

YMCA Branching Out with Community Orchard

Monday 6 March, 2017

Young residents at YMCA Humber designed and planted a community orchard to gain new skills and to support their YMCA centres' enterprise!

The Big Lottery Fund has invested £33 million in more than 30 organisations to inspire and develop the next generation of environmental leaders through **Our Bright Future** programme led by The Wildlife Trusts.

Fruit-full Communities is one of the funded projects and is working with residents of 10 YMCA sites in England, including YMCA Humber who created their own orchard, learning new skills such as designing, budgeting, trees planting and pruning. They are also gaining better understanding of the importance of trees in protecting the environment and are making connections with other young people working with trees in African countries.

For many YMCA residents this is the first project of its kind and here is what some of them said:

"I've really enjoyed working on the project and I can't wait to see it when it is finished." Paul, YMCA resident

"I joined a committee for the Orchard Project and I was made Chair Person.

"I designed the logo and drew up the plans, something I thoroughly enjoyed doing. Art has always been a passion of mine and the Orchard Project has given me the opportunity to showcase my talent."

Anthony, YMCA resident

On 18 March 2017 YMCA Humber residents, supported by YMCA staff and community volunteers will be celebrating the opening of their orchard at a community event at the charity's Peaks Lane site from 2pm-5pm.

We invite the local community to join the celebrations and also to meet our orchard creators and have a go at a range of activities, including tree dressing, woodcraft workshops, fresh food coking demos, a cob workshop, as well as a BBQ, stalls, live music, a disco and much, much more.

The new orchard was planned and planted by the residents and it will improve their local environment in which they can relax, exercise or socialise. Furthermore, YMCA Humber residents are planning to use the fruit grown for cooking and also to promote healthy eating.

To find out more about the project visit: www.fruitfullcommunities.org

This unique project is a collaborative partnership established by outdoor learning and play specialists, Learning through Landscapes, YMCA, the International Tree Foundation and the Orchard Project.

Stephanie Hilborne OBE, Chief Executive of The Wildlife Trusts said: "Our Bright Future is an innovative movement for change. It is brilliant that the Big Lottery Fund has recognised that societal and environmental challenges are two sides of the same coin. The programme supports young people to develop the skills needed to thrive in the workplace and it does so through the environment. We want to see a generation of courageous and wise leaders empowered to change our world for the better."

Thanks to **Our Bright Future**, thirty one youth-led projects across the UK are each receiving around £1m of funding to give young people the skills and knowledge to improve their local environments. In doing so, young people will develop the confidence and resilience to become environmental leaders and influence

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