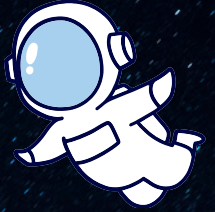


FRIENDSHIP MODEL OF VOLUNTEERING



In the third millennium on planet Earth, a not so evil genius had a brain wave, an idea that could change the lives of many humans. It was an idea about intergalactic ...oops...intergenerational friendships, where every young person who needed one could have a Friend for Life. A trusted adult to help them and stay with them throughout their life no matter what.



In the northern town of Blackpool there was a Resilience Revolution where the community was working together on brave and innovative projects and Friends for Life became one of those projects. Many people were a bit skeptical of the project. Some said it was "unnatural" asking an adult volunteer to be the friend of a young person who had experience of the foster care system, and many said they didn't think the idea would work.



NEGATIVITY

STRATEGIC
&
ENABLING



But the Friends for Life project wasn't put off by this negativity, in fact it just made the people who were passionate about it even more determined to succeed. Team Friends for Life spent time with the local council, schools, social care and third-sector groups to help others understand it.

Bringing the idea to life took some resilience, over 100 young people shaped the project through a process called co-production and in the year 2017 intergenerational matches began to happen.



As mind transference has not been invented yet, between November 2017 and December 2021, 27 young people watched VLOGS made by volunteers and had the power to choose the person, they wanted to be Friends for Life with. The person they got to go out and do fun things with the person they choose to spend time with. 9 matches were made in the last 12 months (September 2020 to September 2021).

By November 2021 there were 27 friendships, and the friends were saying things like...

Now, I'm just more self-assured about going into school, just being myself.

Having a friend for life helped me talk about my feelings and stuff which has helped me like talk about stuff with other friends, you pick up ideas how to socialise.



It's life changing!

It made me feel more confident with my social skills

REALISED
VALUE

Me and my friend, were the first to be matched and have been friends for over 3 years. Being friends with him has made the past 3 years of my life some of the best. With every problem, he is part of the solution. The thought of going out for a coffee, a walk or to the cinema cheers me up, makes me smile and improves the day whether it's good or bad. I am extremely grateful for him. Having a friend for life is more than being there on bad days to help, being a friend for life is about the relationship you develop with your friend. They can help prepare you for life. Although he is older than me he is not my parent - he is my friend, and I know he will be my friend for life.

I would encourage others to have a Friend for Life because what's not to like about having a friend?!

She was there when I was moving and she was brilliant with how she checked up on me to see how I was settling in

I think having a Friend for Life has helped me think about how other people see things

I didn't always trust people like I do now because everyone that I had trusted at that time had "gone".

The best thing about my friend is she is really chatty and asks a lot of questions

I have recently moved homes. I had to move away from all my school friends and family to but the only thing that hadn't changed was my Friend for Life.

To be the honest Friend for Life group have all been really supportive of me through this tough time

REALISED
VALUE

Not only the young people were saying great things about the project but so were the adults....

It is an opportunity for myself and the young person to explore a very unique relationship.

It focuses on the trust we share, in order to build a friendship that lasts through significant life events for the young person.

It is really special and I am so glad that I put my hand up to be apart of this and even more glad that my young person chose me.

It means giving a young person the opportunity to build a true friendship and relationship with an adult, someone they can turn to, trust and will always be in their life, no matter what. No hidden agendas, no wage or job -just a friend for life


It's ironic that the word volunteering is synonymous with unpaid because I feel richer for the friendship that I now have through volunteering

It's a Unique opportunity to make a huge positive change, for both my young friend & me

Friend for Life is a chance to share experiences, laughter and ideas for future development


REALISED
VALUE

Not only the young people were saying great things about the project but so were the adults....

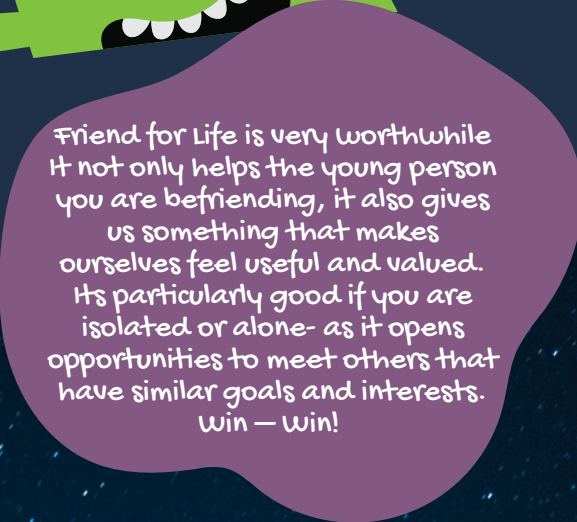


Thanks for my
Friend for Life
Medicine


REALISED
VALUE



Friend for Life is about being around
like minded people and
building friendships through
sharing, caring and understanding



Friend for Life is very worthwhile
It not only helps the young person
you are befriending, it also gives
us something that makes
ourselves feel useful and valued.
Its particularly good if you are
isolated or alone- as it opens
opportunities to meet others that
have similar goals and interests.
Win — win!



