

25 April 2019

## **121 Intensive Family Work**

**We have worked intensively with 255 people within 67 families during the year.**

## **Outreach**

### **Trips**

We ran 2 trips over the Summer of 2018 and **50 families (204 individuals) were able to spend a day out of Cambridge and spend quality time together as a family.**

### **Workshops & Courses**

**61 families benefited from attending a workshop or course**

- Raising Children – July-August 18 (8 sessions)
- Good Budgeting Skills – October 18 (1)
- Building resilience – October 18 (2)
- Cooking on a budget – October-December – 18 (6)
- Sibling Rivalry – November 18 (1)
- Relaxation Techniques - January-February 19 (6)
- Raising Children – January-March 19 (8)
- Eat Well Spend Less – March-April 19 (6)
- Making Mealtimes Fun – (1)

### **Other outreach activities**

We have worked with a total of **281 families** through our outreach programme.

- **Drop in/Coffee morning** ran every morning term time and over the year we welcomed more than **22 new families** to that session
- **FareShare food distribution** took place every Friday during term time, and we added **14 new families** to those we regularly support
- During December 19 we held **a Christmas party for 13 families**, collaborated with the City Foodbank to distribute **Christmas hampers to 23 families** most in need and ran our own appeal in order to provide **Christmas presents for 31 families** in the most challenging situations.
- He held a **special event** as part of a fundraising magic show benefited **13 families**.

## Early Intervention

Early intervention is at the core of our work. Our view is that getting children actively engaged in education gives them the best chance in life. School is often the place where pressures at home can first surface, and as a result we have an opportunity to take actions early on to help families address issues and get support with their challenges.

## Family Life and stronger relationships

Family life is all about relationships - both within the family and with others that provide peer support to both the individuals, and the complete family unit. Our work often focuses on building, or repairing, a relationship with the child and/or parents have with their school. In addition, this year we have focused on helping our families build peer support networks in order to promote resilience. We are careful that this happens in a natural way as we have found these are more likely to last. Our trips, courses and workshops are of value for this particularly.

## Building on people's strengths

Our case work is built on a strengths-based approach. We build confidence and self-esteem through focusing on what's going well.

## Developing and delivering our activities

We have an active trustee group which includes teachers, heads and inclusion SENCO leads, along with members of the local community which include parents we have worked with in the past.

Alongside this formal body we develop relationships with the families we work with and through our outreach work (coffee morning/drop-ins, workshops, trips etc) they actively feed into the work we undertake. That might be helping to decide what future workshops we run, where we go on trips, or what other organisations to work with,

## People benefiting from our project?

255 people have benefited directly through our case work, in their homes

281+ families have engaged with our outreach programmes including courses, trips, food distribution and

We have helped all those staff and children attending the 5 primary schools we work with through helping children better engage with education. This means staff are less stressed and other children benefit from less disruption.

## Volunteers

We have focused heavily on trying to develop our volunteering programme this year – especially amongst our beneficiaries. During the year the number of people registered with our Time Credit programme has risen from 2 to 16.

## The difference our project is making

Our project has worked inventively with nearly 70 local families this year. Primarily and initially this will have been to help with children engage with education but underlying this are a wide range of challenges we are helping families address.

We are making a difference in the lives of families in our communities by supporting them to address debt, fuel poverty, housing, benefits, domestic violence, mental health issues and more. We are encouraging and empowering them to develop peer support networks which in turn is making the community more resilient.

## Hear from some of the families we work with

Recently, local radio station Cambridge 105 visited our Monday morning drop-in and spoke to some of the families we work with. Listen to it here at <http://bit.ly/redhenfamilies> It's only a few minutes and gives you a great insight into the difference we make.

## Some case studies from people who have been involved in or benefitted from our work

### Katie's Story

Katie is a single parent with 3 children, 2 in primary school and one in nursery. Katie was struggling with depression, felt she had no control at home, couldn't take her children out because of their behaviour and couldn't get them into a bedtime routine so they were all sleep deprived. Katie felt that she would not be able to continue caring for her middle child and hoped his father would take him. Katie said "I felt crazy and my son was failing at school and I couldn't do anything about it, I couldn't even go to school for the meetings about his learning without crying and having panic attacks".

Working with the project Katie was able to get good bedtime routines in place, manage her children's behaviour better, was able to go to her GP and get appropriate support for her depression and then things started to improve. Katie can now attend the meetings in school about her child's learning on her own and she now gets her son to do his homework, which she couldn't before. Katie's mental health and confidence improved so much that she now has a job that she really enjoys and has discovered she is really good at. Katie felt so much better about herself and her family that she even gave up smoking.

Katie is now taking the children out by herself and even took them on a camping holiday which she is planning to do again as they all had a great time and she coped really well. They went to an art workshop and various other community activities, which was unheard of before working with the project.

