

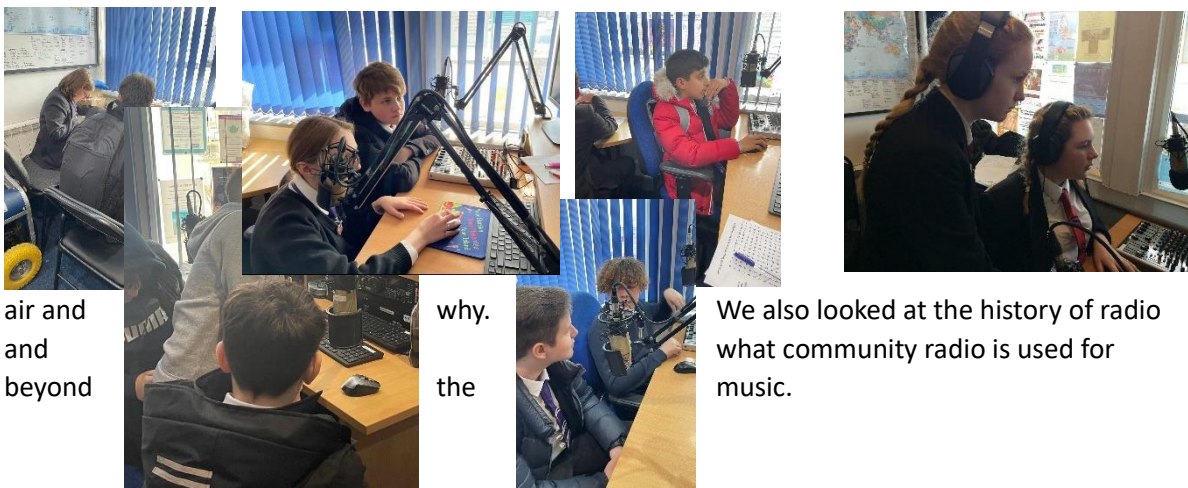
Community Impact Project- Rehabilitation into Education

This is Sheppey FMs entry for community impact, this project impacted the lives and education of so far 4 cohorts of students of secondary school age, its also had an impact in the community they live in, the older generation and parents, teachers and peers that have all benefited from the rehabilitation of these previously very troubled young people.

Our local school, already impressed with the training work we have been doing for them and others over the years, contacted us and asked us for help. They have what they call “red band” students, this means that’s they haven’t responded to any other form of exclusion or isolation methods and cannot be on school grounds at all due to risks to others and staff. This school doesn’t like to permanently exclude anyone, but these students were at risk of not ever being allowed back into a school environment. These young people have been removed from education because of serious violent behaviours in class, or defiant behaviour that was so bad that the school couldn’t keep them safe, or others involved. What we had to also consider is many of these young people would now be feeling rejected and pushed aside, maybe let down, as a result could intensify their behaviours. The other thing we had to consider was we had no idea what has sparked the negative behaviours of the young people or what they may be going through personally or at home. We thought about the overall risks and decided if we could do this it would have an amazing impact not only on the young people but within the school, in their homes and if done right, the whole community. We excitedly put together a plan and agreed to help.

The programme we’re providing was to consist of radio training from presenting to production and interview skills. Drama classes helping them with basic communication skills, improvisation, self-confidence, teamwork, and trust. Cookery with our very own community chef who we are very lucky to have, this consists of basic cookery, food hygiene, food awareness and health and safety, also cooking big bathes of food. It was also to include arts awards; some Discover at least for those really struggling to get anything big submitted but bronze awards for the more able if we could make it happen. The outcome from completing this course apart from the qualification, would be them being allowed to integrate back into school, we also wanted them to learn the values of community and doing good for others, learn that there are better and different paths they can take, learn their own self worth and gain skills, knowledge and confidence, meet and speak to councillors and PCSOs about their choices so far and be heard about their own local concerns also do some good for some vulnerable members of society and feel good about it, like we do.

