

Events and Campaigns



It has been an exciting time for The Rock Trust events team, with plenty going on. Saturday 22nd August saw our annual Kilt Walk event, and once again Edinburgh's Princes Street Gardens was flooded with tartan clad walkers. The sun came out for the day, and supporters were treated to performances from Clanadonia, Cantara, Commotion Women's Drummers and the Edinburgh Postal Pipe Band. Lone piper Cameron McKay led the 5km walk around the castle ramparts.

The warm up ceilidh had some very special guests in attendance, with Edinburgh Ruby's Nick De Luca and Phil Godman joining The Lady Boys of Bangkok for a pre walk highland fling. The Rock Trust would like to say a massive thank you to all those who performed, took part in and came along to watch the event, with particular thanks going to comedienne Susan Morrison and Mike Stevenson from Design Links who rallied the troops throughout the day with their lively and impassioned compering.



Having hung our kilts up for another year we're now digging out our sleeping bags for the annual Sleep Out event, taking place on the night of Friday 27th November at St Andrew's and St George's Church in Edinburgh. Last year's Sleep Out saw over 150 people brave the cold and spend a night under the stars to raise much needed funds for The Rock Trust.

We are hoping to make this year bigger and better than ever, and are asking all our supporters to spread the word. For those of you who prefer to stay warm but still want to be involved we will also be running our 'Sleep In' - meaning you can support our work from the comfort of your own home. Please feel free to copy and display the poster sent with this newsletter and spread the word about the Sleep Out event.

So that's another Scottish summer drawing to an end and Christmas is just round the corner. This year why not give a gift that lasts all year and helps some of the most vulnerable young people in Edinburgh and the Lothians? The Rock Trust's Ethical Gift Campaign has had a redesign, with the launch of two new packs. Last year we were overwhelmed by the generosity of our supports, and we've had enough packages to last the whole year.



This is an excellent way to give practical help to young people who need it most, through the festive period and the year which follows. Please find an Ethical Gifts ordering form with this newsletter. We would be grateful if you could circulate it amongst your friends and family.

For information on events or to register please see our website www.rocktrust.org or contact Becky Duff T:0131 524 9874 Email: becky.duff@rocktrust.org

Good Luck Ella!

Finally, from all the staff and young people here at The Rock Trust we'd like to bid Good Bye and Good Luck to Ella Simpson, our former Chief Executive. We wish Ella all the best in her new position at EVOC.

From October Kate Polson (formally of Streetwork) will be taking up the role of Chief Executive. We are all very excited about working with Kate, and look forward to the innovative new ideas she'll bring. Welcome to the team Kate!

Step Up Review

The first 10 week Step Up programme has now come to an end, and we thought you'd love to hear how Sarah and the volunteers have been getting on. The group focused on conservation and gardening in the community and volunteered at ten different community sites including Water of Leith Conservation Centre, Edinburgh Community Back Green Association and Cyrenians Farm.



The group completed over 50 hours of work over the ten week programme and learnt many new skills in the process. As well as these community based activities the volunteers also took part in a training and skills development programme here at The Rock Trust. These were very important in terms of being prepared for working in the community and building up the skills to get ready for work.

Throughout the first Step Up programme young people were encouraged to feed back on their experiences, and to make suggestions for the development of the project. Some of those involved wanted to stay on in the next programme and act as mentors for new Step Up participants. This idea has been followed up and next time around there will be will four peer volunteers acting as mentors. This is an excellent opportunity for the young people to support each other in developing new skills and participating in community based activities.

The peer mentors will also have a direct part in organising and planning future outings. They will also be responsible for liaising with other groups and partner organisations to develop the volunteering work that Step Up does. Both the peer volunteers and mentors will be role models to other young people using the Trusts services, helping to inspire further interest in Step Up.



As well as the community group work the Step Up project also focuses on the long term personal development of those who attend. Through the project young people have been given the opportunity to pursue an individual placement of their choice. With Sarah's support three young people have successfully been volunteering in the community out with the project. Two of these placements are with local horse riding stables and one young person is volunteering at the local hospital in a general ward, and will be starting their nurse training at University next year.

These volunteer experiences have given the young people the experience, confidence and skills needed for them to pursue a career in their chosen vocation or for moving on into further education. The placements also offer the young people an opportunity to experience a structured routine which gives them real practice for future employment, training or further education.

The next Step Up 10 week block has recently started and we look forward to hearing all about the new challenges and experiences that Sarah and the group have.

