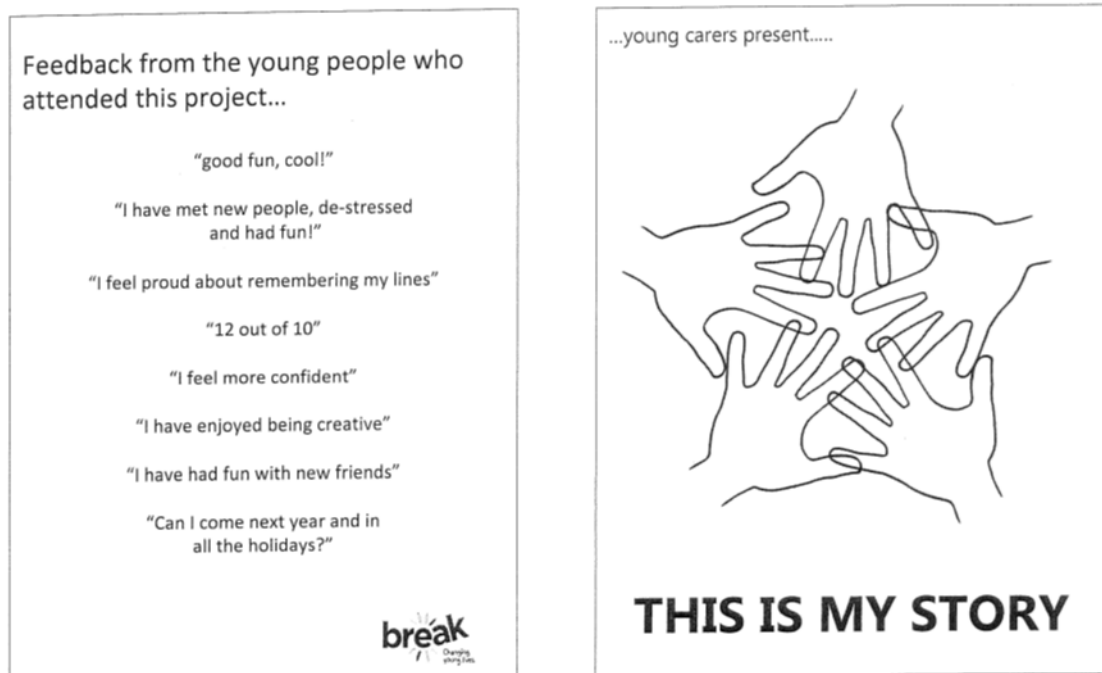


In June 2017 Break were fortunate to receive funding from Mark Masons for work with young carers across Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire.

We put together a plan of service delivery as follows

- 3 young carers groups in schools
- Dramatherapy workshops in Cambridgeshire and Norfolk
- Mentors for young people
- Individual therapy for a small number of young people
- Sibling group for siblings of young people with disabilities.

### Young Carers Summer Drama Project 'This is my story'



### Evaluation report

'This is my story' ran over 2 days in Ely, Cambridge working with Centre 33. 11 young people aged 9-15 participated. There was a short performance to which friends and family were invited to attend.

In Norfolk (Great Yarmouth and Norwich) 8 young people aged 10-14 participated over a period of 6 days (3 in each location) with a final performance day at Norwich Puppet Theatre, again with an

invited audience. There were a number of young people who originally committed to attend but were unable to.

The project provided an opportunity for young carers to explore and share their experiences in a creative and playful way. It supported them to find their voice and also celebrated their resilience and the role they play in supporting their family. Attendance at performances was high suggesting that the young people and their families were invested in the project.

Having been fortunate enough to receive funding this year, we aim to make the project an annual event and seek funding to ensure this happens. This would allow us longer to publicise the project and increase the number of young people who would benefit.

#### Feedback from the young people who attended this project...

“good fun, cool!”

“In primary school I couldn’t perform due to bad nerves. Here, I managed to perform and stay calm. I have met new people, de-stressed and had fun!”

“I feel proud about remembering my lines”

“12 out of 10”

“I feel more confident”

“I have enjoyed being creative”

“I was pleased I managed to perform because in school I get too nervous.”

