



# ***Start Up Slam:***

## ***A Case Study***



A participant of Start Up Slam trying out new graffiti skills

Start Up Slam was an intensive 2-week summer programme held in July and August 2017 at No. 34 aimed at engaging young people aged 14 – 16 with the arts. It was an opportunity for them to find out more about careers within the creative sector and different routes to get there.

The programme attracted 11 young people from the following schools across Kent: Sittingbourne Community College, Highsted Grammar, Walderslade Girls School, Fulston Manor, Borden Grammar and one member was Home Educated.

During the two weeks, the participants became immersed in a variety of creative workshops ranging from: Graffiti, puppet-making, print-making, Street and Urban Hip Hop Dance, Film-making, team-building, Street Dance fusion, visual communication skills, theatrical and special effects make-up and music-making skills. From the above, the attendees listed the following workshops amongst their favourites: puppet-making, dancing, graffiti, screen-printing and theatrical make-up. They commented on the social impact of the programme on their well-being, stating that some of the highlights for them had been 'meeting new people and making new friends'.

The sessions ran from 10.00 to 14.30 with a half hour lunch break where free food was provided for all the participants. Feedback forms were given out at the end of every day to ensure that ongoing constructive feedback could be incorporated into the programme and,

so that the young people felt they were being listened to the programme was tailored to suit their specific needs.

In addition to the workshops, each member of staff from Ideas Test spoke to them about their job role and their different routes into their roles. Following these, participants were encouraged to ask as many questions about the job roles as possible. These sessions acted as informal, supportive career job talks. Kath Abiker, Head of Teaching and Learning at Canterbury Christ Church University, gave a presentation on the transferrable skills that can be learned from studying Foundation degree programmes.

Participants commented:

*“I found her talk very informative. The most useful part was when she spoke about what you need to be prepared for university.”*

Each participant was matched to a professional mentor who had expertise in the creative industry that the young person was interested in and they met with them once in the first week and again in the second week. During these sessions, mentors discussed career pathways, how to make the most of strengths and weaknesses and helped participants set short and long-term goals.

Parents commented on their child's increased confidence from meeting new people - making new friends and from practical learning in terms of real life:

*“My daughter has had a great time. In this two-week period, I have seen her happier, more confident, more enthusiastic than ever!”*

Another parent stated that their child “came home every day totally inspired and enthusiastic about everything.”

In addition, parents mentioned the usefulness of the 1:1 mentoring sessions for their children too:

*“I think in many ways the sessions have brought out a maturity that I have not seen before.”*

Parents said the discussions on goal setting and mapping out career and pathway were particularly valuable for their children and that it was useful to talk through future-plans, and to be able to reflect with someone other than their parent.

### **Programme Learning:**

The flexibility that this programme offered meant that some of the attendees invited their friends, who were visiting, along with them and meant that we could welcome new comers onto the programme - even after it had started.

In future, it would be helpful to run this programme over a year to track continuity and progression with the participants and to provide them ongoing support and advice throughout the year.

It would also be beneficial to link the programme to an Arts Award Access offer – with each participant achieving Bronze accreditation as part of the programme.

Feedback from one participant to the question: What has been the highlight of the programme?:

*“Everything - All of it!”*

One parent expressed their satisfaction and Tweeted:

*“Thankyou @IdeasTest team. Great end to Start Up Slam @Kent\_cc: fund more great projects for young people like this!!#mytaxeswellspent”*

The programme was free to participants and was supported by Kent County Council, Swale Borough Council and U + I plc.



Start Up Slammers celebrating with their certificates of attendance in front of Ted Hanford's record breaking French-knitting - August 2017