

Welcome in

We may come from different communities and faiths and have varied needs and aspirations, but we can all be part of the guiding family

BY FIVE AIMED



LAURA ASHER

GUIDING MAGAZINE | FALL 2010



'We have the usual range of activities...
as well as coping with drips and plaster casts!'



JACK SHIRE

Growing Guiding

Growing Guiding is all about finding innovative ways to attract girls and volunteers, and keep them. It's also about being flexible to make sure everyone can get the most out of guiding. This month, we look at the range of exciting ways that this is happening across the country.

There are two Girlguiding UK projects that are aimed at encouraging the Growing Guiding ethos. Project 50K started in 2004 to focus on the 50,000 girls and young women who are on the waiting lists to join guiding because of a shortage of volunteers. It uses information from pilot schemes and best practice from members to find innovative ways of retaining existing volunteers. It also makes it easier for new volunteers to join guiding and supports recruitment.

The second project is the Big Lottery Fund funded Switch Project with its two strands Switch On and Switch Up. Switch On is for girls aged 10-25 and it provides additional support in areas of England where there is socio-economic hardship. This allows girls to experience the benefits of being part of a girl-only space and have the opportunity to take part in a variety of activities which would not otherwise be available to them.



LURNA LEE

GUIDING MAGAZINE | JUNE 2014

Day of activities

Lorna Lee, Division Commissioner for Bristol North East, is also the Switch Champion for Bristol and supports the work of Switch On development worker Stacy Pritchard.

Over a number of years, Lorna has seen units closing, not from a lack of Leaders, but from a lack of girls wanting to join. This appears to be linked to patterns of immigration. 'While we do have large units in the suburbs, those in the inner city all but disappeared as the immigrant population increased but didn't take up guiding,' says Lorna.

In order to redress the balance, Stacy held a taster day of activities (pictured left) which included cheerleading, hip-hop dancing, henna tattooing and massage sessions. This was attended by about 80 girls from diverse cultural and social backgrounds and prompted an enthusiastic response. Lorna is hopeful that new, financially sustainable inner city units will be established from the groups that formed after the taster day.



CAMBRIDGE NORTH SENIOR SECTION

Life changing experience

Switch Up is the other strand of the Switch project. It awards grants to units in areas of socio-economic need in England. As well as working with units in city areas, Switch Up grants have been awarded to isolated rural units where transport and facilities are limited. For example, the Switch North West Panel awarded Lone Senior Section member, Kirstin MacDougall (pictured above on the right), funding for equipment which enabled her to be part of an international trip. 'It was a life changing experience to be part of such a wide and varied community,' she says.

A little lateral thinking and collaboration will uncover many more opportunities and avenues that can be explored. Members in Kent, who have tried to engage a group of travellers in the area, have suggested that a joint venture between Guiding and Scouting might be the way forward. They believe this would be more suitable than a girl only group because strong family ties in travelling communities mean brothers and sisters don't want to be separated when joining in with activities.

In areas of the Anglia Region where there are many social problems and a lack of opportunities for young people, a local Senior Section group has been working closely with the educational and social services and has managed to obtain local authority funding to run a series of activities in school holidays and a monthly kids' club. They have recently opened a Brownie and Rainbow unit and are pleased by the level of support they have received from family members as well as with the increased self-confidence of the girls.

'Being inclusive means filling in the gaps in less-privileged children's lives,' comments Aggie Baker, a retired Leader who is still actively involved with a unit in the Kings Hedges area on the edge of Cambridge. 'People there thought guiding wasn't for the likes of them, that they wouldn't be welcome and that it would be too expensive,' she says. 'It did take a while to build up trust, but the parents are very supportive now and we've got seven local mums running thriving Rainbow, Brownie and Guide units on the estate.'

FURTHER INFO

- > If you have other examples or tips on growing Guiding or you need support in trying some of these examples or alternative ones email Project 50K at 50K@girlguiding.org.uk or call 0207 834 6242, ext 387.
- > Recruitment resources are available from the Girlguiding UK Trading Service. Find them listed online at www.girlguidingukshop.co.uk or in the new leaflet 'I need some of those!'. Call 0161 941 2237 to request a copy.