Katie said "I have had great support from Red Hen and things have changed for the better and I feel stronger and more independent."

## Peter's Story

Peter had recently joined the school and his English was very limited. He was living with his grandparents in Lithuania for a while and his mother was able to arrange for him to join her in England. It was a big change for Peter at the age of 6 and he was missing his grandparents.

At school, Peter was finding very difficult to settle in, his behaviour was very challenging:

'Peter was refusing to do simple tasks, even when tasks were explained via an interpreter and with the help of visuals aids. He was also hurting children by hitting them and running away, which was unsafe.' Peter's Teacher Assistant.

Peter's mother, Kasia, told school that Peter cried at home for long periods of time, his behaviour was very tricky over meal times, and he was refusing to eat cooked meals. After Kasia spoken to the teacher, school was able to complete with Kasia a referral to The Red Hen Project.

Kasia explained that before The Red Hen Project involvement she felt very low: 'I had no hope, I felt alone and very frustrated. My son was struggling at school and I didn't know what to do, I felt helpless!'

The Red Hen Project worker was able to visit this family fortnightly. Together as a family they set house rules and put in place consequences if the rules were not followed. Peter was able to choose a daily reward so he was kept motivated. Peter loved a piece of cake or chocolate as a little treat, he also loved to get stickers on his reward chart. Kasia understood better Peter's needs and she became more confident managing his tantrums. Kasia is now making sure she spends special time with Peter every day: they play games and read together.

'She helped me a lot, she gave me great advice and helped me with housing difficulties. The housing issues were impacting on our well-being and Maria was able to help with the Home Link application. She listened to me, she valued me, and she cared about my family and our ongoing issues. She gave me hope. Maria was warm and kind and she made me feel good about myself again.' Kasia.

'Peter is now keen to learn and he is happier in school. Peter's mother feels more confident as a parent, she has put into practice the suggestions given by the Red Hen Project and this had good outcomes.' Peter's Teacher Assistant.

Kasia describes how life is like now: 'I feel very confident and happy with my life. I know that I can contact The Red Hen Project if I need advice and support. I made new friends, friends that I can trust. I have a better job and I am a good role model to my son.'

'I have been to a few school coffee mornings with the Red Hen Project and Peter and I enjoyed The Red Hen Trip to Wicksteed Park, we had a fantastic day out. I feel very grateful to the support I had when I needed it most!'

## Victor's Story

After a couple of incidents at school, Victor's mother Tanja was called in to school. Tanja told the head teacher that she did not know what to do! Tanja asked for help. Victor was displaying challenging behaviour at home. Victor was also losing the interest in his school work and he became withdrawn.

Tanja explained: 'Our family was very stressed and stuck! We couldn't communicate with our son. Victor wouldn't talk about his day at school, his problems and his feelings. School was also finding it difficult to help Victor because he wouldn't share with adults what was upsetting him and getting him angry.'

The Red Hen Project worker was able to deliver a set of 1:1 sessions with Victor at his school. In these sessions they explored what makes Victor angry and they discussed ways to think positively. Victor was able to come up with his own solutions and together they developed an action plan. Victor said that when he gets angry he needs to go to a quiet place to calm down, he explained that others can help by allowing him to have his space and time to calm down. Victor started to open up as the sessions went on and his behaviour improved at school and at home.

Victor became more confident and his doing well at school. His teacher is pleased with his positive attitude towards his learning.

At home they set weekly family meetings, where children and parents had the opportunity to discuss current issues, hear each other's points of view, and together, they come up with their own solutions.

'Our family worker helped me to communicate better with my son, in a calm manner and she helped me understanding Victor's needs better. She encouraged us to spend more time together as a family. 'Now we enjoy playing games together. Victor helps me with housework and he is more calm and understanding. I feel happy that Victor can regulate his emotions better, that he talks to me about his day and how things are going at school.'

After the Red Hen support this family's relationships improved, communication is much better and the trust in each other's abilities and strengths has grown. It is now a happier house, with less stress and more fun.

'Our future looks promising. We are working well together as a great team. Victor developed independent skills and he is better prepared for the challenges ahead because he can regulate his emotions better.'

'The Red Hen support is great, with good workers with a welcoming and friendly attitude. I would have liked to be supported by the Project for a longer period of time. Victor is now in year 6. He changed so much! His homework is now all done. What a change! Victor and his brother Oliver are getting on well and no longer hurting each other.

I need to tell the world! We don't get broken doors anymore! The Red Hen Project changed my family to a better one. I am very grateful for the help. All credit to our Red Hen Family Worker, Victor trusted her, and she was the one to break the wall. Now, Victor talks to me about his feelings and about his day at school.'