

Champions for Children 2023

SUMMER IMPACT REPORT

Written by Stephanie Putsch

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A Safer Summer For Children

Summer is a pivotal time in a child's development. It's a wonderful opportunity for children to play and explore, discover new places, forge friendships and stimulate their curiosity. However, for children experiencing poverty, summer can exacerbate an already precarious situation, exposing children to increased deprivation, stunting emotional and physical wellbeing and creating educational learning loss when children return to school.

Away from school provisions during term-time, many children experience isolation and anxiety. Increased food insecurity, limited access to safe outdoor spaces, few creative and recreational outlets and the threat of youth violence means that the summer period is often spent indoors. Without the opportunity to socialise and engage in formative new experiences, this critical time can hamper a child's personal growth, leading to long-term consequences in and out of school.

This report, written and research by our volunteer student researcher provides a small insight into the work of just 4 out of the 83 charity partners funded through our Champions for Children 2023 campaign. We hope that you enjoy reading about some of the activities and support we have been able to provide for children living in poverty in London.

The Childhood Trust believes that every child should have a healthy, happy and safe childhood so that all children are well prepared for life, breaking the cycle of poverty.

Prepared For Life

In June 2023, Our Champions for Children campaign raised £3,503,225 providing essential funding for the delivery of 83 projects over a 12 month period, supporting over 68,000 children across London. Whilst the Champions for Children 2023 programme runs over 12 months, many of the projects provided essential support to children over the long summer holidays.

Our Champions for Children campaign has been running since 2020, raising over £13m. This has provided vital funding to 368 grassroots charities and community projects, reaching approximately 411,000 children facing disadvantage across London. The campaign funds provide essential support for charities helping children cope during the challenging Summer period and beyond.

The Childhood Trust works to harness the potential of the summer months to ensure children are prepared for life. Our Prepared for Life impact strategy creates a framework which focuses on delivering the most vital support services to children living in poverty in London. We focus on four priority areas: 1) physical health, 2) mental wellbeing, 3) home & community environment, and 4) learning & work readiness, to ensure that children are given the tools, support and security needed to be healthy, resilient, safe and confident.

The projects funded and delivered via our Champions for Children 2023 programme tackle these key impact areas. Whether through skills-building, mentoring, or providing a safe haven for a child in need, our charity delivery partners work hard to make the Summer count – making a substantial difference to a child's life, now and in the future.

Our Projects

Four projects
delivered over
Summer 2023



Children are Healthy - Spring Community Hub

Background and Context

Located in the heart of Camberwell, Spring Community Hub works to tackle food poverty and empower families in the community. Offering a food bank, community kitchen and day care centre, their holistic approach embraces the whole family unit. With over 40% of Southwark's children living in poverty, this support is a lifeline for many struggling parents, especially during the precarious Summer months. As part of a dedicated holiday club, Spring Community Hub's Summer program aims to 'Put the Fun into the Summer Holidays' by facilitating free field trips to children and their families. The Hub believes summer is a crucial time for health, wellbeing, and unadulterated joy – for the kids, the experience is priceless.

The Summer Holiday Club

For many working parents, the long summer months can be a challenging time. With skyrocketing day care costs, families are left with few choices for quality childcare. Recognising this need in the community, founder Felicia and her team set up their Summer Holiday Club. Catering to young children, the club provides free day care services, pastoral care, and nutritious meals. Children take part in yoga and fitness activities, art and crafts, a variety of games, and outdoor play. For the children, it's an exciting opportunity to make new friends and soak up their holidays.

The Holiday Club's mission is to enrich the lives of children at their day care centre, nurturing their emotional needs and development. "Kids are gaining so much here which isn't part of the school curriculum," says day care lead Ronke. The staff members at the club facilitate unstructured fun, ensuring the children have a choice of daily activities and the freedom to play. The club's focus on uplifting children's emotional and physical health means children are safe, supported and empowered to tackle the new school year.



"I get to do different types of art here that I've never done before," says 9-year-old Emma, proudly displaying her origami flower.



Away Days for the Whole Family

For many children who come to Spring Community Hub, day trips are the highlight of their Summer. With excursions to theme parks, beach days and museum trips, children are immersed in exciting new adventures. As the cost-of-living continues to squeeze household finances, many families can't afford the cost of these enriching activities, making away days with the Hub even more meaningful. "It's so important to expose children to experiences they may not have had before," says day care worker Lola.