It's a unique
friendship
which bridges an
age gap.
For me it's about
being
there for
someone.

Not only friends were saying great things about the project,
so were social workers...

The friends for life project has made a huge difference to the young people that I work with. For some, they are the only constant that some young people have (particularly those young people who experience numerous placement or educational moves, or change in social worker). This scheme is vital in helping our young people feel a sense of connection and belonging that they are sometimes desperately seeking. In some cases too, the parents of our young people are sadly not always able to make the positive changes they need to live more stable lives by the time our young people turn 18 and in situations like this, their friend for life can be their role model and offer them the support and stability they so need as they move to adulthood.

I for one,
am so grateful
to the
HeadStart team
and the friends for life
scheme
- you guys change lives!



REALISED
VALUE





Between September 2020 and September 2021

46% of young friends for life have moved in with new families

56% of young friends for life have had a change in their main social worker

young friends said that having a consistent adult friend to have fun with during these changes was really important to them.

It helped them to build trust, confidence and to settle into their new homes too.





REALISED
VALUE



Young people matched with a Friend for Life were having successes in many areas of their lives.

For example attendance at school is regularly over 95%.

No young person has been permanently excluded from school.



As well as making matches for our children the Friends for Life project also employed young people who had experience of care as apprentices and sessional workers. Let's hear from one of those...

TRANSFORMATIVE

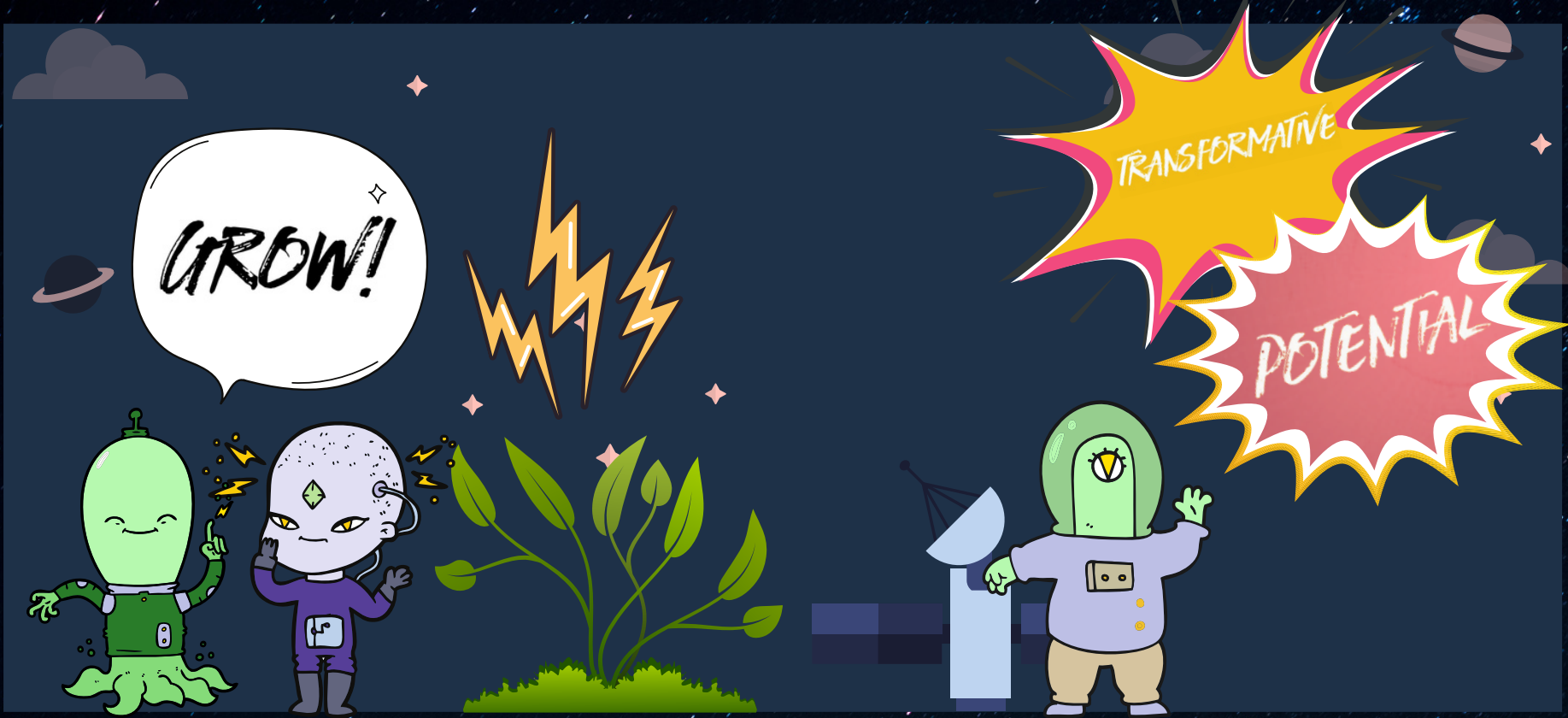
As a teenager I was brought into the care of the local authority, I was moved to a foster home away from Blackpool and the people I knew.

