Five ways heritage helped the Dust Kickers' well



HLF's Heritage Ambassadors at the Geffrye Museum Jeff Gilbert

Our young Heritage Ambassadors explain how heritage improved their well-being growing up.

Whether it's through providing access to well-kept green spaces, or improving people's self-confidence by giving them new skills, National Lottery projects throughout the UK are improving people's well-being every day.

This month, we're focusing on how money raised by National Lottery players and invested by HLF improves the well-being of children and young people.

We asked our Heritage Ambassadors how heritage has improved their well-being. Here are five key things they said:

1. Increased social skills

"Volunteering within heritage increased my capabilities socially. I would describe myself as quite introverted and preferred to stay in the background when it came to activities, and let others take a lead.

"For the local projects I was involved with, not only did the inclusive environment give me a feeling of belonging, but I had responsibilities. It was lovely to shape a new appreciation of heritage where we created new resources that were inventive and accessible to people.

"As a result, I'm probably more sociable these days and not as blunt or pointed in how I speak to people." – *Jack, 24, Dorset*

2. Strengthening communities

“As a kid, I saw a small garden project in my town allow lots of people to act towards a cause together. I felt that this community project added value to locals and everyone involved – it built heritage.

"Nature can bring people together and make them happier, nurturing local spirit, and like the butterfly effect, even a small project can uncover a whole wealth of joy in any community." – *Zeta, 17, Telford*

3. Establishing personal identity

“Heritage can bring us closer to who we are. There’s so much pressure on young people to ‘find themselves’ at an early age, but engagement in heritage allows us to explore our history, culture and identity in a safe and positive environment.

"There’s no time frame or deadlines: young people can explore and learn at their own pace." – *Lizzie, 23, London*

4. Providing an inclusive environment

“Heritage is not exclusive: it is relevant to all. As someone with an invisible illness, I feel this most when I am in a heritage space.

"It gives us the opportunity to meet new people, including those from many different backgrounds, diversifying our life experience." – *Lizzie*

5. Cultivating skills and talents

“I have dealt with a very serious case of depression and anxiety for some time. I was taken out of school to be taught in a hospital because it was so bad.

"I got one C at GCSE English Literature and was in a place where I wasn't sure if I would live to the age of 18, but I had the advantage of an amazing careers advisor who got me into a youth volunteer project at the British Museum and that opened up a lot of doors for me.

"Between the time of leaving mainstream school and now has been a struggle but I am happier than ever and I owe all of it to my experiences volunteering in heritage. My life was changed in ways I could never have imagined by being involved in heritage." – Floria, *17, London*



The Heritage Ambassadors outside the Geffrye Museum Jeff Gilbert



Young people taking part in an Ambition project at Woodford House Ambition

Kicking up a storm! Young people shake up heritage