

## Legacy

There's nothing more thrilling to us than the legacy of what The Bridge is. Over the past 20+ years thousands of young people will have been impacted by the work we do, and countless volunteers have given their time. You'll have seen from the statistics that we spent time with 400 young people just this last year.

As you'd imagine, most young people come and go, and in their lives we simply play the part of a helpful friend, a caring adult or as support in a crisis. For others, we're a lifeline, a punching bag when things are going very wrong, and a place that many call a second home.

In this last year we received two notes that show you a glimpse of what it is to be impacted by, and a part of The Bridge family. It wouldn't be appropriate to name these people, but they, and so many other people are very dear to us and represent a significant local work.

A young person wrote:

*"Thank you so much for helping me out I really appreciate being able to chat with someone without feeling paranoid of sounding like a loon. I wouldn't want to be any where near me after what I was like and I am sorry for that.*

*Maybe one day I'll actually sort myself out and I'll have people like you to thank for it."*

A volunteer wrote:

*"I would like to take this opportunity to thank you both for allowing me to be part of such a wonderful thing. I have had an amazing two and a half years at The Bridge and I can't express in words the value of this experience and how much it has contributed to and improved my life.*

*I would also like to thank you both for everything that you have taught me over the years. I have learnt a great deal from you both and have been truly humbled by your love and generosity. I wish you both continued success with The Bridge and thank you from the bottom of my heart for what you do for this community."*

## A big thank you!

As an independent charity, The Bridge Youth Centre relies exclusively upon grants, individual local supporters and local supporting business partners who join with us in our work to help young people become Secure, Successful, Proactive & Independent. We'd like to extend our thanks to a number of generous individuals, and to Stinky Ink, Libra Systems, Lowe & Fletcher and Bridgnorth Town Council for their continued support. Also to Tesco, Coop, Telford Junior Youth Football League, Shropshire Towns & Rural Housing Community Chest, St Mary's Church Shop in Highley for contributions towards the work of The Bridge over the past year.

Finally, we'd like to thank our wonderful volunteers and staff for everything they give in time to The Bridge and the young people. Without you we'd not be able to make any impact at all.

# THE BRIDGE YOUTH CENTRE

## 2017 REPORT





## The Bridge Youth Centre

The aim of The Bridge is to help young people become Secure, Successful, Proactive & Independent. We seek to achieve this by providing a high quality, safe centre to work from, a professional team of youth working staff, adult volunteers, and a group of young volunteers who participate in a local programme.

As a completely local charity we're in a unique position to make an impact on the youth culture of our town. Our staff, volunteers and all of the resources we use are local, as is our funding. We rely on the generosity of local people and businesses to carry on providing great opportunities for young people. Our activities for young people include:

tuesday@thebridge: 6:30pm - 8:00pm: Year 6 - 8  
friday@thebridge: 7:30pm - 9:30pm: Year 9 - 12  
Young Volunteers Programme | Trips | Camps & Events

Our sessions include the full use of our two story facility which has a café, a disco venue, a computer suite, an activity garden, and a pool table room. Depending on the session aim on any given week, we're able to provide catering and cooking workshops, a crafts programme, indoor and limited outdoor sport, as well as board games and consoles.

## 2017 Projects

Over the past year young people have been engaged in a number of projects in The Bridge. One mainstay of our programme is Young Volunteering, and in 2017 16 young people took a lead in various different areas of The Bridge. In the early part of the year, 10 of our youngest, learnt film making skills and produced a short film on the issue of bullying. The young people produced the art work, filmed and edited the entire project before presenting it to their peers in a special evening event.

As a small local charity, finance is always a key focus. This sometimes means that paying the bills comes before buying new resources. In 2016 young volunteers launched a project that put some of the responsibility on them. They called it 'What R U Doing?'. In 2016 they raised enough money for a large air hockey table and in 2017 they raised £380 which we spent on a new up to date games console and games for them. This was mostly raised through events centred around sports, computer gaming and cake baking. In 2018 they'll be planning new fund raising initiatives including putting a team in to the Bridgnorth Walk.

## Summer Nights

One of the biggest issues we face at The Bridge is remaining relevant to young people who don't yet know us. One of the best ways to tackle this is to find new a creative ways to meet young people on their turf in the local community.

With the help of Star Housing and a generous donation from a local person, we were able to provide exceptionally high quality activities that the young people may not have done before, as well as food, on five key nights through the summer holidays.

True to our aims, when we run a large project like this we are always targeting deeper local issues like antisocial behaviour, drug use and young people consuming alcohol.

Throughout the summer we kept the Crown Meadow clean and safe on the evenings we were there. We engaged with 120 young people aged 10 - 21. We had four adult volunteers from the local community. We served 208 people food, and we diverted attention away from all sorts of antisocial behaviour.

One local resident came to the park to talk to us on the final night. She said:

'I had to come out to see what was happening. There has been such a happy noise throughout the summer this year. Generally all I hear is negative and annoying sounds from the skatepark, but this has been so great.'



## 2017 Statistics

- 122** Individual young people attended The Bridge in 2017
- 120** individual young people were met in Summer Night's Programme
- 160** young people met in the Autumn Outreach Programme
- Team members gave out **48** bottles of water and Brioche to young people out late at the Christmas Lights switch on event, to combat drunken behaviour
- 16** young volunteers gave time in Bridge sessions in 2017
- 3** young volunteers transitioned to adult volunteering in The Bridge
- 10** young people were taught filming making in spring sessions
- The Bridge received **Silver award status** which symbolises that we provide a safe, well considered, high quality programme for young people.
- 3 weeks of the National Citizen Programme** hosted in The Bridge for local young people.

The Bridge team also took young people to a number of off site activities as well as partnering with other local groups to provide an Autumn Main Event and a trip to West Midlands Spree.