I had already been to 6 high schools; I wasn't doing the right things or around the right people. Although friend for life didn't exist, when I was moved to my foster home, I had a really good relationship with my foster parents (not always and definitely not to start with!) but as I grew in their company, I learnt many new things, not just things to use in life but how to be a better person when doing them things.

My foster dad especially had a huge impact on who I am today, he taught me right from wrong and to know that I am better than what I had come from, this wasn't just any foster carer, this was a super foster carer!

I saw my foster dad as my friend for life. Coming back to work in the council and for the local authority made me realise how much I would have benefited from actually having a friend for life.

I have seen the positive impact it has on a young people's lives in such a short space of time and honestly I believe every young person should have a friend for life.



With successful and secure friendships blossoming, soon even those who really doubted the project started to think it may be a good idea after all. They started to say things like, Friends for Life could support “any children or even a family” and “maybe there is something to be captured there in terms of a blueprint for other stuff”. Giving lots of thought to the concept of friendship and how the project learning could be applied, THE FRIENDSHIP MODEL OF VOLUNTEERING was created. So there was not just the Friend for Life project, but a whole Friendship based model of projects with a Friend for School and Digital Friends joining too.



The Friendship Model of Volunteering (FMOV) is growing and in the last year 2020-2021 this meant 379 hours of training adult friends as well as 79 supervision sessions.

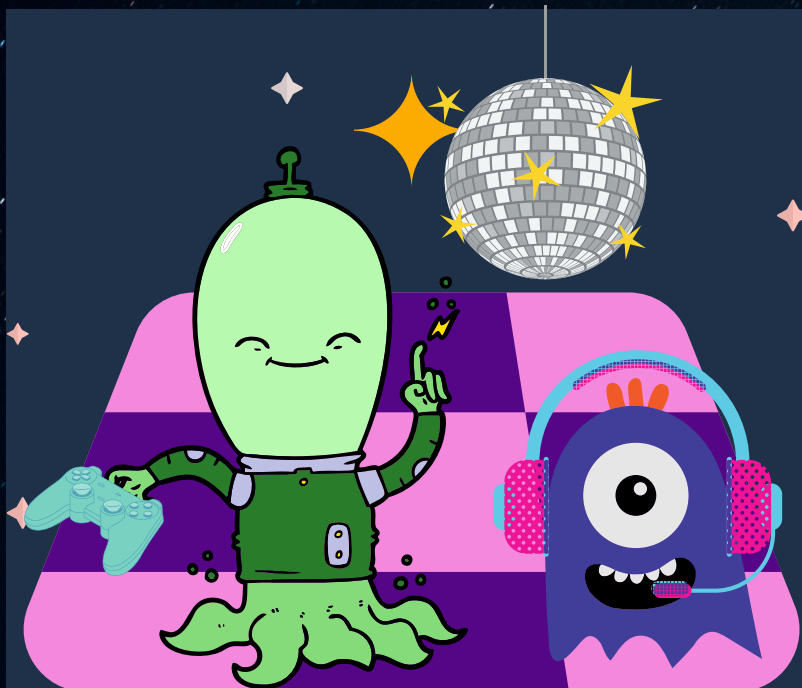


39 adult friends attended 16 training sessions in the last 12 months including 'What Makes a Good Friend', 'Safeguarding', 'Attachment' and 'Digital Safety' and 'Self-harm'.

The Digital Safety Delivered by Kidscape was especially popular with 12 attendees.

Young people were involved in a variety of things through being part of the friendship model of volunteering, co-production, presenting and of course having lots of fun.

Between September 2020 and September 2021 that includes:



STRATEGIC
ENABLING
APPLIED
REALISED

11 friends planned and organised group events

33 Friends attended our Halloween virtual event

31 Friends attended our Xmas event

9 Friends attended our summer event

22 Friendships were supported in staying in touch through Covid with letter writing packs and Christmas card activities

38 Friends had a pumpkin delivered to their door to carve and share

7 Friends were involved in co-producing and sharing our sustainability options to programme board

7 Friends were involved in a co-production group "We're on the case"

20 Friends were involved with 25 creative opportunities

And there were awards and achievements:

24 young people were awarded You Rock Awards



The Friends for Life project won a national award. The UK Youth's Inspiring Pioneer of the Year. People were really interested, The BBC want to feature it on the news and who knows maybe one day it will be a film...

but the Friendship Model was never about glitz and glamour, it set out to help young people and the community and that is what it achieved.

THANK YOU!



The Model has grown and there are now 27 Friend for Life matches
9 Friends for School matches and 3 Digital Friend matches
this is a total 39 friendships within the Friendship Model of Volunteering....
not bad thanks to the ideas of a not so evil genius, the hard work of a
dedicated team, the funding from the National Lottery Community Fund
and the bravery and resilience of everyone involved in the friendships,
young and old!