

Sleepout 2011

Yes its that time of year again, when we start to make encouraging noises to you to come and join us in our annual Sleepout fundraising event. It being our 20th year, we wish to make this years event the biggest and best one so far.



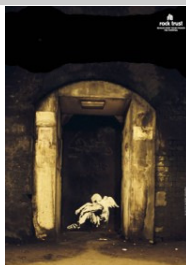
As usual, it will be held on the last Friday night in November, which this year is the 25th. St Andrew's and St George's West have been good enough to lend us their outside areas along with full use of their Undercroft café, from which we will be serving hot drinks all night as well as sending all participants away with a hot filled roll in the morning.

This year we have some fantastic prizes to pass on to the best fundraisers, including an Ipod, Harvey Nichols food

hamper, vouchers for Valvona and Crolla and many more.

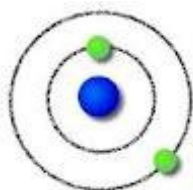
If you can't join us on the 25th in person, you can still support us by registering to 'sleep-in'. By making a small financial offering, you can sleep in your own bed for the night whilst still lending your support to us!

To register please call 0131 557 4059 or visit our website at www.rocktrust.org or use the sheet that accompanies this newsletter. Your support really will make a difference, so whether you choose to sleep-out or sleep-in, please do register today!



The Changing Face of Supported Housing

In our 20th year, we are in the process of changing some of our supported housing provision and introducing a 'core and cluster model' to our Edinburgh Bedrock service. This is a community based support model where a number of residential flats are supported by a central 'hub'. The hub is also a flat but one not used for residential purposes. Rather, it acts as a base for support, both in the evening and at night. It's a place where staff can deliver group work support sessions to those young people living close by (e.g. cooking classes, employability skills etc). A flat represents a nicer environment to undertake this work in and for certain tasks (e.g. cooking and preparing meals) it is much better suited than an office. Having the hub also means that if a young person is at their flat and needs some impromptu support, a worker will never be too far away.



This model will compliment the other supported housing models that we have, from shared accommodation through to single, and parent and child accommodation. It will give our young people a greater level of choice and will provide them with a more responsive and flexible support service. Its been a development that has been on the drawing board for some time so we are delighted to be making meaningful headway towards it now.

Young People Get Volunteering Boost

We are delighted to tell you that our new volunteering project is now up and running. The Rock Trust is leading a partnership made up of The National Trust for Scotland, The Water of Leith Conservation Trust, Fresh Start and West Lothian Council, to help build their capacity to place young people in volunteering roles within their organisations.



The goal is to provide up to 40 volunteer placements to young homeless people across the Lothians over the year. Placements include electrical safety testing of recycled electrical items, customer service, administration, conservation leadership and management, as well as

marketing and training.

We are also assisting West Lothian Council to develop a Nightstop service to provide respite accommodation to young homeless people. The first group of young people are now coming through and are being matched to suitable volunteer roles within the partner agencies. One young person, Liam, 24, from Edinburgh, is going to be working with the team at Fresh Start, to undertake the electrical safety inspection work. "Electrical testing is something I thought would be really useful



for the sort of employment I am interested in. I'm feeling quite confident about it; I've been out of work since my daughter was born, so I'm really looking forward to getting back to doing something. I can't wait to gain new experiences and new skills. "



With so few employment opportunities available just now its important that we work as hard as we can to make sure that our young people keep engaged and have something to look forward to. Volunteering is an important piece of the jigsaw and offers fantastic opportunities for young people to keep active and gain the skills and confidence that will help them compete for the jobs that are there at the moment. We look forward to bringing you more news on Liam and the other volunteers in future newsletters.



10 Years Underground!

This summer marked an important milestone in the history of our Underground Project, as it reached the grand old age of 10. We took the chance to celebrate the occasion with an open day party, which was well attended by young people and supporters, both past and present.

The Underground has assisted many hundreds of young people over the years, through drop-in's, 1:1 sessions and



Compass To The Rescue

In our last newsletter, we told you about our new Compass Project, which unites existing strands of our work whilst also blending in new themes with an employability focus to them.

The project has just kicked off and one of its early pieces of work involved leading a group of young people on a residential trip to the Loch Lomond area. The purpose of the trip was to conserve the path leading to the top of Ben Lomond. This important work involved the building up of overused paths with stones, soil and turf as well as the narrowing of paths that had become too wide (causing unnecessary erosion and damage to the flora and fauna).

The work was completed in two days and was a great boost to the hosting organisation, whose rangers would normally have taken nearly two weeks to complete the same task. All involved had a fantastic experience and were rewarded with a days canoeing on the great Loch before turning homewards. Speaking after the trip, one of the group members commented 'It was good hard work, and I just loved being out in the countryside'.

As the project gets into its stride, we hope to offer our young people many more experiences like this. More news to follow!



Made Up With Our Makeovers!

Over the course of the summer months we have been blessed with some fantastic support from a number of companies who have been kind enough to lend some staff as volunteers for a day, to decorate flats and tidy up gardens.

In many instances our young tenants have rolled up their sleeves and helped out too! This not only helped them to develop new skills, but also spend a day in the company of good positive role models who could talk about their life and work experiences. Of course, in each occasion, the young person also benefited from ending the day with a much improved living environment.

Such a simple exercise can have a profound impact on our young people. Giving them the chance to take control and to change and influence their surroundings is a sensation that is new to many. A good home environment is also likely to help promote positive mental health.

Adam, a young tenant speaking about his experience said "I'd like to say thanks to the volunteers for all their help and hard work. The people that took part were great, very friendly. They really helped me with my new start".

We would like to thank the staff of Black Rock and The Royal Bank of Scotland for their generous support.



Community Building

Who ever said that managing supported tenancies in the community is an easy job?

It's a question we often reflect on as we endeavour to support our young people to manage the transition to independence within our community. The Trust has been involved in this important work for its entire 20 years existence. It's work that has involved many highs, but also on occasion, a few lows.

On the positive side we have assisted many hundreds of young people to forge lasting routes out of homelessness. Young people who are now adults, contributing to and adding value to the society that they (and we) live in.

The work does however come with risks. No amount of prior assessment or lead up work will guarantee a successful placement and there are times when despite our best efforts some supported tenancies do not work out. Perhaps the young person is not ready for it or negative pressures from others conspire against them. In any case progression is about learning, and often the best learning comes from mistakes made. Of course, when things don't work out there can be implications for neighbours and the surrounding community, who at times have to unfairly endure the brunt of antisocial behaviour and the like.

In such instances its an understandable reaction to look to point the finger of blame – perhaps the individual was let down by the supporting organisation(s) and didn't get the assistance that they needed, or perhaps they should never have been given the opportunity in the first place. The truth of course is always a little more mundane, despite the best efforts of all involved things simply did not work out.

Here at the Trust we know that the majority of the young people that we support go on to make the best of the opportunities provided to them. We also know that vulnerable young people stand a far better chance where services like the ones provided by the Trust exist. Our challenge therefore is to keep going, to keep doing what we can and to the best of our abilities. Therein lies the hope for the future that our young people seek.

Something's Cooking in The Kitchen

The Underground has just completed a project based around cooking skills, healthy eating and getting the best out of a limited budget. The program lasted for 10 weeks and was well attended by young people with an appetite for learning. Over the course of the programme the group took full responsibility for planning meals, hunting down the best deals in local food shops and bringing the ingredients back to put together in a range of very tasty dishes.

All group members took a great deal from the experiences and have gained numerous practical skills along the way.

