

Participant Case Studies

These case studies of young people have come from programmes supported by the Building Stronger Communities Fund, funded by Ring and facilitated by Laureus. Laureus have confirmed that these anonymised case studies can be used in the public domain.

Case Study 1

Track Academy - building confidence and self-esteem.

The Programme

The Track Academy family comprises former international athletes and coaches, mentors, teachers, business professionals and a number of highly motivated and passionate volunteers. We are also mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, relatives and friends who play our part in making the community the best it can be. Track Academy helps disadvantaged young people to fulfil their true potential and develop as positive members of their community.

About the Participant

M, Female, 15

M joined Track Academy through her school in September 2021.

Challenges

M struggled with low esteem. She came in very shy and lacked confidence but had a desire to run and be part of a group.

Impact

M has slowly come out of her shell and is always friendly and polite to staff, peers and newcomers. She has gained confidence and started feeling at home at Track Academy. She is a regular student athlete training three times a week and had only this year registered with our representing club TVH to compete in open meets and championships. M takes pride in her sport and often asks to be filmed whilst running so that she can tweak her running technique and critique her performance in a positive way to encourage herself to do better.

M is always willing to help coaches carry equipment and is usually appointed to fetch the storage keys at the front desk to assist her coach so that the training sessions are not interrupted.

Quote From Participant

‘Track Academy is a home away from home’

Future

M has now set goals to compete at any given opportunity to improve her personal best.

Case Study 2

AHOY Centre - building confidence and self-esteem.

The Programme

AHOY's objective is to become a Flagship Learning Centre using the River Thames as a pathway to provide opportunities for the community and those at-risk, disadvantaged or with learning disabilities. Through sailing, rowing and related learning activities the AHOY Centre aims to break down social barriers, and develop essential life skills, confidence and pride. AHOY's safe haven and inclusive culture provide a safe environment where all participants are treated equally, regardless of background and abilities where participants feel welcomed and believed in – a key component to developing young people as active citizens in their community.

About the Participant

M.K. - Male, aged 16

M.K grew up in a single-parent family with their younger sister, spending much of their youth visiting the homes of their grandparents. M.K was an energetic youth, so their mum used to divert to longer walks before nursery so they could release some of the excess energy. A route that made them a frequent passer-by of The AHOY Centre Charity. Aged 8, M.K joined AHOY and not long after their grandma passed away. It was during this period that M.K engaged with the Shipmate project.

Challenges

School wasn't easy for M.K. A young energetic person who at an early age understood the importance of education. Throughout primary and secondary school M.K was bullied for their good behaviour, eagerness to learn and adherence to the school rules. This caused a behavioural change in M.K, a lack of motivation and reduced attentiveness in class –not wanting to be in school, an environment where he felt unwanted.

The ongoing impact of this decreased his confidence and self-belief, and his disinterest in learning was damaging his future prospects. School was becoming more of a negative impact for M.K, it was a troubled time for him with no clear direction or guidance to follow.

Impact

AHOY was the environment that M.K was seeking. From his first day on the project he felt welcomed, and an immediate sense of worth and respect from the staff and instructors. It was the complete opposite of the feelings he had at school.

The instructors quickly became role models to M.K, encouraging him to progress through the project and the learning but also ensuring he was progressing externally too, with regular questions and tasks being asked to complete at school to discuss in the next session

The rules at AHOY and shipmates were more meaningful to M.K, the thought of not being able to attend due to poor behaviour, and being sent home for not adhering to the safety procedure resonated well with his style of learning and helped to bring out the best in him – he was becoming more confident working with other

people and engaging with new faces, it was giving him a perception of the real world without actually being exposed to it.

M.K is now 16, a long-standing participant in the project, often the one seen to be introducing new recruits to the charity, ensuring they are welcomed to the group.

“I’m not being recognised as just a kid in their class anymore – I’m being recognised as an experienced person, a role model within the group. The hard work I have put into self-development is being accepted and recognised by the group.”

Engaging in the project from an early age gave M.K the opportunity to learn from his peers, who were regularly giving advice as to future challenges he may face. Now a peer on the project himself, M.K has developed an eagerness to hand his own experiences down to future generations.

“ I often message some of the young people in the group who have become friends, particularly those that I see facing similar struggles to myself. I take pride in reminding them about the importance of education and sticking to a routine. Sharing my own struggles and learnings for the benefit of others. ”

The project has helped rebuild the confidence and self-belief lost from the bullying at school. M.K has become more extrovert and confident in his own ability, building strong relationships with fellow participants.

“ I met one of my best friends at shipmates. They have since left the project and started university but we remain in contact and they’re eager to come back to volunteer during their term break”

Quote From Participant

“Does a lot more than you can imagine, the project is more than sailing and rowing, you gain transferable life skills, meet new friends, it’s a life changing project. ”

Future

M.K has an aspirational future, whilst they still try to establish what career they will head into, they are seeking to remain in further education to complete their A levels & Nautical studies.

M.K would like to become an instructor at AHOY / or other water sport facility and continue to share their passion for using waterborne activities for positive change.

M.K has used their skills and confidence built through the project to start up their own small business.

“I just want to keep on working hard. Putting the skills learnt from my time at AHOY to good use.”

Additional Information

M.K has become a role model within the group, an inspiring, ever present young person who is a true testament to the benefit of long term engagement to the Shipmate project. They recognise the impact their tie at AHOY had had, not only on their lives but their families too, there is a clear passion to want to give back to AHOY a support young people to follow their path.

Case Study 3

The Running Charity - improving physical and mental health

The Programme

The Running Charity is an independent charity harnessing the power of running to support young people aged 13-25 years, who are experiencing homelessness or manage complex needs. Their mission is to nurture young people who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness and help them reach their full potential. We do it through our running and personal development programmes and by creating a supportive community. What started as a pilot scheme of twelve young people in a Kings Cross Day Centre is now a national organisation guiding and inspiring hundreds. The Running Charity was born out of a pressing need to tackle homelessness among young people. Building on their experience in sport for social development, they saw an opportunity to harness running as the spark to give young people a stronger start.

About the Participant

D, Male, 18

D has been a “looked after child” in the UK care system.

Challenges

D lives an isolated life, spending the majority of his time indoors gaming. Morbidly obese, he has struggled with physical activity. He is also coming to terms with his sexual identity.

Impact

D took some persuading to come out running initially but has since become a regular participant. He has enjoyed pushing himself physically and has built some close friendships within the group. His confidence has grown significantly and he recently attended a weekend camping and adventure weekend with us in Snowdonia. We encouraged D to challenge himself and he threw himself into all the activities until he couldn't physically continue. His fitness is improving.

Quote From Participant

“This has been the most peaceful weekend I've had, my mind feels clear”

“I realised my appetite was less this weekend because my mind was quiet, I've eaten much less than I do at home and haven't been hungry”

Future

D is looking to lose weight and continue to challenge himself.