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## **Growing Up Information Sheet**

### **Work Experience in a Horticultural Setting for Young People with Learning Disabilities**



#### **Introduction**

Barnardo's Dundee Family Support Team was first established in 1985. A joint funded initiative with Dundee City Council Social Work Department, our aim is to support children & young people with significant learning disability and their families. You can find out more about us on our micro site (see back page for details).

In recent years we have become increasingly concerned about the lack of opportunities available to our young people when they leave our service at age 19. In 2008/09 we carried out some detailed research in relation to identifying need. What we learned is that there is an overwhelming need to provide supported employment opportunities locally, which reflects a national picture for people with learning disabilities in Scotland.

## **What is Growing Up?**

Our project successfully applied to the Big Lottery – Life Transitions Fund in 2011 to establish an employability skills service for young people with a broad range of learning disabilities in the age range of 18-25 years. Growing Up, which aims to provide employment skills in horticulture received 5 year funding and, over the course of the next 5 years, aims to reach up to 65 young people.

Young people join us on a part time basis of up to 2 days per week and can remain with us for up to 12 months. Part of our role is to help them move on to horticultural placements with support, which we hope will lead to further work experience, employment opportunities, further training and voluntary work possibilities.

While the service was launched officially in February 2013, in real terms it started in August 2012 with the first intake of 8 young people.

Currently we: have 2 allotments in City Road and Murrayfield Gardens, respectively; work in partnership with Kingspark School; provide care and maintenance for the gardens at Capability Scotland and Menzieshill Parish Church. We also have our own small garden at Dudhope Street and hope in the year ahead to establish an exciting partnership with Megginch Castle in the Carse of Gowrie which is the site of one of Scotland's oldest orchards.

*"I have come on leaps and bounds since coming here."*

*GU student, February 2013*

## **Staffing**

GU employs 3 permanent employees: a Development worker (f/t), a Gardener/Instructor (f/t) and a Support Worker (p/t). Volunteers and students supplement the staff team ensuring that each young person has support. In future years we hope that some of our young people who successfully complete the programme will return to assist us as volunteer mentors.

*"Being part of Growing Up will help my future career prospects and is good for my CV".*

*GU Student, February 2013*

## **Outcomes**

For each young person taking part we aim to meet 3 simple outcomes. Young people will:

- Gain horticultural skills
- Feel happier and healthier by taking part
- Gain a real sense of inclusion in wider society.

Depending upon aptitude and ability young people can also gain 3 levels of accreditation: Barnardo's own certificate, the Royal Caledonian Horticultural Award and/or Dynamic Youth Award – part of the Youth Achievement awards.

Young people keep a learning log/portfolio while with us and their achievements and challenges are regularly reviewed. A thorough Induction is provided and a range of information about the service through an Introductory Family and Young Person's Pack is in place for all our new students.

We involve young people in all aspects of the programme and in the winter of 2013 for the first time ensured that our young people gained simple budgeting and cookery skills through an exciting partnership with the University of Abertay's Food, Nutrition & Health Department.

Young people receive a small lunch allowance when taking part as do volunteers, who also receive travel expenses.

## **Referring to Growing Up**

We need to ensure that the young people (aged 18-25 years) who are referred to the service will be able to access the opportunities it offers. Our referral form will ask questions in relation to the following areas:

- Nature of disability
- Interest and/or experience of gardening
- Ability to travel independently
- Health Considerations
- Ability to listen and communicate

*"I feel great about coming here".*      *GU Student, February 2013*

## Partnership Working

We know from experience, that the success of our service over the years has been built on partnerships and relationships that work. GU is supported by an over arching Advisory Group which holds representation from a variety of key people and agencies which includes: family members, volunteers, Education Department & Social Work colleagues, Employment Skills centre staff and our colleagues from Barnardo's Works.

The aim of the group, which meets quarterly, is to oversee the development of GU and Family Support Team while problem solving and assisting in the future direction of both services, as well as monitoring practice and ensuring accountability.

We welcome any communication or points of view that you may have.

Should you wish any further information about GU please do get in touch.

### Contact Details

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