of a youth council in my local town. We had youth workers there; they played quite a big role in my life. I’ve always wanted to be that role-model, a support for other young people who might not have that. I studied a degree in Youth Work and Community Development; within that I had to do a placement each year. I did my first- and third-year’s placements at FOCUS. As soon as I graduated, I applied for a role as Leicestival’s assistant project manager. I did that for two years, before creating my own project, START.

“The beauty of working for FOCUS is the freedom of creativity. You don’t have that freedom in a lot of other places I’ve worked in. At FOCUS, you can come up with an idea, find funding, create this amazing project, and just run it. As for START, it’s great to be able to see young people that arrive on the first day nervous and introverted come out of their shells even in the first or second week. It’s amazing to be able to offer that opportunity, to journey alongside them and experience it with them.

“I like a challenge, something new, and every year FOCUS provides that. There’s always something happening, or something different. I think this is gonna be a good year for FOCUS; it’s gonna be a challenging year, but with new things coming. It’s gonna be great.”

Volunteering at FOCUS



Zubeir, Volunteer with Inspire

Zubeir began his volunteering journey with the Inspire Project in November 2020. Despite the limitations caused by the occurring pandemic, just as online training and sessions, his enthusiasm to volunteer shone through. Once we were able to return to face-to-face sessions, Zubeir’s positive and approachable nature allowed him to build bonds with the young people. During breaks, he would delight and entertain them with magic and card tricks.

We recently conducted an interview with Zubeir on volunteering at FOCUS. Reflecting on his own life, Zubeir recognises the positive impact adults can have on young people.

“When I was young, certain adults gave me the confidence to achieve,” he told us. “Having role models really changed my life. When I was younger a teacher had a chat with me and took time to listen. It was a ‘Sliding Doors’ moment and my life went in a totally different direction.”

In August 2021, Zubeir got to experience the return of the Inspire Residentials. He helped to provide a fun-packed and engaging personal development programme for a larger group of young people than he had dealt with before. Zubeir provided a First Aid Training workshop for the young people, volunteers, and staff.

Zubeir continues to offer his support from afar in the Inspire Project’s WhatsApp group. There, he has become well-known for telling the odd ‘dad joke,’ or sharing his love for Leicester City Football Club and The Leicester Tigers.

“Family and friends are the most precious commodity you have. They enrich your life and make it bearable.”

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^{pm}
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

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:

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