



COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS



PROJECTS LIKE THESE ARE AMAZING FOR THE COMMUNITY, THERE IS A WIDE VARIETY AND SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE AND IT GIVES YOU A WELLBEING BOOST.

The Community Champions project continued to build on the strong foundations that have been developed at Milford Haven School over the last few years that have had huge success in supporting some of the most vulnerable members of our community. They continued the most successful projects and introduced some new ones to meet the need of the community and encouraged community resilience.

The Community Champions are a group of young people aged between 11 and 16 who worked with the Community Lead to engage with the community of Milford Haven to support residents that are experiencing hardship, poor mental and physical health and who are struggling to thrive.

Due to the catchment area there are many families that face ongoing challenges related to extreme poverty that has an effect on other aspects of life such as an increase in those suffering with mental health issues. Our Community Champions took a collaborative approach by working with the Community Champion Lead, local community organisations and charities to link with our community to bring about a lasting impact.

The projects focused on improving mental and physical well being, easing financial hardship and encouraging the community to reconnect post lockdown. The project has shown a proactive approach to prevent situations of mental health and physical health from escalating and offers an essential need of opportunities to improve well being and financial hardship. The project also gave the young people involved a vital opportunity to gain life skills such as listening skills, networking skills, communication, interpersonal and team building skills. It helped to develop research skills and the ability to write reports, skills in marketing and social media

Our Community Champions created a timetable of events that took place from September 2022 – July 2023.



Big Picture Project

On Friday 14th October, Milford Haven School's Art Club took their Big Picture Project on tour and invited the community to join them to raise awareness of World Mental Health Day and the benefits of painting for well being. The aim of the project was to work together to create a big picture that encompasses the message that no one is alone. The Big Picture would then be donated back to the community and given to Milford Haven Town Council to display.

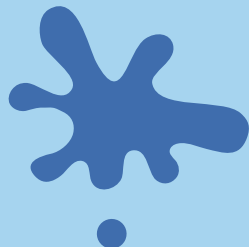
The students were joined by representatives from local mental health charities including: Sandy Bears Child Bereavement, Liss Listens, 2 Wish and The Samaritans. Not only did the charities get stuck in and help make the Big Picture, it gave them a great platform to share their services with the community.

100% of the students involved said they left the event knowing more about the support available to them and 100% said their overall well being improved as they were able to share their passion for art and encourage others to use it as a tool to improve mental well being.

Out of all of the charities that attended, 100% of them said they found it a useful and less formal way of getting their services across to people who need to access them but would not know how otherwise. 100% of them also said that their well being had improved and that they would use art as a tool with future users of their services.

Out of all attendees from the community 70% said that they felt the project improved their well being and that they would attend again (some of the attendees didn't fill in a questionnaire and some don't have the capacity to do so).

Mayor, Katy Gray was in attendance and said "I attended this project and it was great, I got to meet lots of young people and shared ideas. Also others from further a field and got to design a picture myself. It was great fun and an enjoyable afternoon and would wholeheartedly participate in similar projects. It's relaxing, takes your mind off any problems and makes you smile. A really positive interactive project"





Pumpkin Carving Competition



In October 2022, The Community Champions launched a Pumpkin Carving Competition to encourage the community to get creative with their families. They chose to provide prizes that would boost the wellbeing of those living in poverty in our community and offer vouchers for family days out. The competition was launched on social media and the community were encouraged to send their entries in via email. We received over 100 entries. The winners were asked for verbal feedback and they said:

“It is great that we were able to enter this competition for free, it is expensive to take children on days out and after we won 1st place we were able to have tickets for Folly Farm and take our children on a free day out. It was fantastic”

“This was a great opportunity for me to spend time with my children creating the pumpkin and then we won 2nd place and we were able to celebrate by going to Heatherton as a family. It is normally so expensive.”



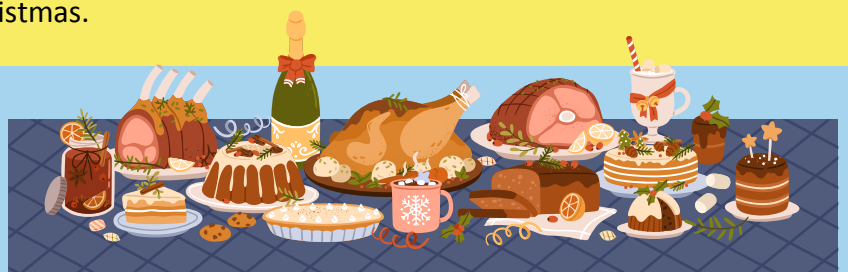


Everything but The Bird Christmas Hampers

‘Everything but the Bird’ hampers were delivered to the most vulnerable families in the community to help ease financial hardship at one of the most pressurable times of the year. To ensure the families that we supported with this project were in need we identified these families using a list of factors that increase the vulnerability of young people. Examples of the criteria included families who were in receipt of Educational Free School Meals, families with children with additional learning needs and those living with parental substance misuse, mental health issues within the family and young carers.

Overall though professional discretion was used and we supported some families where it may be difficult to quantify the need or vulnerabilities, however from experience and using professional judgement we identified that support is required.

Out of all of the families who took part in this project 100% said that they felt their wellbeing was supported. 100% of families said that they would appreciate the support in the future and 100% said that they felt this project made a big difference to the comfort of their life at Christmas.



