

## Glasgow Families Working in Partnership

Ten families in the east end of Glasgow completed their family John Muir Award as part of Golfhill Primary School's Families in Partnership Programme, funded by Glasgow City Council. The programme aims to support and encourage families to work collaboratively to foster family values of cooperation, respect and patience, whilst developing strong relationships between teachers and parents. Using the John Muir Award helped raise the families' awareness of the value of their local wild spaces, and equipped each family with the confidence to enjoy and look after them.



### Getting to know wild places

A variety of wild places were chosen in the schools grounds and further afield in Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park. They took part in lots of activities to encourage a greater connection with the natural environment. These included a senses walk through the Magic forest, drawing in the wild garden, and exploring micro environments in the playground (using [Mission:Explore John Muir](#)). They found out about John Muir and how he loved the outdoors and tried to look after it.



The families were also inspired by environmental artist Andy Goldsworthy, to create some artwork with things they found in their wild places. Towards the end of their Award the families went for a four day residential trip to Ardentinn Outdoor Education Centre in Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park. Here they experienced the Park through adventurous activities including gorge walking, beach exploration, ropes courses and night walks. One pupil said that her favourite part was *"exploring night time in the wild"*.

To put something back to their wild places, each family worked co-operatively to make feeders to help and attract birds throughout winter in the school grounds. They also planted flowers and bulbs to encourage more butterflies, bees and other insects in spring time.

They showed respect for wild places by regularly cleaning up litter and considered how best to minimise their own impact whilst enjoying the outdoors.

**"We were careful to walk on paths, we made sure we put our rubbish in the bin ... and kept the place clear."** Participant

The families worked collaboratively to share what they had done. They drew pictures, took photos and contributed to a 'Big Book' to showcase all their work. The book includes stories, photos and art allowing everyone to contribute, including those who were less confident interacting in English. They also talked about their experiences within their families as well as with the others participating. Some shared more widely, with family members out with the programme, or with their class and friends.

### **Building relationships with people and places**

Feedback from families showed that they had great fun working together as well as spending time outside. They liked getting to know the different wild areas and seeing how they changed over the weeks from Autumn to Winter. They enjoyed being able to sit, listen and watch in each area.

Many of the families were inspired to find out more about biodiversity and plants at home and in their local area. One family wanted to encourage birds into their own garden, so they built an extra bird feeder to take home. Others said they felt more confident and capable to explore other wild places in their local area.

Teachers reported that pupils benefitted in terms of their confidence and communication. Pupils who were quiet to start with, began to interact with other children by the end of the programme. Parents commented that they enjoyed being able to take more time to be with their children without interruptions. They said that they felt a greater connection to the school and the wild places and that they wished to keep visiting and to look after their natural environment in the future. Some felt more able to get involved and help out with the school where they hadn't before.



**"We didn't know there were so many exciting wild places in our own schools area."** Parent

### **Strengthening school programmes**

The school too has recognised the benefits of using the John Muir Award as part of the Families in Partnership programme:

**"The Award fit really well into our programme, and allowed us to cover the main themes of patience, cooperation and respect in a much more natural and effective way than we had in the past. The framework was clear but flexible, and allowed for the development of our own interests as our confidence increased. It has also helped us to develop the wild places in our school grounds, whilst developing and strengthening relationships with parents and the local community."** Lorrain Dougan, Head of Primary Education, Golfhill Primary

The school plan to continue to use the John Muir Award to structure the Families in Partnership programme, as well as increasing the time, ownership and activities involved to work towards an Explorer Award in the future.