

Report to Caritas Hexham and Newcastle for grant made on 22.3.21

Jeremy Cain, 20.4.21

Summary

The Mercy Hub ran a 9-day Holiday Club between 6th April and 16th April 2021. As part of this we delivered 5 Zoom sessions, working with the children to use the materials provided in their activity packs. These materials were purchased with the Caritas grant, which enabled us to provide a range of exciting activities as detailed in the programme below. The Zoom sessions were supplemented by 3 days of outdoor activities focused on street dance and samba drumming, led by external providers.

Overall, we supported 48 children from 23 families.

Programme and attendance

Date	Activities	Number of children attending session
Wednesday 7 th April	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome and news share• Scavenger Hunt: Wilderness survival kit• Bingo• Easter Bonnet making• Solve-them-yourself Mystery story Follow ups: Dance City videos.	41
Thursday 8 th April	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome and question: Tell us about an adventure you went on?• Let's go to the Races game• Sticky ball target practice• Cooking: Nutty Yoghurt and Cinnamon dip, Pea-camole dip• Solve-them-yourself Mystery story Follow ups: Den building and decorating.	41
Friday 9 th April	Puppetry workshop Follow ups: Treasure hunt in Elswick Park.	17
Wednesday 14 th April	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome and news share• Spin the wheel game• Easter Club Pentathlon• Solve-them-yourself Mystery story Follow ups: Easter Club Olympics.	24
Thursday 15 th April	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome and question: what is your favourite healthy food?• Banana dancing• Planting pea sprouts• Ecobrick making• Solve-them-yourself Mystery story Follow ups: I Spy Nature in my neighbourhood.	17

In addition, parents were present in the background helping their children join in with the activities.

Delivery

The programme was planned by the Mercy Hub Co-ordinator, who bought all the resources needed to enable to children to do the activities. With the help of volunteers, these were then packed into a box for each family and delivered to their homes.

Whilst delivering, volunteers were encouraged to spend time chatting to parents and to offer further help where necessary. This is an important part of our work as we are trying to build a community within which we can support families to support each other. During the outdoor sessions, we were able to see these relationships develop as volunteers had more time to spend with parents as they dropped off their children.

The Zoom sessions were delivered by the Mercy Hub Co-ordinator, supported by his family and, in the second week, the Diocesan Youth Ministry Team. It is difficult to involve volunteers in this more fully due to the limitation of delivering activities by Zoom. However, one volunteer joined us for most sessions.

Feedback

"I think you all do amazing. At a time when things haven't been great and the children haven't had their normal routines this has been a life saver, especially for one child families like mine. Yazmin looks forward to the holidays to see everyone online but more so the meeting up and seeing people face to face. We are extremely grateful for the extra activities and I feel this is extremely beneficial for the children."

"My kids like all the activities. We enjoyed and happy for get this chance. I am like its help full for me."

"Thank you for introducing us to new foods and recipes, and including in the packs items that we may not have but can be used many times going forward, like a glue gun!"

"My children like the most from box the planting because they can plant it every morning. I'm very happy in the club. Thank you very much for all activities. God bless all."

Reflections

- The Zoom sessions have been well honed over the last 9 months and we have a good feel for what activities work well. However, the mixture of online with in-person sessions this time underlined the limitations of Zoom: children participate better, and better relationships can be developed with both children and parents when people are actually together.
- The Diocesan Youth Ministry Team bring an excellent variety and energy with them, as well as their expertise in working with children and young people. It would be good to involve them more as we move from online to in-person delivery.
- Families engage with us for different reasons- some mostly because they welcome the additional support with food, but most because they are looking for positive activities for their children to take part in; the group also helps some parents to feel less isolated. This gives us opportunities to develop the support we offer in each of these areas.
- At Christmas we worked with 34 children from 18 families; in February, we worked with 37 children from 18 families. This time we have worked with 48 children from 23 families. This growth has mostly resulted from word-of-mouth recommendations amongst parents. This is encouraging but if we wish to continue to grow, we will need to recruit more volunteers and gain more funding.

Easter
Holiday
Club 2021



MERCY
HUB