Heritage Hunters: young people help open up



Aerial view of Auckland Castle

The Heritage Hunters, a group of young people from in and around Bishop Auckland, have been actively involved with the project from the onset. They will play a major role in bringing it together by working with staff from Auckland Castle, exploring ideas of how to engage other young people and families to take an interest in the castle and its long, impressive heritage.

Their first challenge will be to learn as much as possible about the castle, in order to become tour guides for visitors to the castle. They have lots of ideas on how to encourage children and families in activities, with family fun days, sports events, cooking events and an art competition during the school summer holidays.

Auckland Castle’s history yields many stories relating to local life over hundreds of years. These stories will form the basis of the project providing opportunities to engage the public via social media and various exhibitions.

Auckland Castle is one of the UK’s most important historical buildings. Since the days of the Norman Conquest in the 11th Century, the castle has been a seat of power. For almost 900 years, it has been the palace of the Prince Bishops of Durham and although the site where the castle now stands has seen numerous changes, few will have been as far reaching and visionary as those which are set to take place in the 21st Century.

At the end of the project the young people leading the project will evaluate and record their experiences sharing them with the wider community.

Commenting on the award, Felicity Shenton, Strategic Director says: “This is such an exciting project. We have been working with a group of young people from the local area as well as members of the Polish community. They have lots of ideas about how to make the castle more interesting and accessible to children and families. They will become trained tour guides, run competitions and organise family days. Great news for the young people and great news for the local area.”

Explaining the importance of the HLF support, Head of HLF North East, Ivor Crowther, said: “This is an excellent project for the young people of Durham. As well as the vast collection of skills they will develop, this in-depth look at the castle and its place within their local history will help inspire them to explore their heritage for many years to come and ensure the castle is accessible as possible for the public. Auckland Castle is a magnificent part of the North East’s landscape, and this project, led by the enthusiasm of the young people involved, will help raise its profile and open it up to more people than ever.”

Notes to editors

- Investing in Children is a children's human rights organisation that supports children and young people to access and improve public and voluntary sector services and facilities.
- Investing in Children is a Community Interest Company ((registered in England & Wales) No. 8428687
- Investing in Children is a children’s human rights organisation that works with children and young people aged 0-18 to help them to improve the ways that public and voluntary sector services are delivered.
- For more information on activities and events visit the Investing in children website.

Further information

For further information, images and interviews, please contact

Investing in Children: Felicity Shenton, Strategic Director, email: Felicity.shenton@investinginchildren.net, tel: 0191 372 9200.

Heritage Lottery Fund press office: Lucinda Tyrrell, email: lucindat@hlf.org.uk, tel: 020 7591 6031.