With fun trips designed for the whole family, children enjoy a full day of new activities. This variety goes a long way to boosting well-being, providing stimulating new experiences and fond memories of their holidays. Beyond having good fun, children feel enormous pride in their Summer outings.




“Legoland was my favourite, I can’t wait to tell my friends at school!” Daniel, 10


The Community Kitchen


The daily Community Kitchen is where parents and children come together to eat, laugh, and rest. Without the provision of free school meals, families struggle with food insecurity during the Summer months. Free and nutritious meals for the whole family are paramount to relieve financial and emotional pressures. It's part of the support network the Hub provides, helping families tackle the underlying issues caused by poverty. "We're holistic, we look at why families need us – let's address why they keep coming," says dedicated outreach coordinator Cassandra.

A welcoming space for parents and children to socialise, for mother-daughter duo Oluwakemi and Abeni it represents so much more: "it's a place we can come to feel safe and comforted – they've been a family to us." At Spring Community Hub, food and community are at the core of ensuring families are healthy.



 Amount raised: £11,337

 Children helped: 400

 Location: Southwark

Why did you focus on the impact goal Children are Healthy?

Health is the foundation of a child's wellbeing. Providing children with access to regular nutritious meals and exercise is critical to ensure better school and life outcomes and improve quality of life through childhood and adolescence.

Children are Resilient - Global Generation

Background and Context

Behind the noise and traffic of King's Cross lies a remarkable secret. Nestled between a sea of buildings is a flourishing community garden, run by community project Global Generation. From workshop spaces, a community kitchen, communal plant trellises and a story-time yurt, the garden is a true oasis for children to explore and play in a green safe space. This focus on connecting with nature is at the heart of Global Generation's 'Growing a New Story' Summer programme. With the help of children from the local community, the project aims to co-create a new biodiverse garden. In an area experiencing rapid urbanisation and high levels of pollution, the opportunity to learn new skills and take ownership of their neighbourhood allows young people to build resilience through nature, community and creativity – all whilst fostering a sense of green adventure.

Learning Resilience Through Creativity

At the core of Global Generation's Summer programme is an emphasis on empowering children through creative activities. From woodworking and puppet-making to gardening and cooking, children are surrounded by opportunities to learn and play. Walking into a shingle-making workshop, you're greeted with flying wood shavings and a group of determined-looking kids. Under the watchful guidance of facilitator Nick, children get to grips with the challenge at hand, chopping logs down to size, whittling the wooden slabs and admiring their hard work.



"Growing a New Story" aims to co-create a biodiverse garden in a nearby brownfield site with local children. By taking part in rewarding tasks, the kids not only learn exciting new skills, but also build self-esteem by completing fun and challenging projects. "That's why I wanted to come here, because I can do so much creative stuff", says Alissa. The ability for children to express themselves creatively is key to building confidence. With an emphasis on hands-on activities, fun is at the centre of their day, as brickmaking facilitator Nadire knows all too well. "It's just so tactile! The kids can bash and smack and play, but in a contained way – you can really see them coming out of their shells." Creativity becomes a tool for children to build resilience and self-esteem.



Connecting Through Nature

Being outside, especially during the warm summer months, is integral to a child's happiness. With limited access to safe green spaces in a busy urban environment, for the children who are part of 'Growing a New Story', coming to the community garden means the difference between spending their Summer indoors and having the freedom to play in the sunshine. Time spent outdoors also means time spent away from their phones and tablets, an important element for sensory development. Seeing the kids interact together, you get a sense of the imaginative play sparked by being in a natural environment.

"I like to find things in the garden and smell the plants", says bubbly Amina, "especially the mint, it smells so good".

At the heart of all this greenery lies the community kitchen. It's the hub of the garden, and the basecamp for the children to cook together, share meals and build summer friendships. Food is the core of Global Generation's mission; through a 'farm to table' approach, the children learn not only how to cook delicious vegetarian meals, but also to grow their own food. Planting alongside residents from the local council estate, kids are taught essential lessons about sustainability and the value of teamwork. Highlighting the relationship between nature and community, children learn to Grow their own Story by forging resilience through connection with each other and the planet.



