

L6th Welly Leaders Homestart Project:

Learning and Knowledge gain: We were all very excited for our “Easter Hamper Project” and saw this as an opportunity to not only actively connect with our local community, but also to grow as individuals. Reflecting on our project, our skills were challenged in many ways and in turn we were all able to learn and grow as leaders. Our organisational skills were challenged as we had to ensure our plan was feasible, manage communications with relevant members of our community and our partner charity and, organise collection and storage of donations. In addition, we had to learn to work as a team which was an integral skill to completing the project and ensuring its success. From the start to the end of the project we came together as a group and found each other’s strengths in order to most efficiently work together. We achieved amazing results whereby the leaders of the charity HomeStart were deeply thankful for our efforts. HomeStart came to our school to collect the baskets that we had prepared and kindly gave us more information on where the hampers were going to and shared details on the families that would receive our donations. We all really enjoyed our project as we were able to widen our horizons, helping members of our community who find themselves in very different situations to ourselves.

Impact on others & Community: Venice, one of our members, ran a half-marathon while we were in the process of organising the Easter Hamper project. She raised over £1,900 for families supported by our partner charity HomeStart. We were also able to raise awareness in our community on the issues that HomeStart tackles. Speaking to our peers and mentors we had an influence on our community by encouraging donations to support local families in need but also reminded our community how lucky we are for our opportunities and that we shouldn’t take them for granted. Secondly, by collecting donations for our Easter Hampers, including recycled toys, books and school supplies, we encouraged students to consider the importance of giving things a second life especially in the consumerist society we live in today. Moreover, through both meetings and more casual discussions we influenced others to actively engage in Global Citizenship beyond just donating money. An important initiative for us with regards to choosing what our project was to entail was giving those in our community not part of Welly Leaders a voice. For this reason, before finalising our project we spoke to students around school to see what was important to them and what were issues they wanted to tackle or support. After reviewing overwhelming feedback that inequality of opportunity was something many students wanted to see tackled, we were certain that HomeStart was the perfect charity to support in this endeavour.

Special Recognition: Our project would not have been possible without the generosity of our peers and teachers. We contacted the entire pupil body asking them to bring in goodies to put in the hampers. This included items such as biscuits, soft toys, school supplies, potted plants/ seeds. In addition, we involved teachers and certain student leaders in the project by asking for assistance in spreading the word; we organised for our campaign to be promoted in house assemblies and on an individual level through word of mouth. As a group we visited each boarding house to speak to matrons and propose our plans for collecting donations. Finally, our project would not have been started if we hadn't partnered with the incredible charity HomeStart. The members of the charity were kind enough to come to our school and collect the Easter hampers. They then distributed the packages to the families supported by the charity.

It was important for us to ensure that our project was sustainable. With the aim to minimise our carbon footprint and promote sustainable consumption, we asked for all non-edible donation items to be second hand. It was amazing to see so many people embracing our request: we received books and toys which we were happy to give a second life, sending them to new families. Moreover, we

ensured that the bags that we used to package the donations were made with recycled materials and could be reused by the charity next year.

The Process broken down:

Step 1- Coming up with the project:

We knew we wanted to come up with a project that predominantly focused mainly on helping those in the local community of Crowthorne and broadly speaking Wokingham. After brainstorming many ideas, based around the different global goals such as sustainability and poverty and inequality. One team member mentioned she had a personal experience working with a charity named Home- start.

Step 2:

We researched the charities work and goals, to see if it would be something we as a team would like to get behind and after much enthusiastic mutual agreement, we started to brainstorm ideas for how we could either do a fundraiser for the charity or actively take part in sourcing desperately needed materials, we ended up doing both.

Step 3:

After a lot of deliberation over multiple ideas, we decided as Easter was fast approaching to do something that incorporated it. This is where the Easter Hamper idea arose from.

Step 4:

So, after much organisation and many emails, we were ready to set the ground running on the project. Firstly, we emailed the whole school to explain our project and what they could do to help us, regarding donations. Then we placed boxes in each boarding house, they remained there for about 2 weeks. Furthermore, we made sure to email all the House masters/ mistress' and matrons to encourage the students to get involved as well as spreading the word ourselves. While we were collecting donations, we also wanted to raise funds for the Charity. So, one of our teammates took on the task of running the Wokingham half marathon which she ran brilliantly and ended up raising £1946.

Step 5:

After the 2 weeks was up, we went around all the boarding houses and collected the boxes which were bursting full of goodies. On the same day, we created the Easter hampers, placing the snacks, books, toys, colouring pens, sunflower seeds and so much more into the bags.

Step 6:

The final step of the project, a member of the charity came to pick up the Easter hampers. We got to meet and chat to her and learn more about the specificity of where our hampers would be going and the families they would be helping on Easter.

Conclusion:

To conclude, as a team we learnt the importance of how making one little difference can brighten up someone's day.