‘the two days were really good, I enjoyed it. I would not have changed anything about it’

‘my favourite part was acting and meeting new people.’

‘it was REALLY good.’

‘my favourite part was making new friends.’

“I liked meeting new people. I enjoyed both days.”

“It helped me to feel more confident at performing. I feels more prepared for my performance in school in year 6. I enjoyed having fun with new friends.”

“I enjoyed meeting new people and making friends.”

“Can I come next year and in all the holidays?”

#### Feedback from parents

My daughter gained confidence, got her out during the holidays and she made friends.

I believe S benefited from the club, it got her involved with other children and gave her more confidence in herself, I would like to thank all who ran the project as it was highly enjoyed by S.

A was eager to go to each session. He enjoyed the activities and certainly loved attending!!

## **Mentoring project**

Break is providing a personal mentor for 8 young carers in Norfolk. The mentors have been recruited and trained. They have professional supervision with our mentor co-ordinator. The mentors provide fortnightly individual support for the young people – giving them some time and attention from an adult. Some of the young people enjoy support in attending activities such as museum trips, going to the park to play football, cinema trips – others use the time to talk about their lives and the difficult times they experience. The young people have absolute choice about whether they have a mentor and indeed whether they continue to see their mentor – the relationships with the mentors and young people have developed well and are strong.

This is a service which is making a real difference to the lives of these young people.

## **Siblings group**

7 young people attended a 3 day residential trip to Kingswood – an outdoor activity centre. They came from Norfolk and Suffolk. The young people took part in all sorts of activities including a climbing wall, “Jacobs Ladder”, some trust exercises, rock climbing etc In the trust exercises they were all blindfolded and had to get into pairs. They then had to throw a bean bag and guide each other to it. This was then followed by the young people having to walk blindfolded across the site following the sound of an egg rattle. The young people then had to complete an obstacle course with various ropes and ladders around and under trees. The young people had to guide each other using verbal instructions only and they had to keep checking that the other young people were still behind them. They all did an amazing job and worked as a team really well together – experiencing the thrill of danger whilst also the joy of feeling supported and achieving a difficult task.

These young people had opportunities to be with other young people, to have fun , to take risks and to share their experiences as carers. They were well cared for and nurtured throughout.

One parent fed back

“L and F enjoyed every minute of it. They had such an amazing time and we're so pleased that they were able to access activities that we would struggle to do as a family. They miss out on 'normal' family weekends in a lot of ways and this gave them a real break from being at home where the mood and where we can go is often dictated by their brother and what he can cope with.

They have had a weekend where they don't need to worry about leaving their homework around because their brother may eat it or destroy it, or their toys because he may chew them or choke on them. They have also not had to worry about helping when he has a 'meltdown' or ducking because he lashes out when he is frustrated.

They have also made some new friends who have similar challenges in their home lives.

It was also lovely for us to be able to spend some rare 1:1 time with G while his sisters were away.”

## **Young carers groups and individual therapeutic work**

The schools we had offered a group to were initially very keen for us to provide this service for their young people. They were confident that they could identify children who had caring responsibilities. This has taken longer than we had anticipated and one school has since come back to us and said that the need is no longer there for a group. We are currently working with different schools and will

be using the funding provided to enable us to run groups in schools in the autumn term this year. A delayed start but the work will happen as planned.

The young people who attended the drama workshops in the summer holidays evidently had a need for more therapeutic support. These young people engaged well with the dramatherapist and individual therapy has been offered to them.

### **Conclusion**

The funding provided by Mark Masons has enabled some of our most vulnerable and burdened young people a range of activities and support to help them through a difficult time in their lives. They have had therapeutic support and they have had fun. Importantly they have experienced that there are other young people with similar experiences and have felt less isolated by that. We have not yet completed all the funded activities – some of them, particularly the group work has been complex to establish and has needed longer to set up. The funding will continue to make a difference and should all be used by the end of this calendar year.

We are very grateful for the opportunity.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'C. Kennedy'.

25.9.17