TRANSFORMING LIVES: JONNY AND JACK

Jonny has been a City West Housing Trust customer for the last two years, when he moved back to Salford from North Wales with his girlfriend. The main reason for this was to receive family support and to be in a safer and more positive neighbourhood to bring their son Jack up in.

Before the summer holidays Jack, who has been diagnosed with ADHD and is currently on medication that is working well, had never really been interested in any structured activity. He would jump from one thing to another and not focus on anything for any length of time. He wasn't able to develop friendships with children in school and his speech was limited to statements rather than conservations.

Jonny saw a Tweet from Greater Manchester Police advertising the 2-week parkour and free running camp that LCCC Foundation, through their Sporting Foundations for Life programme, and Evolve, a parkour and free running gym based in Salford Quays, were running during the summer

holidays, part-funded by City West Housing Trust. He thought it could be something which would interest Jack.

The first session captured his imagination and since then he has been hooked.

At the end of the 2 week programme, Johnny took up Evolve's offer of a free taster session for Jack at their gym. He loved it, so Jonny signed Jack up as a member for two sessions a week.

Jack showing off his skills at Evolve, watched by Jonny and an Evolve coach

Two months later and Jack goes every day, apart from Sunday when the gym is closed, to practise and develop his skills. Finding a sport to focus on has helped Jack channel his adventurous side in a safe and structured way. His growing confidence saw him take part in a recent Showcase at a local shopping centre.

Significant friendships have been created, something he's not been able to do before. His parents have never seen Jack be comfortable enough to have conversations with other children, but he regularly does now at Evolve. He is also more comfortable engaging with older people as he feels that he has a skill to show off.

Jack's behaviour at home has changed significantly since the summer. He's also finding it much easier to sleep at nights and is staying asleep for longer. Previously his nightly sleep pattern would be 1am until 6am; now he regularly goes to sleep at 10pm until 6:30am.

Aside from benefitting Jack, becoming involved in parkour and free running has had a hugely beneficial effect on Johnny.

Currently unemployed due to health issues, he was able to take Jack to the summer camp and stayed to watch the delivery of the sessions. After the first couple of days, Jonny took it upon himself to help out with the setting up and putting away of the equipment and became friendly with the team delivering the course. He felt comfortable enough with them to offer more support and began to proactively find ways to improve the activity. By the end of the two weeks Johnny had become an integral part of the delivery of activities and it was clear that he interacted with other young people very well.

Jonny keeping a close eye on Jack at our October half term camp

Alongside the offer of a free session for Jack, Johnny was offered one himself which he took up. He enjoyed it so much that he joined the Thai boxing session at Evolve's gym and over a three week period lost over a stone in weight.

Instead of merely dropping Jack off, or watching the session, Jonny is now a volunteer assistant and helps the Evolve coaches on a daily basis. Regular interaction with a number of people has helped with his current mental health issues, making him feel more positive. Johnny stated that, "the team and people at Evolve have a very positive nature which has helped me with my health problems".

LCCC Foundation and Evolve have put together a training programme to support Jonny's development further.

In Jonny's own words, through parkour and free running their life has EVOLVED!!!!

Thanks to Claire Anderton, City West Housing Trust Development Officer, for compiling this case study.