Amount raised: £80,340



Children helped: 1,000



Location: Lambeth

“It’s always a wonderful feeling for any child to use tools they wouldn’t have before. Being part of a bigger project, that makes them feel valued.”

Nick, project mentor

Why did you focus on the impact goal Resilience?

At a time when children and young people are experiencing increased anxiety and isolation, building resilience is integral to protecting mental health and emotional well-being. Resilience can be learnt and is an important asset that helps children develop their potential.

Children are Safe - Christian International Peace Service (CHIPS)

Background and Context

For the children of Brixton's Angell Town estate, CHIPS – AKA the Christian International Peace Service – is a sanctuary. Established in 2014, CHIPS aims to work with the community in a bid to stem endemic division and violence. Triangulated between warring estates, Angell Town, in the top 10% of the nation's most deprived, is at the centre of the 'Postcode Wars', an epidemic of gang violence between competing London postcodes. With high levels of poverty and dwindling social provisions, CHIPS' 'Brixton Project Expansion' summer program provides fun activities and mentorship to help break cycles of violence - creating safety for the estate's children.



A Safe Haven

The Summer holidays are a vulnerable time for the children who come to CHIPS. With many parents at work, and free from classroom supervision, it's a sensitive transition for many Angell Town children; one that can lead them down a dangerous path. "Kids can get sucked in by bad influences," says Abdul, a youth worker, "If they get caught up in the grasp of the law, it's difficult to bring them back around." Grooming and gang recruitment is a common theme, one that can have deadly consequences for young people. With funding for local youth services slashed in recent decades, young boys often don't have many places to turn. CHIPS aims to make sure they don't get caught in the crossfire, providing a safe space outside the isolation of their homes.

CHIPS' mission is to turn the tide of violence on the estate. Operating from a community centre, children have access to a games space, a football pitch, and weekly field trips around London. When asked about his favourite memory at CHIPS, 10-year-old George spoke of a recent swimming trip: "I love to swim, it makes me relaxed, all my stress goes away when I'm in the water." Offering a wide range of summer activities – from go-karting to museum trips and E-sports nights – the centre is fruitful ground for children to make lasting friendships, breaking down barriers and building connection instead of division. It's the basis of forming trusting bonds that can mitigate future division, growing together instead of growing up too fast.

Trusted Adult Guidance

At the heart of CHIPS' work is their youth club, a community hub where children can come to play and socialise under the watchful eye of trusted mentors. Going between the bustling games room and busy football pitch outside, project lead Kamika is a magnet for children seeking advice. "When the kids are playful and joyful, when they're building positive relationships – that's what success looks like to me." She's one of the many role models at CHIPS helping young people develop emotional resilience.

