

## **19. DCDP Case Study: St. Mary's Community**

St Mary's is an area of Dundee city that is within the 5% most deprived in Scotland, and has significant drug and health issues. There are also many people who could be considered 'working poor'. The area has several community resources, including a community facility run by volunteers, St Mary's Community Church and One Parent Family Scotland community flat, as well as a very large primary school and nursery. Many workers provide services in St Mary's, but are not based there.

Rank's funding enabled St Mary's to recruit a part-time engagement worker to work with all sections of the community, identifying and overcoming barriers to participation; supporting participation in local activities; developing social media and signposting to services, groups and activities.

In the first year, the focus has been on laying the ground work. The existing St Mary's volunteers have been pivotal in providing much needed local knowledge and insights. Connections with other Rank-funded organisations, such as Faith in Community, OPFS, V&A Dundee, Food bank, Police Scotland and Equally Well, are blossoming.

Achieving success so far can be measured in statistics such as 100+ families engaged in 'Summer Family, Fun and Food'; 20 families referred to Family Active; a 50% increase in attendance in toddler groups.

It can also be measured in the small changes: the confidence given or the reduction in social isolation through attending a walking group. Or a mum on a visit to a soft play centre simply saying "we have difficulties every time we go out, but having a worker there just seemed to make it easier."

Having a worker dedicated to St Mary's community means that services are now becoming more 'joined up'. There is greater dialogue between workers who provide services, making services more locally relevant and targeted. Hard to reach members of the community are now engaged. Social media has allowed St Mary's to have an online presence which showcases what's great about living there, what's going on, and gives a platform to air views and be socially included.

Our Facebook page has, for example, enabled a Care Assistant get in touch about local activities suitable for a lady with dementia. In another example, a community member posted pictures of the dinner she made from St Mary's Community Garden vegetables which sparked a recipe-sharing discussion and laid the ground work for family cooking classes next year. Winning the Gold certificate and second place in Dundee City Council's Garden competition for our community garden has generated interest across all sections of the community. It also brought together the St Mary's community, from the St Mary's worker, youth workers, and adult learning to One Parent Families Scotland and Foodbank.

Rank's funding was used to fund days out for families during the summer holiday. The feedback was that having a worker accompany the families made it easier, in terms of taking the plunge to go out, and smoothing the way while there. Another benefit so far is that the worker has been able to have the community facility open more often and assist the volunteers.

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