

# Respect

## **An intergenerational project bringing young people and older people together through volunteering**

Volunteer Centre Sutton (VCS) has been funded by Sutton Safer Partnership since 2005 to run a small project to help reduce the fear of crime and breakdown the negative perception the young have of older people and visa versa. This project is called Respect.

This intergenerational work has linked groups of young people from local high schools and older people in the community. Many of the young people have been at risk of exclusion from school. They have volunteered to visit older people in a variety of settings - sheltered housing, day centres and clubs.

Activities are varied as well as the time span of each project depending on the availability of the young people and the older people. Each project has followed a similar plan with workers meeting with each of the groups to talk about what they wanted from the project and to collect their thoughts about the other generation. Sessions (some on a weekly basis over several weeks and others for several days in one week) have then been run and have included:

- Gardening – in one project the young people helping older people to develop a derelict piece of land alongside their sheltered housing into a communal garden.

Greenshaw  
High School  
and  
Clarence  
Road  
Sheltered  
Housing



Greenshaw  
High School  
and  
Richmond  
Green  
Sheltered  
Housing



Carshalton  
Boys School  
and Seven  
Acres  
Sheltered  
Housing

- Reminiscence, craft, bingo and quiz afternoons.



Greenshaw and St Paul's Sheltered Housing



Greenshaw and Belsize Court Sheltered Housing



Carshalton Girls School and Sutton Lodge Day



Cheam High School and Belsize Court Day Centre

- Indoor carpet bowling.



Carshalton Girls High School and Sheltered Housing



- Joint trips out – one ending in an impromptu game of rounders with some of the young people acting as ‘runners’ for the less able older people!



Carshalton Boys and  
Seven Acres  
Sheltered Housing

- Pamper sessions



St Philomena's School  
and Roundshaw  
residents group

At the end of each project the views of each group are again collected and in all projects so far there has been a very positive outcome, with the Respect experience changing the perceptions each group had of the other dramatically. The outcomes of one project reflect the results of the others:

- Changed younger people's views about older people - after the project at least 75% said they felt they could change what their friends thought about older people, as opposed to the start of the project where 90% said they had no hope of influencing what their friends thought of older people.

- The older people said the experience broke down 'previous barriers' they had about young people.
- Positive interactions with the police and experience of how to handle conflict.
- Positive interactions with older people who invited them into their homes, potential for future links.
- Young people went back and asked if they could base a school project on the whole experience, this involved interviewing one of the older people.
- Positive interactions with people of different cultures.
- Lots of the parents were very supportive of the project and one directly commented that her son was a different boy and she thought it was due to taking part in the project [the young boy in question suffers from Attention Deficit Disorder]

As a result of their limited time volunteering, some of the young people went on to other volunteering opportunities.

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