



Tales from the TSI Network

Supporting Volunteering For All

All across Scotland

generations together in Arran – Arran CVS



Arran CVS has created a new volunteering opportunity with Arran High School to coincide with the Year of Young People 2018. Generations Together is its intergenerational project, connecting ten S5 pupils with residents from the nearby McKelvie Road sheltered housing complex. North Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership supported the project with a small funding pot for resources and worked in partnership to deliver dementia training.

How Arran CVS helps bring generations together

Initially, Arran CVS faced a slight hesitancy from the older people when engaging with the pupils. Then they had to overcome the practicalities of determining the most appropriate activities, as well as agree suitable timings to bring both groups together.

At the outset, Arran CVS provided dementia training for the young people, which included wearing an ageing suit to help them understand the ageing process and dispel any preconceptions about becoming old. The School was very accommodating, releasing the young volunteers during class times, allowing them to run activities with the older people. Arran CVS carefully coordinated the most suitable times for pupils to get together with residents, as well as achieve the perfect balance between suggesting suitable activities and encouraging the young people to devise their own.

Pupils visit residents a few days a week and support a wide range of activities, such as arts and crafts, games sessions, manicures and beauty treatments. The young people were most surprised by the interest shown by some residents in technology, so they added IT support to the list. These IT sessions are delivered within the Arran CVS office, on a prearranged basis, when resident bring along their tablet, phone or laptop to seek basic technical help from the pupils.



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Breaking down intergenerational barriers has had far reaching, positive consequences. The young people have gained a completely new perspective of the older generation and, at the same time, have given something meaningful back to their community. The whole volunteering experience has helped them understand that this older generation doesn't feel old in their own head and still has interests and dislikes - at the end of the day, the two generations are not too different.

The residents of McKelvie Road are now delighted to welcome the pupils into their communal lounge and participate in the sessions. It's been great for Arran CVS to see residents benefit from the activities, as well as the young people develop a wide range of life skills - from communications right through to sharing knowledge – and all at a far younger age than they would have done otherwise. The IT sessions have also proved mutually beneficial. **The team are seeing young lads, previously quite reserved, building a bond with the older men who, themselves, are engaging far more and returning week after week to learn from the pupils. It's a win, win situation.**

With the older people far more aware of what is going to happen next time around, any hesitancy is long gone. Now they can't wait for the sessions to start again in the new school term. As everyone is gaining so much from the experience and many barriers broken down, Arran CVS has established a similar initiative with youngsters from Brodick Early Years Centre providing support for sheltered housing residents in the town. The Centre deliver structured activities and Arran CVS provide the connections and resources to free up a member of their staff for this. The four-year olds approach things differently - they don't have the same preconceptions as the S5 pupils. They simply play with the older people who join in and enjoy the experience.



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