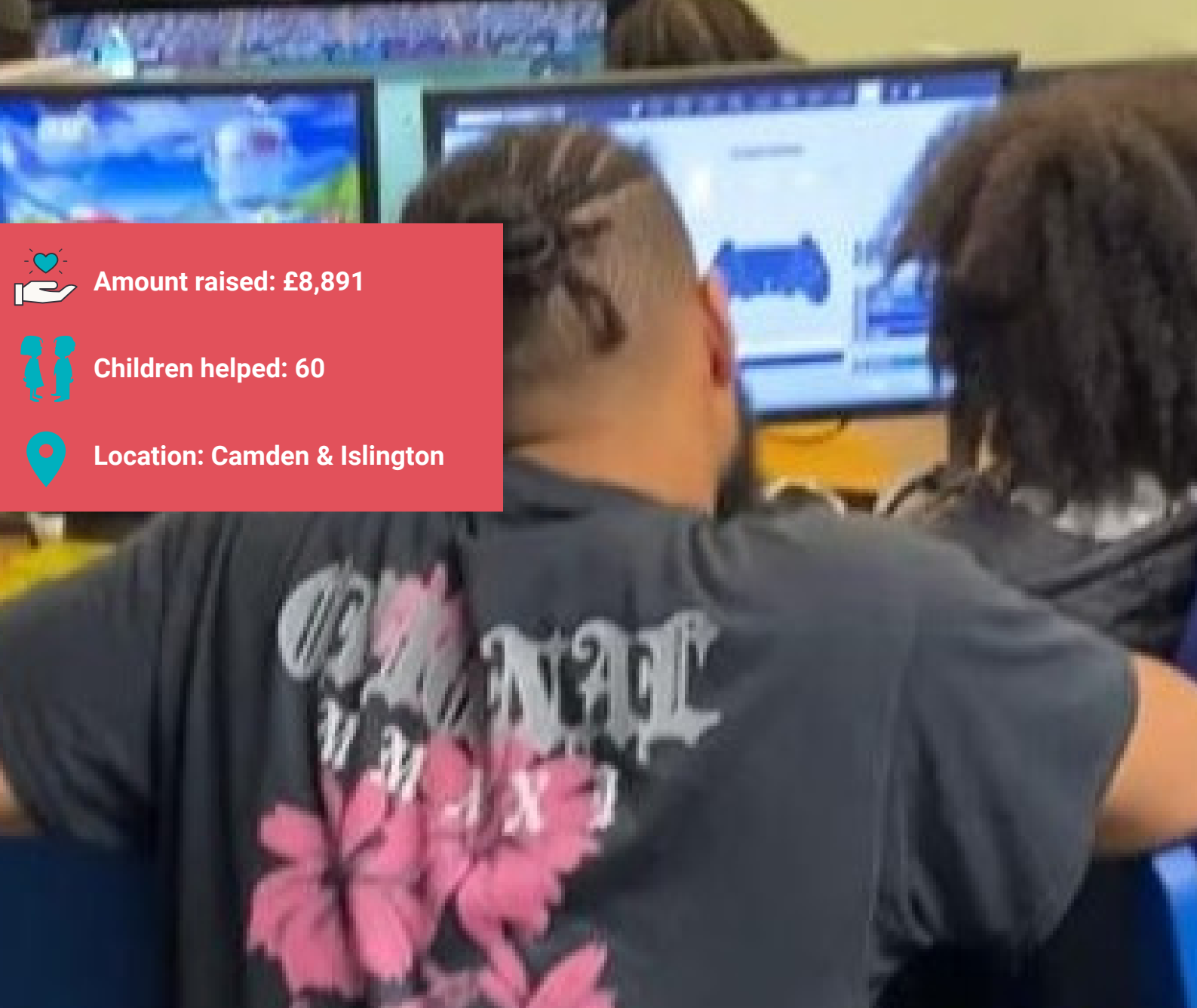
Adult support is crucial, one that can make a big difference down the line, as volunteer mentor Kas explains: "When young people learn how to regulate, how to communicate and give language to situations, we can prevent violence and antisocial behaviour." The presence of trusted mentors means vulnerable children are heard and understood, allowing them to channel their emotions positively. Time spent at CHIPS during the summer months creates the opportunity to build lasting relationships, guiding young people to make safe and positive choices.



Working With Community

With the cost-of-living crisis hitting Angell Town residents hard, CHIPS aims to support both children and their families. Whether it's collaborating with other local organisations, or providing parents with provisions and resources, staff at the youth centre are dedicated to uplifting the whole community. The organisation supplies children with free healthy meals, while helping to shift the burden of childcare from busy working parents. It's a place to come together, and create safety through connection.

***"I feel safe here. I know there's people who I trust who will help me in a tough situation."
Jaden, 17***



Amount raised: £8,891



Children helped: 60



Location: Camden & Islington

Why did you focus on the impact goal **Safety?**

A sense of safety is essential to children’s wellbeing and development. Helping to foster secure living conditions and positive environments is key to enjoying a decent quality of life. Safety is also important to create community cohesion and feelings of belonging.

Children are Confident - Go Live Theatre Projects

London's West End is synonymous with the Stage. It's the perfect location for Go Live Theatre Project's 'Summer Stage' program. Using the power of performance to unlock possibilities for children their dedicated summer workshops provide inspiring stage experiences for disadvantaged and children. At a time when local theatre camps are prohibitively expensive and largely inaccessible to the neurodivergent community, Go Live Theatre Projects seeks to expand access to creative spaces – ensuring every child can express themselves through dance, song, and drama. From theatre practice, to attending matinee performances and putting on a final play, young people learn the skills to bring stage confidence to their everyday lives.

