

Project Report for GirlzClub. April 2023.

Data –

We continue to have seventeen girls on our GirlzClub register. Out of those seventeen girls, fourteen - sixteen of them attend regularly every week. Twelve of them live on the Sandy Hill estate or roads that are just adjacent to the estate. The remaining six are from Aldershot, Farnham & at the very bottom of the Upper Hale Road. Alongside our Year 7 girls, we also still have our four Young Leaders (Year 8, 10 and 11), three of which are from the Sandy Hill estate and regulars to the youth centre.

Report –

We have had a very busy and enjoyable half term. The girls have all really bonded as a group and work extremely well with each other. They are an absolute delight to spend time with. They now take a lot more ownership and responsibility over what we do, and they enjoy being involved in planning and organising future sessions. Both of our volunteer helpers have recently commented on how lovely it is to have seen their confidence and self-esteem grow this past half term.

Our main focus since Christmas has been about mental health and well-being. As mentioned in my last report, this topic came about because of my own concerns and observations regarding the mental health and well-being of some of the girls that attend the group. We have just recently finished this topic and I feel it was a huge success. The girls all came up with some great ideas of things we could learn about and activities we could try. We explored topics such as, healthy coping techniques, common misconceptions of mental health, how we can look after our own mental health and how we can support others. Some of the activities we did include a well-being box for everyone at the youth centre to access, a specific well-being area within the centre, where people can go if they are feeling overwhelmed or just need some peace, a tranquil area outside in the garden and their own individual mental health tool kits and wellness journals. Each of these activities were a big success and the girls were really engaged and enthusiastic. I monitored their feedback throughout the duration of this topic (through their weekly evaluation journals and a questionnaire at the end) and I am pleased to say that the results were really positive. All the girls enjoyed the discussions and activities and there was a definite improvement with how they scored their confidence and self-esteem (compared to how they rated it at the beginning of the year). There was also lots of positive comments left on the evaluation forms. These are just a few examples, “I feel so much happier now I know how to cope when I am having a panic attack”, “I feel better now that I have someone I know I can talk to when I am struggling” and “I have stopped comparing myself to my friends because I realise that I have my own strengths and it doesn’t matter if they are different from theirs”. Overall, this topic had a very positive impact on the group and is something we can continue to work and build on.

The girls continue to fill in their evaluation journals weekly and they really help me to plan, evaluate and reflect. It is also a good way for the girls to share their thoughts, opinions and ideas with me. Alongside these, we had a big brainstorming session straight after the Easter holidays. We spent time discussing what they would like to do leading up to the summer holidays and the girls then voted for their favourite activities. Baking and art related activities still continue to be a favourite amongst all of them.

Moving forward, we will be spending this next half term working on our contribution to Hale Carnival. All of the girls have expressed an interest in being involved, whether it's behind the scenes getting things ready or on the actual day as part of the procession. We will also continue with our baking and art activities and now that the weather is getting warmer, we will be spending more time in the outside area. We have lots of keen gardeners, so we are currently growing lots of vegetables and flowers from seeds, which we will be planting outside soon.

We hope to have two specialist nurses from the Surrey Park Clinic, coming in to give a talk on puberty, body changes and periods. This has had to be postponed a few times now, due to their work commitments, but we are hoping it will take place before the summer holidays.

The Men in Sheds project is still booked in for May Half term. However, over half of the girls are now unfortunately away that week. This is a real shame, but I am currently in talks with Erin at Farnham Maltings, to see if it would be better to change the date so that more of the girls have the opportunity to participate.

We are all very much looking forward to the term ahead.

Jo Goodhew
26th April 2023