

Those In Need: Paul Donaghy

Bio

Name & Type: Paul Donaghy (SGO), Primary schools in County Durham

Location: Sedgefield

Impact Award Category: Those In Need

Term: Autumn

Summary of Activity

Due to the success of previous at-home lockdown activities and the continued closure of sport clubs and leisure centres meaning a lack of access to physical activity for children, Paul Donaghy launched an initiative to provide targeted pupils within schools to take home an equipment pack to stay physically active with a range of challenges and activities, some individual and some shared.

The activity was titled the HEART project - **H**elping **E**veryone **A**ctive **R**esearch **T**eam.

Schools in the top 20% deprivation levels across County Durham were targeted, with those schools engaged to secure their involvement Pupils were given two sets of 6 week 'missions' to test and create exciting challenges for themselves and their families All Key Stage 2 pupils were given a HEART bag, pen, water bottle, and equipment as well as a booklet (featuring images from children's previous activities) and a set of stickers.

Paul also added the element of 'It's Your Go' week, in which children created their own challenges using the equipment and sent them to other children.

Deprivation figures were provided by Public Health, and Paul worked closely with the local Active Partnership, County Durham Sport to identify the schools targeted.

Further partners included Durham County Council, Public Health Practitioner, Bishop Sport and Leisure, The Branded Company, and many more. These partners helped fund the 30 bags given to each participating school, while those schools targeted pupils most effected by the pandemic and those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.

Pupils were also encouraged to fill out feedback forms, and examples of activities were shared between schools.

Moving forward, Paul has planned for 12 HEART project festivals to take place during the academic year aimed at 15 targeted pupils per school.

In partnership with County Durham Sport and Active North East TV, the activity will be involved in Active 30 Filming to create short videos showcasing the activity.

Impact on Young People

In total, 11 schools took part in the 12-week programme and 915 pupils were targeted as a result.

Using the feedback forms across both sets of 6 weeks, Paul was able to mark a significant improvement in children's enjoyment and fitness over the course of the activity.

One child from Hartside Primary, said:

"I have enjoyed doing the activities with family members. This was a great experience I can't wait for the next book and to do some other fun and exciting activities"

Furthermore, over 94% of parents said their child was engaged by the bag of equipment, while 84% said it helped their child move more.

Deputy Head at Howden le Wear Primary School said:

"I just wanted to pass on how much my kids are enjoying the project. In my class, I've been setting it as homework on Seesaw every few weeks to ensure the kids fill the booklets in... The children seem to use the equipment for other stuff at home as well and then bring their bags into school when we do PE with it. They were over the moon seeing their photos and activities in the new booklet too which is great"

Key Learnings

Paul advises listening to the pupils to get their feedback and use their ideas in next stage of challenges. You'll be delighted at what ideas they can come up with given the opportunity!

Survey results will also help you get tangible parental feedback.

You should leave plenty of time to deliver the equipment, and make sure the school knows it is arriving to avoid any problems. Also, look out for funding applications and award grants to help you pay for it.

Collaborate - speak to local SGOs to gauge interest and identify keen staff in targeted schools. Take photos to inspire others about your work.

Finally, Paul recommends trying to take as much work away from primary staff as possible, but also make sure you collaborate with sports departments to help your workload too

How this could be replicated across the network

The network can take inspiration from how Paul's targeted work was lead by insights from previous successes and waning activity levels in schools, as well as his collaboration with a variety of local partners able to make the activity possible.

The use of pupil voice has been crucial here in engaging children and informing future activity, providing a brilliant example of how to engage children, parents, and schools.



Paul said: *"It feels fantastic to be recognised at a national level for the targeted work we are doing locally. We are really proud of the Heart Project and the difference it has made to those in need".*