

Alice's Journey: From Hidden Young Carer to Confident Art College Student



Background

Alice, 17, is a Young Carer for her mum, who has Spina Bifida. For a long time, Alice was a 'hidden' Young Carer - her caring role was not recognised at school, and she struggled in silence.

This changed when YMCA staff worked with her school to identify and support Young Carers. Once identified, Alice was invited to take part in a Young Carers project and was offered 1:1 mentoring sessions in school.

Through these sessions, staff quickly realised that Alice was facing significant challenges with her mental health, particularly anxiety and self-identity. It also became evident that she was experiencing severe bullying at school due to these struggles.

Support Provided

To understand her needs better, staff completed an Outcome Star assessment with Alice. This helped highlight the areas in her life where she needed the most support. One of the key actions taken was encouraging Alice to access professional mental health support, guiding her through the process, and providing a safe space to talk through her experiences.

During mentoring, Alice shared her passion for art and her ambition to attend art college. With support from staff, she navigated her GCSE exams and college application process—and this year, she was accepted into her chosen art college.

Beyond academic support, Alice was invited to attend respite sessions with other Young Carers, giving her time to socialise and enjoy activities away from her caring responsibilities. During these sessions, Alice showed a natural ability to support others, recognising when fellow Young Carers were struggling and offering them guidance and reassurance.

Recognising her potential, staff encouraged Alice to apply for a local peer mentoring programme. She was supported in writing an application, preparing a cover letter, and attending an interview. We are incredibly proud to share that Alice was accepted and is now undergoing training to become a peer mentor, where she will use her experiences to support others.

The Impact

Alice has transformed from a shy and withdrawn individual into a confident and inspiring role model. She now takes pride in supporting others and embraces new opportunities with enthusiasm. Her journey highlights the power of targeted support, encouragement, and access to the right opportunities.

To ensure she continues to receive the support she needs, Alice will be referred to the Young Adult Carers Service next year, allowing her to access tailored support as she transitions into adulthood.

The Difference

Alice herself has spoken about the significant change she has experienced. She feels more confident and happier within herself. A follow-up Outcome Star assessment confirmed this progress, with Alice rating all areas of her life more positively than before.

Her transformation is a testament to the impact of recognising and supporting Young Carers, ensuring they are not only seen but also empowered to thrive.

Support

We provide help to Young Carers and provide support and advice to Young Adult Carers, aged 18 to 25 from our partner, YMCA Sutton Coldfield.



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