

## **Stroud High GSL Society**

### **Who we are:**

When our teacher, Mrs Arstall originally offered the opportunity to partake in the formation of our school's Global Social Leaders Society, she received many applications from enthusiastic students across the school. Shortly after, she narrowed it down to 6 students; drawing on the talents of each year, who would attend the Future Foundations training day.

- Lucy Pritchard (16) – Leader
- Caitlin Jones (15) – Deputy
- Beth Dodd (14) – Outreach supervisor
- Amelie Mckenna (13) – Administrator
- Tegan Hackett-Holdford (12) – Tech support
- Zainab Abdurahnam (11) – Researcher



We were all strangers and it was a new experience for everyone. Throughout the training day we bonded and have learnt to utilise each other's strengths and skills in the hour we spend together every Thursday. We intended to launch our club the first week back after the Christmas holidays and spent the time we had prior to that advertising, planning and networking so that all would run smoothly once opened to all students.

Since launching ourselves as an official society within the school, we have had amazing dedication and commitment from the students, many of whom applied to join us on the training day. The day spent with Future Foundations member Owen helped to reignite our enthusiasm and reiterate the aims of the society to our newer members, who later spent the afternoon creatively planning more potential projects and ideas to benefit our current ones.

Thanks to the time spent together helping others, we have become a close and enthusiastic group of friends and a society we hope anyone would be excited to join.

### **Our aim:**

To build a relationship with our local community through project work to address issues facing a variety of vulnerable groups in our area.

### **Who would benefit:**

- As an all girls school, we had existing links with Stroud Women's Refuge, a charity for vulnerable women and children suffering domestic abuse that regularly struggles to continue to provide the amazing support and safety that it does due to issues with funding.
- Stroud is a town deeply involved in the refugee crisis and does lots of work to support the victims of it. We recognised the amazing work being done and wanted to assist and support them.
- Gloucestershire Young Carers is a local, hard working charity that provides endless support for some of the most vulnerable yet brave members of our community.

### **What we have achieved:**

- Initially, we reconnected with Stroud Women's Refuge and have worked on strengthening our link with them. They have provided us with many ways we could help out and we are currently following up the request for furniture to furnish their new set of flats. While organising a potential furniture donation

project, we also wanted to get creative and work on planning something of our own to help them. Due to confidentiality, this has been a complicated challenge; but one we are still working on and intend to accomplish.

- With the work of our amazing members, we have been able to not only contact, but form a strong relationship with many of the people providing support for the refugees in our area. We put forward many of our ideas to try to help them in their work and we received a lot of support for our project working on enrolling more refugees in the local college and offering better education to the refugee community. Since then, we have contacted the necessary governing organisation to arrange for advice and guidance on how to advance in our project and we are now working on building and maintaining contact with them.
- Our greatest contact has been with the Gloucestershire Young Carers charity, who we will be consulting with in person very soon due to a change in schedule cancelling our previous meeting. With a specific project for them yet to be decided, we began some fund-raising to enable us to take on larger projects and support our current ones. Our school cake sale has been delayed due to complications, but will go ahead soon and we hope it will also help to promote our society further.
- One of our members came up with the idea of a clothes collection within the school, which we promoted in our assemblies and received a lot of positive feedback. The boxes have since been collected and the 11 bags of clothes have been sent to Clothes Aid, a charity benefitting a variety of people and organisations.



### **Why we chose these projects:**

These organisations and people are all important members of our diverse community and communicating with them has helped and will continue to help us build up our relationships within the area and promote the sense of togetherness and well-being that our town thrives on. By choosing to focus on helping individual groups, we hope to show that everyone is a valued member of our town and to also remove the stigma that surrounds young people by building relationships, and through them showing that we are also part of the community and are willing to offer support and help.

### **What we have learnt:**

Each of us has gained different skills and knowledge through being a part of this society. All of us have benefitted from learning how to find common ground in a group of strangers and we now have a strong group of supportive friends to rely on. By communicating with such a diverse range of people, not only have we learnt more about our town and who resides in it, but also how to form relationships and build up connections through a variety of different mediums. Having learnt to better appreciate our comfortable circumstances and lives, many of us have matured greatly, especially due to being around older students. It has brought the school closer together as well, as the improved communication between years means each of us can lead by example and learn from the rest. With a new and very different kind of society now in place, it provides a neutral circumstance in which all kinds of students can meet, even if the only common interest is helping others. There is a greater sense of pride as we continue to meet with our community and we are content in the knowledge that we have great potential, and have many more exciting challenges and opportunities to come.

**The future of our society:** We hope that by creating this society, we have laid the foundations for many other girls to continue to develop this club and experience the benefits of it. We want it to remain a strong part of our school and allow girls to work together towards improving the lives of others. We intend to develop all of our existing projects and have lots of exciting new ideas for future projects which we hope to commence over time.