End of Services

Unfortunately it's not all good news here at The Rock Trust. Due to lack of funding our Active Futures Project and Social Networks West Lothian have sadly come to an end. This reflects the difficulties faced by charities during the recession and now more than ever we are relying heavily on the generosity of our sponsors to keep our much needed services running.

Participation Group

The Rock Trust Participation Group was formed last year with the purpose of involving young people in the decisions that are made about their services. Here, a member of the group gives an account of her experiences so far;

"The participation group has been running for a little under a year and so far has been very successful. The group gives young people the chance to be actively involved in how their service is run, and gives them a feeling of self-worth.

In the short time we have been running we have achieved many things. We have met leading officers from Supporting People and the Care Commission, we have given them our views and discussed with them about the way they review. This is an ongoing piece of work. The Social Networks group have made two fantastic films, with all the work being done by the young people.

Recently we have been more involved in the consultation process and recruitment. We'd possibly like to change the way the consultation process is carried out and ask the young people questions that really matter.

Being young people ourselves we think we know who will make good Project Workers, Supportive Flatmates and even Chief Executives. We have been involved in the recruitment of these posts and came up with our own questions and a scoring system. This process has worked so well that it's likely to become a permanent fixture in the recruitment process within The Rock Trust.

We work alongside other groups and get lots of great ideas and feedback from this. We also get to experience first hand how hard it is to raise awareness of homelessness, and the much needed funds to run The Rock Trust services. We tried our hand at fundraising at this year's Kilt Walk event – which was a great success. We hope to be involved in lots more aspects of fundraising in the future.



It's also a great achievement for us to get this space in the Rock Report to share with people our successes and challenges, and hopefully get your support. We are looking forward to telling you more about our work in the months ahead.

Our biggest achievement so far has been working with the Board, to plan together for the future health of the organisation.

Looking forward we hope to set up quarterly meetings, a drop in and our own website so we can get as much feedback and suggestions from all the Rock Trust young people as possible. We are always looking for more young people to come and join our group; every member is valued and brings skills.

As a group and individually we get a lot out of giving something back and the experience has given us a lot of confidence and a strong sense of self-worth."

My Rock Trust Experience-Young Person's Testimonial

One young person recently received a Kick Start grant meaning that he could have his furniture moved when he changed tenancies;

"This grant has helped immensely, it helped me move into fresh accommodation and move on in a positive way. If I hadn't got this grant I would have lost my furnishings & white goods."

The Rock Trust established its Kick Start grant scheme 2 years ago to help ease the financial strain faced by young people as they establish themselves in their own home. It is supported by individuals and funding bodies who are kind enough to make donations into the fund.

BlackRock Challenge Day

There are lots of ways to support The Rock Trust, and we are always looking for volunteers who are willing to give their time and expertise. So when BlackRock approached us a few months ago to offer two teams of volunteers for a challenge day we jumped at the chance.



The first group from BlackRock set to work in the Underground, giving the back room a much needed spruce up. The young people had chosen the colour and the BlackRock team set to work getting the place looking fresh and new.

Robbin, one of the BlackRock Volunteers said, "the team had a great day painting, and wish the young people all the best in the future!"

For the second challenge day we contacted a young person who had just taken up a tenancy that was in need of decoration. Supported by a member of The Rock Trust supported accommodation team, the tenant worked alongside the BlackRock volunteers and got stuck into the task at hand. By the end of the day they had redecorated two rooms, giving the flat a fresh and welcoming feel.

By offering their services the BlackRock volunteers assisted a young person in making their new flat feel like a home. The young person said, "I am very happy with the result, the BlackRock team were very friendly and worked really hard to get the job done".

Everyone involved had a fantastic day and we look forward to working with the BlackRock team again in the future to make a positive difference to the lives of the young people we support. From all at The Rock Trust we'd like to say a big Thank You to The BlackRock teams who came along with such enthusiasm and gave their time.

My Rock Trust Experience-Young Person's Testimonial

"I've been receiving support from The Rock Trust for a year now and I can honestly say I don't know where I would be without that support. I initially was living in a single flat but due to problems with other residents in the area I didn't feel safe.

When I approached my key worker with these problems I was listened to and respected. The problem was dealt with very quickly and I moved into a shared flat.

I have recently moved into my own flat and am still receiving support. I have been introduced to other projects that I have gotten a lot out of. This would never have happened without The Rock Trust.

I am involved with various groups within The Rock Trust and I have gained a lot of self confidence. I'm in a totally different place compared to a year ago and the support I have received from my key worker at The Rock Trust has played a huge part in that."