Festive Support



Community Christmas Dinner

The Community Champions partnered up with local community centre The Mount to deliver a Christmas Dinner for free to some of the most vulnerable members of our community.



Festive Friends

To combat loneliness at Christmas the Community Champions visited care settings via Zoom to host Christmas games. 100% of residents said they felt their wellbeing was improved and they would participate again.



Wellbeing Wreath Making

To encourage community participation post Covid the Community Champions hosted a Wreath Making Workshop. Out of all those who attended 100% said they felt it improved their wellbeing.



Fitness Family Fun Day

The Community Champions and Sport Pembrokeshire joined forces to bring Milford Haven a fun filled Family Day at Milford Haven Leisure Centre on Saturday 21st January.

Rough and tumble, zorbing, hockey, basketball and swimming were among just a few of the activities on offer at the Family Fun Day held in Milford Haven this past weekend. Families of all ages were invited to attend Milford Haven Leisure Centre from 10am-2pm to enjoy multiple different physical activities. Free fresh fruit and cereal bars were available on arrival as well as an opportunity to enjoy a free soup and a roll or a hot dog at lunch time in the Leisure Centre Cafe.

The Community Champions teamed up with Sport Pembrokeshire to host the Family Fun Day at Milford Haven Leisure Centre to encourage people of all ages to try something new in 2023 and show how physical activity can promote not only positive health but positive well being.

Thanks to grant funding, Milford Haven School were able to fund the day, with Sport Pembrokeshire running most of the activities. A representative from Sport Pembrokeshire was available throughout the day to answer any questions and offer people information about the clubs that are available to them in their local area.

The Family Fun Day was a roaring success with one parent saying:

“I think it’s amazing that the school has been able to organise something like this for their community, everyone was invited not just pupils from the school and it’s great to see people coming together to enjoy something.”

Another member of the community said:

“It has been so much fun, my son has asked about joining a football team and Sport Pembrokeshire were there to give me all of the information I needed about the camps they have on offer. Will be signing my son up. Well done everyone involved.”

When asked what was the best part of the day one family said:

“We think it is brilliant that the school is noticing the needs of their community and putting on something like this. With the cost of living it is difficult and to be able to bring them somewhere like this where they are entertained and fed is amazing.”



Free Fitness Classes

The Community Champions put on 5 weeks of free fitness classes for the community to attend to encourage using physical fitness to boost wellbeing.



Donut Drop In

For Children's Mental Health Day the Community Champions hosted a Donut Drop In where young people could access vital support available to them.



Community Easter Egg Hunt

The Community Champions left Easter Eggs all around the community for local residents to take their children on a free Easter Egg Hunt. This encourage people to get outside and boost their wellbeing.



Daffodils of Kindness

During Random Acts of Kindness Week the Community Champions delivered daffodils of kindness across Milford Haven to help brighten people's day.

The day took place on Thursday February 17 but the Community Champions got involved by placing daffodils of kindness, donated by Blas y Tir across the town. The Community Champions received 100 bunches of daffodils and placed them throughout the town to spread kindness across the week.

Many of the people who have found a bunch have commented, saying:

"I found some in Steynton this morning. I smiled all the way home. How lovely, thank you."

"What a lovely thought. They are now in a vase that says 'a little kindness can bring a lot of happiness,' which I thought was appropriate."

"Thank you so much. I found these today and they have brightened up my day."





:: Bunny Run

To encourage the community to use physical fitness for wellbeing the Community Champions hosted a Bunny Run. The community were invited to take part in the free fun run with their families. They signed up for a race pack and received bunny ears, a medal, a certificate and an Easter Egg.

Over 100 local residents took part and ran, walked or biked 5k. Of all the residents took part 100% said they would take part again, 100% said that the event improved their wellbeing and 100% said that they appreciated that the event was free to enter as those families with multiple family members find it hard to take part in events such as this due to the cost.

Support Picnic

The Community Champions once again teamed up with local mental health charities to support the community but this time they took it outside. The wanted to encourage the use of outdoor spaces to improve wellbeing and hosted a support picnic outside with gardening activities.

The local residents in attendance said that they felt that the opportunity to speak to representatives from the local mental health charities made them feel more inclined to approach them if they needed support in the future.

One local resident said "I didn't realise how good gardening good be to change my mood, it is something I will continue so thank your for this opportunity"

Summer of Fun Vouchers



In order to tackle poverty throughout the summer the Community Champions handed out summer of fun vouchers to young people living in poverty so they could have treats over the summer months. These vouchers included free ice-cream, milkshake and donuts.



Bags of Books

The Community Champions teamed up with Milford Youth Matters to encourage the community to read for wellbeing by tying over 100 books to 7 different locations in the community. The community were then invited to come and choose a book to read with their families. All 700 books were taken by local residents and those that took part in the project said:

“This event is amazing, my daughter looks forward to it every year, she gets so excited and it encourages us to make time to sit down and read together”

“These free books are brilliant, it makes my children so happy that we choose a book together and then sit down and read it”

“Out of all the community projects that takes place this one always brings a smile to my face, I look forward to taking my children up here.”

“The fact that these books are free is fantastic, not everyone in the community can afford to buy books and we do have a local library but there is something special about being able to choose a book with your child and then make a point of reading it together, 10/10 for Bags of Books”