Confidence through Self-Expression

For the children who attend the 'Summer Stage' programme, rehearsal is the epicentre for creative self-expression. From dance classes to improv sessions and creative writing workshops, young people are immersed in the theatre experience - writing their own script and expressing themselves freely. "Being onstage is so important because I get to express myself and show people who I am," says 15-year-old Tom, an avid dancer who is keen to show off his moves.

By allowing the space to advocate for their creative voices, theatre workshops encourage children to dive into performance with confidence and gusto. Performance activities are not only a joyful experience for the young people who attend the theatre workshops, but essential to build important life skills. Through creativity and communication, children are challenged to step out of their comfort zones, building the confidence needed to apply these newfound skills to their everyday lives. Professional practitioners and volunteers encourage leadership, teamwork, and problem-solving, inspiring the children to pursue their artistic interests and expand their creative horizons.



Go Live Theatre Projects is focused on creating an inclusive environment for children living in poverty, ensuring they are valued, seen, and heard. "There's a level of acceptance here that you don't often find in a school setting," says lead director Tash, "the children come from different backgrounds and see the world in such different ways; watching them come together is a beautiful thing." Uniting children through theatre is pivotal to break down barriers and reduce social stigma.



"I can express myself around my peers without feeling judged; it's really helped me break out of my shell."

Rachel, 13

SEND and the Stage

The 'Summer Stage' programme extends accessibility to the theatre for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. Dedicated workshops for young people with mild to moderate learning difficulties provide a platform for those underrepresented in the performance arts. "We want to create a supportive environment and let the children work at their own pace," says program manager Layne, "it's about guiding them so they can achieve the full experience." Devoted staff provide tailored and holistic care, removing obstacles to participation and encouraging young people to perform at their best.

Overcoming Mental Health Challenges

As with many young people today, those who participate in Go Live Theatre Project's programs can experience mental health issues. With anxiety, depression and low self-esteem on the rise, children often feel isolated and don't know how to express their emotions. Drama can be an important channel to help young people feel less alone. Working towards a common goal, children share a sense of purpose and connection, building the social bonds that will help them navigate emotional challenges.

It's a subject that's close to Assistant Practitioner Ana's heart. "It's a space where young people get to leave all their problems behind, let loose and be silly! I'd like to think it's a form of therapy." Children are given the tools to express themselves through drama, allowing the space to explore their emotional worlds. It's the foundation for overcoming insecurities and building confidence – changing young lives on and off the stage.



Amount raised: £109,469



Children helped: 700



Location: All London Boroughs

Why did you focus on the impact goal Confidence?

Confidence is an essential skill to help make children ready for life. Raising ambitions, developing self-assurance, and fostering a passion for learning can help young people overcome obstacles, providing motivation to pursue future career aspirations and preparing them to enter adulthood

Summary

Through your generous donations, the Champions for Children 2023 has made a huge impact on children living in poverty this summer, engaging an estimated 68,168 children this year. The Childhood Trust's projects have been able to provide essential services to struggling families; nutritious meals, enriching activities, skills-based learning and a safe place to play are but a few of the indispensable provisions your contributions have afforded. For many families, it's meant the difference between a summer spent trying to survive and seeing their children grow and thrive.

Making summer count is a difficult challenge for families on low incomes. The cost-of-living crisis has put a huge burden on parents trying to meet their children's needs, with holiday provisions out of reach for low-income families. Additionally, post-pandemic social and academic setbacks have had a profound effect on young people, especially those without the resources to access support. Our charity delivery partners have gone above and beyond to address many of these issues, holistically supporting children at a critical stage in their development.

The testimony of the children and parents in this report highlights the essential need for the Trust's services. The work children's charities do to relieve ever-worsening experiences of poverty is the glue that holds communities together, making your support more important now than ever. With continued funding, we can help tackle the insidious consequences of poverty for children – providing the opportunity to be healthy, resilient, safe, confident and ultimately, prepared for life.



Thank you so much for your generous support!

We are especially grateful to our charity partners and families who have taken the time to share their valuable insight on the positive impact that these charities can have on everyday life.

We hope that our report does justice to the priceless work that you conduct in our communities!



The Childhood Trust
www.childhoodtrust.org.uk
info@childhoodtrust.org.uk