Changing lives: different faiths make connections



Leicester children of different religious faiths were given a unique opportunity to learn about a previously unknown shared history, thanks to a National Lottery-supported project exploring the First World War.

A Century of Stories, run by Leicestershire County Council, gives local people and organisations throughout the county the opportunity to discover their own personal connections, and those of their communities, to the conflict.

As part of the project, Sikh, Muslim, Hindu and Christian children looked at how people from their own faiths were involved in and affected by the First World War and discovered a shared heritage with other religions.

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>
> - Jasbir Mann, Headteacher of Falcons Primary School

The children, supported by their primary schools, looked at letters sent from the front line to families back home and thought about what they would have written had they been there at the time. They also produced artwork, a tree dressed with messages of peace and a dramatic dance performance.

“This is being carried out in a number of different faiths,” says Alex Wallace, history lead at St John the Baptist School, “and that shows great unity within the message and great similarity within the faiths. Instead of concentrating on differences we are concentrating on similarities."

The revelation that the war had involved soldiers of all faiths came as an eye opener. “For many years the Sikh contribution has been hidden. When I was at school I had no idea that our culture had such a contribution to make to the war and the children have learned that,” says Jasbir Mann, headteacher of Falcons Primary School.

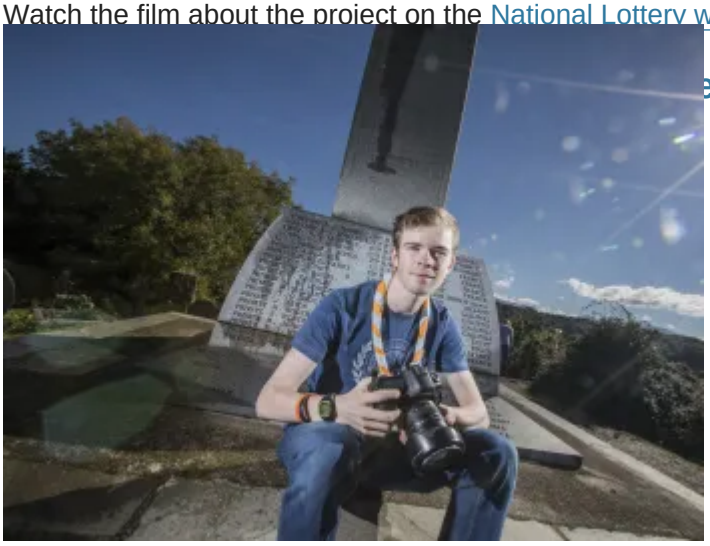
As the project ended all those involved gathered at Leicestershire County Hall to share the performances and displays each school had prepared based on what it had discovered.

Thanks to National Lottery players, the experience created by the project had a profound effect on the people who took part, creating connections in the community and between faiths that might not otherwise have been made.

“Thank you for the opportunity this project has given us," says Imtiaz Patel, Deputy Head of Madani Schools Federation. “It’s allowed us to work collaboratively on a project - to work together on something that really shows our connection.”

Watch the film

Watch the film about the project on the National Lottery website.



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Changing lives: Scout learns about terror of the trenches