

James Goddard
Clerk to the Trustees
Cambridge United Charities
The Guildhall
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8th March 2017

Dear James

Report to Cambridge United Charities 2016/17

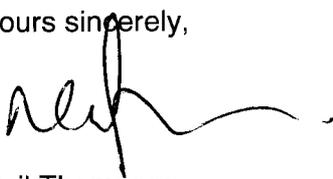
I am delighted to write to you with a report of the work that has been made possible over the past year, thanks to your kind donation of £1,500, in April 2016, being from the Hobson and Crane grant to Romsey Mill. We are extremely grateful for the support of Cambridge United Charities.

As we indicated in our earlier correspondence with you, the money that you have donated has been used to support the work we are able to carry out with young people, particularly those who feel anxious about the move from primary to secondary school. We know that this is a really important time for young people and their self-confidence; and for many, the feelings of uncertainty and anxiety can be stifling for them - causing them to be unhappy, with a detrimental effect on their sense of wellbeing and mental health. Our experience of this situation is continually being reinforced by the feedback we receive from local schools and parents of primary aged-children. Our work is long-term and relational, and we aim to build relationships of trust with the young people, to help equip them with the resilience to take on the challenge of moving to a new environment that can seem threatening, and provide them with fun, positive experiences that grow their self-belief and help raise aspirations.

Across all areas of our activity, Romsey Mill is passionate about overcoming disadvantage, challenging social injustice and promoting inclusion. We continue to work at grassroots level, providing help and support to those who are hardest to reach and most in need, making effective use of the skills of the team to deliver the work and to meet the complex needs of vulnerable local young people. We are delivering lots of activities this year - and creating new projects - all of which rely on the generosity of Trusts, local businesses, communities and individuals, as well as some local government funding.

I would like to take this opportunity to ask the Trustees of the Cambridge United Charities if they would consider continuing their valued support towards this important work. If you would like to know more about specific projects or if you would like to visit us here at Romsey Mill to see our work first hand, please let me know. We would be delighted to share more with you. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,



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Report to Cambridge United Charities Romsey Mill's Youth Development Programme 2016/17

Romsey Mill's work with young people in the Cambridge area is inspired by our belief that every young person has wonderful ability and possibility. No young person's current situation should dictate their future and we are committed to helping them be all that they can be. Our Youth Development Team's mission statement is: "We love young people and are passionate about supporting them to overcome challenge, live fulfilling lives and inspire change in the world around them."

Last year, over 739 young people regularly participated in Romsey Mill's activities for young people, with 98% considered to be in our target group of those at risk or experiencing disadvantage for any of a number of reasons (e.g. low confidence; poor self-esteem; low income family; poor mental health; struggling at home, school, or within their community).

The grant we received from Cambridge United Charities (Hobson & Crane Educational Grants) has been allocated towards our work with young people struggling with the transition from primary up to secondary school. Whilst this is an exciting time for many, it can also be daunting, even for confident children. For young people struggling with social skills, low self-esteem, anxiety or a difficult home life, the challenge of moving to a new and bigger school can seem impossible. This can lead to poor attendance and low attainment.

Therefore, Romsey Mill works with small groups of children, to prepare them for the move from primary school and continues to support them throughout their time at secondary school, helping them to build strong relationships and a good foundation for learning. We offer a combination of one-to-one support, group sessions and positive activities that enable children to develop confidence and resilience, raise aspirations, and develop support networks and a positive outlook towards moving into secondary school. Children emerge from the project better equipped and prepared to enter secondary school and to achieve their potential.

Highlights from the year

'It helps you stop worrying as much as you normally would. It's made me less nervous; it's fun! It has made me prepared for secondary school.'

- Throughout the year, Romsey Mill has carried out 5 separate transfer support projects.
- We provided support for 25 high need pupils across years 6-11.
- We developed and delivered a pilot course for parents of primary aged pupils to better understand and be able to manage anxiety and build resilience
- We enabled young people to take part in confidence building activities, including 2 half-term trips; and one outdoor adventure residential in Norfolk
- We ran 37 weekly sessions for young people aged 9 to 13 years, from the Abbey ward in Cambridge, to help them make the transition from primary to secondary school.



Redeemer Rascals

The group supports young people in the Abbey and Barnwell area every Wednesday afternoon (4.00-5.30pm). It meets at Christ the Redeemer church building, Newmarket Road, where the young people participate in craft activities, informal sports, quizzes and cooking.

The purpose of the group, which is based on young people who have been referred from local schools or who have self-referred, is to provide a social space where the young people can learn life skills (teamwork, communication, resilience); build positive relationships with youth workers and each other; increase confidence and self-esteem; and successfully transition from primary to secondary school.

This allows us to build long-term positive relationships with the young people as they learn new skills, develop greater confidence and are able to share their anxieties, concerns and issues with trusted and experienced youth workers, who can support them and help them to build resilience.

Dealing with anxiety

We were approached by St Matthew's Primary School, Cambridge to help a group of parents and their children better understand and deal with anxiety, after the School identified that building resilience amongst pupils was a priority, and that a number of their children were particularly struggling with anxiety.

The course was developed and delivered by Romsey Mill's Youth Development Worker who offers transitions support, in partnership with a South City locality worker, and was designed to support parents with anxious children – offering peer support for parents, helping them to meet others in the same situation and to share ideas and advice. The parents also learnt about anxiety: what it is, how it manifests itself and how it can be overcome. The course was attended by 11 parents, some of whom were specifically invited by the School.

We had positive feedback from parents, saying that they have been putting some of the strategies that we discussed in place, and now felt better equipped to help build resilience within their own children:

"This awareness will definitely help me to be more resilient myself and better prepare and support [my child] for challenges ahead."

We are now looking at how we can replicate the course elsewhere, in collaboration with Romsey Mill Children's Centre; and to identify other ways to be able to support and help other parents and their children who are struggling with anxiety.

