



POP’s Annual Report

FY 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022

FY 21/22 has been an even busier year with fundraising events finally returning and POP’s spend on charitable activities rising by an amazing 50%, an achievement of which we are justifiably proud.

CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

Maths and English Tuition for Foster Children



Foster children (CLA - Children Looked After) remain amongst the most disadvantaged in society when it comes to learning and academic achievement, so this project has continued throughout the financial year, with our spend increasing by just slightly over 50% year on year.

The academic gap we experience remains fairly

constant except where we are able to intervene in the very early years of foster children’s school careers.

An academic gap is the gap between the CLA’s chronological age and their academic performance levels – a gap of 3-4 years is not uncommon amongst CLA. In fact, we have only seen one CLA not in this position so far and that is because we were able to intervene at a very early stage (she is seven).

So once again one of our main activities this year has been the provision of Maths and English tuition delivered through our strategic partnership with Explore Learning in Bracknell, an award-winning tuition provider.

In brief the foster children have access to up to 9 sessions per month, the centre is open 6 days per week and the children work in groups of up to 6 per tutor. The learning tools are closely mapped to the school curriculum and each child has an individual learning plan to match their ability, level and speed of learning. In addition, if the child cannot attend the centre (or prefers not to) all the learning can be done online.

This year we have supported twenty students, seen Bracknell Forest Council take on the funding through the Pupil Premium that each foster child attracts and therefore seen the reality of the sustainability of the programme once POP get the students up and running.

The students have benefitted from over 700 sessions, mastered 2524 new skills and all narrowed their academic gap. On average they have mastered a new skill every 20 minutes! Some CLA have caught up as much as 2 years in the POP funded 6 months. We even have one student who is outperforming her academic age! And that is on top of the improvement we have seen across the board in the foster children's self-esteem, confidence and willingness to engage at school. A marked difference to their attitude before the tuition.

Foster Parents continue to applaud the programme:

*'It is so exciting to see *** invested in her future'*

'His confidence is blossoming'

'We are thrilled with her development'

We have spent £6569.27 on Maths and English tuition this Financial Year. Money exceptionally well spent, in our view.

Post 16 Educational Support

When the school leaving age was increased from 16 to 18 in 2007, sadly the provision for extra educational support for foster children was not increased. So whereas up to 16, all foster children attract some extra funding (Pupil Premium Grant or PPG), that is not available to Post 16 learners. This leaves a significant hole and causes some major issues.

This financial year we have started to look how we can help this age group and have just started our very first post 16 student with some individual tuition. This is a project which no doubt will expand in future years.

Care Leavers and Further Education

This year we have continued to support our budding Astrophysicist as he started his foundation year at the University of London (Royal Holloway College) in September 2021. This is the start of a four-year journey towards a degree which will hopefully be followed by a PhD and then some sort of research post.



We have also supported three care leavers with equipment for their first flat (kitchen equipment, carpet etc) to allow them to live independently and be in a position to engage in job related training / employment.

Sporting Activities

Bracknell's thriving basketball team, Bracknell Cobras, has a new recruit who also happens to be a CLA. This year POP has paid his basketball annual subscription to allow him year-round access to coaching and playing facilities, provided by Martin Amoo-Gottfried, an ex-professional and England international player. The way forward for this young man is to attend college in America with the depth of experience, coaching and competition that would provide. Currently we are in discussions to see how we can help.

Once again this year we have extended our swimming programme with four foster children benefiting from swimming lessons. There is strong demand so we expect to see this continue for many years, particularly given the benefits from a developmental point of view which we evidenced in last year's Trustees Annual Report (TAR).

Christmas Hampers for Families in Need

Each year, there are families who really struggle to provide what most of us would regard as a 'normal' Christmas with a special dinner and at least some presents. With the cost of living rising at speed, more and more families find themselves in this situation. It is something POP has done for quite some time, but this year it is starting to evolve into a permanent programme. One of our



guests at our Christmas Ball made a significant donation just to support these hampers. So, this year we supported four families. Next year it will doubtless be more than four.

A local school identified families in crisis for us and we provided hampers at Christmastime to allow those families to enjoy a more normal Christmas. Not only a hamper to provide Christmas lunch but also some Tesco vouchers to allow the families to buy presents. Please see some of the fabulous comments below:

S family, 2 adults, 3 children:

'We were not going to have a grand Christmas lunch/dinner this year due to very low finances. POP delivered us an amazing meal with all the extras and trimmings, as well as a pack of Christmas crackers, all put together in a beautiful gift box. My whole family loved every bit of the meal, and all the food was fresh and the best cuts. Thank you so much to POP for making our Christmas meal so very special. We really are grateful beyond words!'

Y family, 1 adult, 2 children:

'I was overwhelmed with the Christmas hamper and my children and myself honestly appreciated it at such a hard time. Thank you so much to POP for making our Christmas that much easier.'

G family, 1 adult, 3 children:

Wasn't sure what to expect so it was a lovely surprise. Very nicely thought out and had everything we needed.

FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES



After a gap during the pandemic, we ran both our popular POP golf day and our Christmas Ball this year.

The day dawned bright and sunny and with 39 players (the maximum the course would allow at this point) enjoying the challenging course at Mill Ride (SL5 8LT), we made a profit of healthy £2,012. In 2022, we hope to return to full numbers of players again.

As always 2021's Christmas Ball was run as a thank you to our wonderful foster carers but also to raise the profile of the charity and finally to raise funds.

This year we returned to Great Fosters in Egham, a beautiful setting. There were 149

guests, 13 of which were Foster Carers, who were very prominently thanked not only throughout the evening, but also with gifts of flowers and wine.

We made a significant profit of £4688.19.

This year our donations/ pledges on the night were up significantly as was the number of bids made on the auction items. One item to note, thanks to COVID, there was no sponsorship at all of the ball, something we have previously managed to achieve. Our auction provider noted in the post event de-brief that this was pretty much uniform across the sector.



Grants / Significant Donations

This year the **Greenslade Family Foundation** donated £10,000 to support the continuance of POP's Maths and English Tuition programme; they were particularly enamoured of the fact the programme was already proven to work and that it was made sustainable by the fact that Bracknell Forest Council would pick up the funding after the initial 6 months of POP-funded tuition.

AlphaFX chose Power of Parenting as one of their two charities of the year and have run several events to raise funds for us. In this financial year, we have received an additional £2787 so far with more to come.

Finally, two very enterprising young people, **Caymin Maharaj and Arnie Bodasing** have raised over £2000 between them through carrying out a 100m challenge in March 2022.

All in all, a very successful year.

The POP Hub of Excellence

The POP Hub of Excellence Next year will see POP focus on a project that has been in the planning for several years now – the POP Hub of Excellence.

This is designed to be a building embedded in the community that provides a depth of knowledge, understanding and learning for everything that relates to fostering vulnerable children.

It will also provide mandatory services, training and support to the local council and police, along with innovation and ideas provided by some of the leading experts in children's social care, neurodiversity and trauma, who are working with POP Charity.

The legacy for the charity will be making a real difference to needs of foster children and their families within Bracknell Forest and the surrounding boroughs and getting the community involved to support and understand this area of children's social care.

