

Kindercare Transition to Independent Living Group complete their John Muir Discovery Award

This group was selected from children in the “transition to independent living” scheme run by Kindercare. These children are preparing to leave care by building their skills and confidence. All of the children are fostered in the local area but none had visited the campsite or Hutchinson’s Bank area. Their John Muir Discovery Award took place in half term as an intensive four day programme.

Objectives

The focus for this experience was for the individuals to form a group and work together in a wild place. Through completing a variety of activities they would discover, explore, share and conserve the wild place while developing their personal learning and thinking skills. Most of all the idea was to have fun and enjoy being outside.



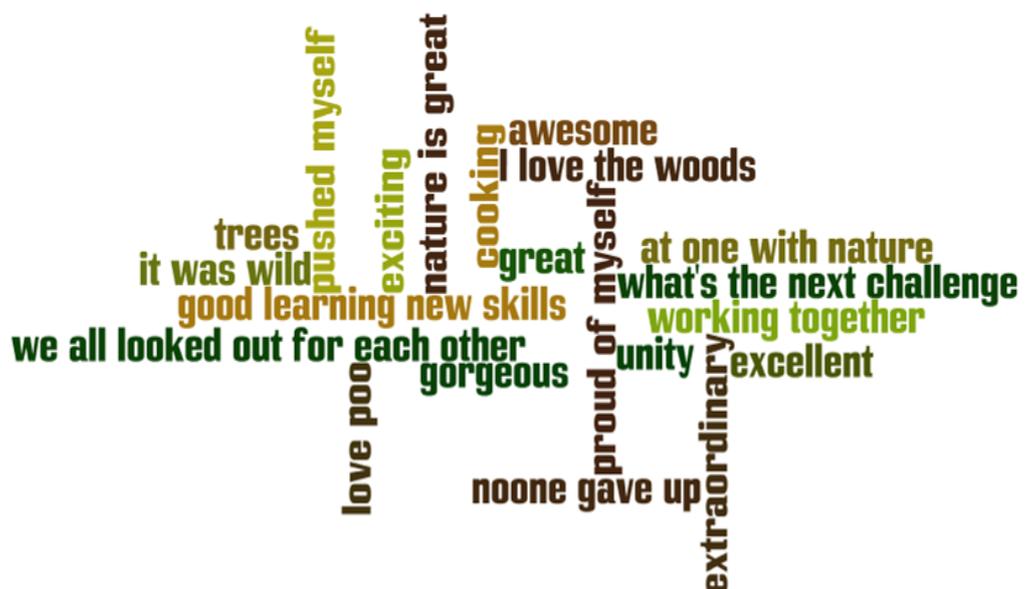
“John [Muir] was very inspired in animals, plants and people which are connected to each other and their environment”



“It is hard being a teenager, there are so many pressures people put on you or you put on yourself because you want to fit in. Being at bushcraft has made me realise that you can be who you are. Here you can just be yourself”



*Looking at poo
Is fun to do
Who knew?
The Poo Poem*



Activities

The group covered a wide range of bushcraft skills including fire craft, knife skills, tracking & observation, cooking on a fire, bow making and archery. This enabled the group to learn more about their surroundings by understanding the habits of creatures, the properties of woodland trees and the impact of fire on the landscape. They learnt about different habitats and the management of our countryside and finished by taking part in chalk grassland restoration with the London Wildlife Trust team. Each day the group shared their idea and observations by writing in their books, drawing pictures, composing poems, taking photographs and collecting interesting items to show others.

→ → → → → → → → →
 Trails in the Snow
 ☉ ☉ ☉ ☉ ☉ ☉ ☉
 Footfalls in the snow
 Tracing where wild creatures go
 Deep slots, two by twos
 Roe deer with double dewes
 Perfect prints with long, thin claws
 Indicate a badger's paws
 Follow 'arrows', perfect, straight
 Show the pheasant's hasty gait.
 Double back print, two small fore
 Track a squirrel's bounding paw.
 Pads and toes, where cross dissects
 A fox, its habitat protects
 Looking closely, as animals hide,
 Secrets of the woods, opening wide.



"This whole experience will be one I know I won't forget. 4 days of being in the wilderness has taught me so much. Some I enjoyed and some of it I didn't but I tried everything once and I don't normally go outside"



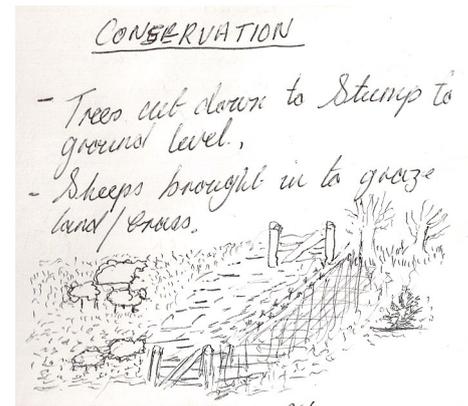
Out in the woods, toes are frozen
 Animal tracks, there were more than a dozen
 You could hear the sheep bleat, from the other side
 Walk this way or that, we would have to decide
 Deer tracks, fox prints and rabbit droppings
 You can even see where the squirrels were hopping.

"I don't think I have smiled and laughed as much as I have this week - I feel great!"

So what is the next step...

Many of the members of this group expressed an interest in spending more time outdoors and some even went as far as planning careers in the environmental industry such as landscape gardening and tree surgery. They found it very useful to hear real life stories from all of the adults and it was a pleasure to see such keen interest.

"Can't wait for tomorrow"



Conserving Hutchinson's Bank with LWT



"This course has been superb—I've enjoyed every minute of it and learned so much. Hannah has been an excellent instructor, making everything so interesting and managing the group so well, without being overbearing. The activities were challenging but achievable at each participant's level. The young people have had an experience they will never forget. They have been right out of their comfort zone at times but have been supported and encouraged to stretch themselves—and many achieved beyond what they would have expected of themselves. The team of volunteers were really helpful and treated the young people with respect and humour. Altogether, we are extremely grateful to the Trust for allowing us to participate in the Award. For some of us, it may be a life-changing experience but for all of us it has been extremely worthwhile. Thank you" - Sue, Kindercare Fostering



Working in partnership

Achieving goals

DISCOVER	EXPLORE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural Habitats Identify animal prints and poo Names and properties of woodland trees Practising observation skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A variety of woodland areas Walking, listening, observing Looking for evidence of animal homes Enjoying the peace and quiet
CONSERVE	SHARE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restoring ancient chalk grassland "Leave no trace" ethos Picking up litter Careful selection of materials for woodland crafts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drawings, photographs, poems Enjoying the company of others Helping partner to use tools safely Knowledge through discussions Cooking food for each other