

Tales from the TSI Network

Supporting Volunteering For All

All across Scotland

supporting looked after children - Angus



Voluntary Action Angus (VAA) started working with a local group of looked after children and young people aged 12 to 18 for the first time earlier this year.

Through supporting them on their volunteering journey, the team hoped to build confidence, develop skills and expand their opportunities in life.

These young people were faced with limited opportunities and, for a wide variety of reasons, lacked confidence and had low self esteem. While their own background caused hesitation amongst some when it came to offering opportunities, one of the biggest barriers to connecting the young people to the community was transport due to their rural location. With some under 16, securing a suitable placement would bring about its own challenges, however VAA was determined to make this a positive experience and, with added support, would help the young people overcome some these hurdles to get them out into the community and volunteering.

How Voluntary Action Angus

Bobbi Murray, Saltire Awards & Youth Volunteering Development Worker, together with VAA colleague Arlene Dickson, Third Sector Strategic Officer for Children's Services, first met with the group at the start of this year. While some thought it would be boring and others saw it as unpaid work, the team worked with them to help change their perceptions of volunteering, showing them how it could open doors to a whole new world of unexplored experiences. Bobbi and Arlene listened to hear about their interests and help determine what might appeal and best suit them.



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Identifying opportunities in the surrounding community was another challenge for the team. They had to alleviate any doubts people may have harboured, meeting with them and answering questions about concerns that could potentially have put them off. They were reassured by the answers and knowing that these young people would continue to be supported by VAA while they settled in to their new roles, helped ensure everyone was happy.

Equally, it was important that the young people would be secure and happy in their roles. So, with all the necessary PVG disclosure checks carried out and transport issues resolved, the team secured placements offering a wide range of volunteering opportunities to all of the young group. This included childcare, catering, care for elderly, media and hairdressing. It was vital to make the volunteering experience positive for everyone involved.

The entire experience has helped break down barriers and create a far greater awareness within the local community about the capabilities of these young people. Fundamentally, the positive impact on them could be seen almost immediately, with confidence boosted in every way as they eagerly grasped this new opportunity to volunteer.

VAA is ensuring that they receive the recognition they deserve by signing them up to the Saltire Awards. Already, some are gaining Saltire Approach certificates for 10 and 25 hours volunteering activity and notching up Young Scot rewards along the way. A whole new world indeed.

Voluntary Action Angus
voluntaryactionangus.org.uk

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Voluntary Action Scotland is the national
network of Third Sector Interfaces
www.vascotland.org