

Active Involvement Stories

Nathan, a disabled young person

Nathan, aged 11, had cerebral palsy and is very keen to raise awareness of the issues faced by children and young people with disabilities. He told us about his role as an ambassador and the work he does with other charities:

“Being an ambassador means going to events, letting everyone what Whizz-kids does and trying to get people or businesses to donate money to the charity.

I also go to ambassadors’ meetings to plan disability awareness campaigns, make sure appeals get sent out to the right contact people, plan what we are going to say and propose at events”.

Last year he helped organise a cricket match that raised £1000 !

Nathan is keen to improve things for disabled people locally.

“I get frustrated when I go out shopping. Wheelchair access in Solihull Town Centre isn’t very good – there are slopes to let you get into shops but when you are inside some shop’s access to different parts or levels is poor. Disabled toilets are big enough and there aren’t enough leisure services for disabled people”

Eshan, a looked after young person

I would like to tell you about a talent I have and how it all started. I draw pictures of people and paint mainly in watercolours.

I started drawing when I was small and I lived in Afghanistan at the time. I would copy and draw small pictures of cartoon sketches such as cheese, trees, small animals etc.

When I came to England I lived in a hostel in West Bromwich, I would draw on the walls, which got me in a lot of trouble with the key workers there. Even though I had painted a few pictures I was never encouraged or supported to carry on my art work. At times I felt like giving up. When I moved to foster care I started Bourneville College and learned English. My tutor noticed that I was always drawing over my work, eventually he started to give me small pictures to sketch out of magazines and encouraged me to attend the after school art class. I went along to the art class, which was about 2 hours, once a week. My art teacher gave me lots of encouragement which gave me a big confidence boost.

Last year, I moved to Theo Langston Care a supported living hostel. The staff there brought me some paints and canvass and hung my pictures in the lounge. I love to paint and take a lot of pride in what I do. There have been

times in my life that I have felt like giving up especially with the tragedy I experienced, but my art also helped me a lot as well.

I do believe that with the right people supporting you and having confidence in yourself, you can achieve what you want.

Eshan, 17 years

Beth, from Voice of the Future Group

Hi, my name is Beth and I am 13 years old and in year 9 at school. I go to a group outside school, run by The Children's Society in Chelmsley Wood, called Voice of the Future.

I started with the group when I was 9. I was one of the first people to join the group. Some of the things I like are music and speaking to people; I got that talent from The Children's Society because I was treated like an adult by an adult. I like people to like me as I am. I like going to the project because I have loads of friends there. The things I don't like are being told what to do. I don't like going to school that much but I do like some of the lessons such as swimming, PE, music and French.

One of the things I want to tell you about is the interviews. Well it all started when we had to be trained by the workers at the project. They were people that we had to interview. The first time their body language told me that they were really nasty but the second time they sat there and listened and that was quite easy. We had to make an interview checklist to find out if they were child friendly. When I did the actual interview I was really nervous but in the end I enjoyed it and developed a lot of skills such as communication and body language and making eye contact.