Before any of the young people were allowed to go on air, we had training in our training room, and they also learned some production work. They learned all about what they could and couldn’t say on



air and
and
beyond

why.
the

We also looked at the history of radio
what community radio is used for
music.

The drama parts of the course were mostly classroom based for room, we needed to prove to the school too that the young people could cope in a classroom, this was a huge challenge, more so with



our current students. But once they engage and listen, they produce good work.

In cooking we had to be careful to induct them in slowly, they needed to learn all about knife safety before being allowed to have one, we had to remove two students from kitchen duty for being aggressive and threatening with the knives, we allowed them to participate in everything else but have to look after the safety of our volunteers, some examples of the students using knives correctly.



After cooking the food each lesson, it was portioned up and distributed to vulnerable people in the community that may otherwise not get a hot meal, this means that the young people were feeding others less fortunate, this made some of them happy, we had parents telling us they were bragging about feeding others, this is good because it means they want to be good. Because they had to prepare food to distribute, they were also taught how to think of allergies, labelling, the ease of reheating as they don't want people getting ill, the likelihood of people liking what's been made, so nothing too peculiar in the ingredients or heavy of spice. And of course, they always needed to consider a vegetarian option. Hand hygiene was important throughout too.



Once the young people were ready, they were allowed some studio time, they learned from the presenter by watching and listening and had backroom training before hand, so they knew how to use the playout system and to control the desk before they had any studio access, they were also aware of on-air etiquette. The students were encouraged to use their airtime for good, talking about things that mean something to them, performing drama scripts and even doing special themed

shows such as a special one for their mums near Mother's Day. They all seem to do well with the on-air part, even those that worried me language wise, it really built their confidence and they finished feeling great about what they achieved, it was a big boost



for them seeing messages from their parents coming into the studio. One of the



other important things the students done was interview local councillors on air, this gave them the opportunity to think about their area and important issues, think of solutions

and causes and get to speak to someone with a little bit of power that could help them or advise



them on what needs to change and how. Also, a valuable lesson in how to speak to someone in authority before being returned to the classroom.

Here is a picture of some of the students with local councillor Dolley Jean White. We had two other councillors that agreed to come in at various times too all with different cohorts of students.

At the very end of each programme, 3 so far this last year, we are on our forth, the young people got to put on an event for some isolated elderly people, using all skills they've learned in each of the other areas, they set up the hall for them, made them welcome cards and gifts, laid the tables, cooked both courses, served it to them, took radio roadshow equipment too, set that up and set up music considering their music genre and their age, the also sat



down with them and spoke to them. This was an event the school hierarchy were also invited to see first-hand what they have learned and how they behaved around vulnerable

people, watching these young people engage with the elderly and really enjoy it too made every session, which was by far a walk in the park worth it.



At the end of the project each student receives some headphones, a cookery set and a certificate.



They will receive their arts awards when the final cohort of students has finished in a ceremony their parents can attend. We are on the final group for this academic year now, this last group are the most challenging so far as they are younger than the others, but they certainly keep us on our toes. The most recent are in the audio submission but we don't have photo consent just yet.



Taking on this project has been extremely rewarding for all involved, even when it got a bit scary at times, we have got to watch these young people grow in confidence, watch them progress in things they never thought they could achieve, to be fair most didn't even want to participate at first, we watched them mature, watch their joy



and their parents and teachers joy as they engaged with the much older generation and most glorious of all we have seen the first few cohorts of students now reintegrated back into mainstream school off the back of this. We learned that many of these young people were struggling mentally and just needed to be noticed and listened to, some even possibly had underlying learning difficulties that have yet to be diagnosed and will now on the back of this and our reports get the help they need moving forward.

We were met with resistance, bad language, were called names at times, we saw flying papers, battled with mobile phones and cleaned up lots of spilled water, smashed sandwiches and washed graffiti, but it was all worth it because not only has this project had a positive impact on the lives and future of these youngsters but if by changing the path of these students stops antisocial behaviour on the streets it also has a huge impact on the community as a whole. Sheppey FM prides ourselves on various training projects, but this has been our proudest so far.