

Ben's Story, 2016-2018 Group



Written by programme participant Ben (July 2018)

When I first saw the programme introduction video in 2016, I knew it was going to be something I would regret not doing. I was diagnosed with A.D.D a few years ago which makes it hard for me to speak with other children and makes it hard for me to find friends. When I went on my Explore Day I was very nervous and anxious, at first I found it hard to speak with the others and would often be the one who would isolate myself from the rest of the group and by the end of this day I felt a bit more confident because I knew who I'd be with for the next two years.

When it came to Mountain Camp I was very nervous and anxious, I had a tendency to ask lots of questions because I wanted to know what was up ahead for me and I was also really nervous at the time. When we went on our expedition there was this place which you could slide down, I didn't want to do it at all, but after my group encouraged me, I did it which made me feel more proud of myself. All of the Activity Days helped me because I was able to learn new things and the groups were smaller which meant that it was a little bit easier to interact with the other children.

On the Coastal Camp it was appearing that I was coming out of my comfort zone more, I was becoming more confident, I gave the activities such as the dragonboat racing a good shot. At this stage in school I was starting to come out of my comfort zone more and was starting to make new friends.

On the Forest Camp I was starting to find out more about myself, when we were going caving I was leading half the group through some very tight spaces. I also found that with a bit of encouragement I wouldn't give up on what I was doing. When we got back to camp Rob wanted a little chat with me and said that someone from my group said that I was very brave and brilliant in the caves, this made me feel happy and proud. I also hardly ever asked any questions.

Nowadays I feel more confident speaking to people, I don't ask as many questions as I used to, I have also started my DofE and I have started sprinting for a local running club.

Thank you for everything you've helped me with over these past two years!

Ben

Text from mum 08/01/2018 - *His confidence seems to be growing and growing! He recently climbed Snowdon with his dad, he's joined a canoeing club through school. He also wanted to join a running club, so has now joined Avon Valley runners and goes to Bath University to train. He's really enjoying it! So thank you. Obviously the experiences he's having with the Youth Adventure Trust is definitely giving him the confidence to start other clubs!!*

Reasons for initial referral from school –

“Ben is a lovely lad who has really struggled to find his fit here at school. He can be socially awkward and finds it hard to make friends/understand what is expected of him. He desperately wanted to be liked and have friends but sometimes needs to understand that because people don't want to play the games he wants to play doesn't mean he can't interact with them. Friendships are tough for him. I would love to see his confidence grow.” Ben's teacher

Below is the feedback written by the Programme Manager, and the volunteers who worked with Ben, at each stage of the programme; it really demonstrates Ben's achievements in his time with the YAT.

EXPLORE DAY FEEDBACK

It was evident Ben came along with a really positive attitude and wanted to challenge himself. This was great to see, and Ben really threw himself into all of the activities despite being a bit apprehensive. Ben struggled a bit with the social side of things and often isolated himself from the rest of the group but this is something we can certainly help Ben with. I'm sure he'll get a lot out of his time on the Youth Adventure Programme.

MOUNTAIN CAMP FEEDBACK

Ben has been amazing whilst on camp. It was evident he was very apprehensive, nervous and worried about activities, but as the week went on he became more relaxed and calm. Everyone really liked having Ben around and took the time to get to know him and answer all the questions he had. Once Ben focused on the task in hand, rather than the outcome, he proved he could accomplish tasks which helped develop his confidence. It's been a great start to Ben's programme and as time moves on his confidence will certainly continue to grow. Well done Ben, you should be really proud of your achievements.

My group leaders would like to say....

Ben, what a thoughtful, caring and creative young man you've been. Throughout camp you've overcome many fears and attempted ALL of the activities making all of the leaders extremely proud. Try to keep improving or worrying less about the further tasks and enjoying what you're doing. This box really isn't big enough to write down every achievement you've completed this week, but a highlight was definitely your jump from the waterfall during gorge walking. Keep being yourself Ben, keep being on fire.

COASTAL CAMP FEEDBACK

Ben is starting to come out of his shell more and now gets involved with conversations. He's chatting and interacting with others and asking less questions indicating that he's happy on camp, and less anxious about what will be happening. Ben always gives all the activities his best shot and challenges himself as much as he can. Ben has a positive and determined attitude and is a pleasure to have in any group. We hope Ben continues to develop his confidence and we'll work with him to contribute more to his team during his next camp in the summer. Ben can definitely be proud of the way he approached the camp, the effort he put in and all that he's achieved so far.

My group leaders would like to say... BEN

you have done so well on this camp - really great at taking part in all the activities and getting out of your comfort zone!

you have been a wonderful team player - keep it up!

Anna, Chni and Sam.

FOREST CAMP FEEDBACK

Ben has developed into a confident and very brave young man. He's come such a long way on the programme, to the point where another young person in his group told me "Ben is so brave, he's brilliant at leading the group". On hearing this I made a point of talking to Ben about it, and the smile on his face showed how proud he felt. Ben asks far fewer questions now, and is happy to go with the flow and discover what lies in store rather than needing all the information beforehand. Ben should be extremely proud of himself; we are certainly proud of his journey and look forward to seeing him again in October for the first of his Pathway Days.

My group leaders would like to say....

Ben, we offered you lots of challenges during forest camp and you were willing to attempt everything put in front of you. Your teammates called you 'The man without fear' and have enjoyed your inspiring attitude to give anything a try. We have seen a massive boost in your confidence in chatting with others in your team and you have become more willing to share your ideas. You said you would like to volunteer with us when you are old enough, we would welcome you back.
Craig Michael Victoria

FINAL PROGRAMME FEEDBACK

It shouldn't be underestimated how much Ben has grown in confidence over his two years on the programme. When we first met him he was extremely shy and anxious and always on the edge of the group, almost reluctant to take part. Now he's keen, cheerful, and resilient. He offers his opinions and thoughts, and often volunteers to go first because he feels so much more confident. His anxiety about all aspects of the programme have dramatically reduced over time; he's less anxious about what could happen and lives in the moment more. Ben has created himself a real success story through his effort and commitment to developing. He's achieved so much and should be extremely proud of himself. We look forward to hearing how Ben gets on in the future.

