



The project

Sonshine Club's "Gardening Community" project, during which 40 youths with disabilities came together to grow herbs and vegetables in Springfield Park, and 10 youths received home gardening kits, was incredibly successful.

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With professional guidance, the children planted seeds in plant pots and in the ground, transferred plants from the pots to the ground and continually cared for their plants, and through animated discussions and hands-on-experience, they learned about recycling, composting, pond dipping, climate change and more. They also discussed cooking healthy meals on a budget and then did some cooking and healthy eating together. They formed lasting friendships, reducing their isolation.

The children loved the project and were amazed by their ability to grow their own healthy food, which they could take home at the end and share with their low-income families.

As on-site participants, each with their own disability, arrived for each session, they hurried to check on their plants, their enthusiasm obvious from their beaming faces and excited chatter.

The children who received gardening kits at home loved their clear instruction booklets and parents have told us how their child has been calmer than ever before, with their very own plants to look after, and a supportive community to share the plants' milestones with.

All participants gained so much more than the tremendous satisfaction of growing their own plants, although that alone would've been a worthwhile target.

As reported by the team leaders and volunteers, as well as by parents, SENCOs and health workers, the children gained the joys of being part of a supportive community of children like themselves, they improved their social skills, they made friends, they became more confident and independent. There was a clear improvement to their self-esteem and they became happier and calmer.

Research shows that gardening, especially when done with peers, can significantly improve health and wellbeing, and through your generous donation, we have seen this happen in children who are struggling in so many areas.



The case study



Mrs B, mother of F, a boy who participated in the gardening project recently phoned Sonshine Club to thank us again for the project. She said that her son's enthusiasm and skills for growing vegetables following the 'Gardening Community' project, prompted her to start using an allotment near their home.

She explained that they do not have a garden, but they have been using their allotment to plant their very own vegetables. The whole family have been involved in this project, and it has led to a much calmer, happier home, with everyone feeling satisfied, and united towards a common goal. They are saving money on their vegetables, helping the environment, and enjoying the therapeutic benefits of outdoor gardening together.



"It was only because of Sonshine Club," Mrs B said. If not for the gardening project, growing their own vegetables as a family project would never have occurred to her, and would not have been possible with F's challenges getting in the way. She shared with us how F has gained so much since he joined the project both in his practical skills and in his life skills. He has friends, he is calmer and more independent, and his anxiety levels have gone down.