

Report



Street Dance February 2013

Street Dance Club was consistently popular, week in, week out; the attendance fluctuated slightly as some children joined later or some left after a few weeks, but there was always a core group that remained enthusiastic and engaged right to the end.

There were a couple of elements that made this club different to others and went toward it being a large success; the children had the privilege of a professional Street Dance teacher who ran the sessions. This was a benefit for the children on many levels; it was a new face that caught their attention from word go, they looked up to her and had a lot of respect for her throughout because she was a professional dancer, it gave the children a fresh start for her to get to know them without the negative perceptions they may have of

themselves, it allowed the youth leaders to focus on encouraging individuals as Lauren continued with instructions for the group as a whole.

Some children initially had difficulty in concentrating and keeping up, which in some cases, despite encouragement, caused them to give up. With those that stuck in and continued to come every week we found that as they got more used to the structure of the session they relaxed into it and got more and more confident each week. As soon as the children realised they knew a bit and were able to dance together without their instructor, this was a huge boost to their self esteem and confidence and they had a thirst to learn more and do better.

The street dance club taught the children how to respect their instructor, listen carefully and concentrate, it taught them to try new things and that it's okay not to get it straight away, but practice to pick it up. It taught them the rewards of effort and hard work. They learned to work individually and as a group.

The rewarding thing to conclude this club was the final street dance performance where all the children's friends and family were invited. This performance grew out of how well they did in the club and we felt they deserved to be recognised as they grew so much in ability.

The performance was a chance for parents to see their children in a different light and how much they had developed through attending the club. Some of the children spent the first week up the back, distracted and refused to join in, this behaviour was down to a lack of self belief and confidence to give it a try in case they looked stupid or couldn't do it, one of the children stopped coming and the other continued to stick in with the club. The contrast in the child's behaviour between week one and the final performance was like watching another child; she was confident, leading the group from up front, smiling and delighted to show off to her mum and her Gran.

The final night displayed a unity within the group as they laughed and smiled together and were excited to get pictures as a group and with their instructor. They encouraged each other as they danced together in their routine, and also during one section where they all had the stage to themselves to freestyle as the rest clapped and cheered them on. This was a chance for them to be confident in showing off their individuality, which for me was one of the main outcomes for the children from the attending club, a real sense of who self belief in their own abilities and personality.

The parents cheered as the children finished their routine, looking so proud of their children and praising them as we mingled at the end of the night.

In the feedback some parents expressed their appreciation as they wouldn't normally have been able to afford to send their children to dance classes and some of the children's feedback was that they never would have thought they would have been any good at it. Thanks to the Street Dance Club friends were made, talents surfaced, confidences were built and fun was had by leaders and children alike.

