Youth Social Action in 16 – 19 Study Programmes

Bexley College
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Bexley College is a small GFE in South East London.

As a vocational college we are aware that qualifications alone will not help our students to get jobs. Although we have significantly increased the number of work experience placements for our students we appreciate that it is not always possible or appropriate to offer work experience placements to all students. We have a broad understanding of employability skills and recognise that volunteering is not only socially responsible but it does develop the skills of our students so that they are better able to compete in the job market.

Across the academic year our Personal Learning Coaches deliver a group tutorial programme which has themed weeks aimed at creating a feeling of community both internally and externally to the College and to raise awareness of youth social action. This includes an understanding of organisations like the National Citizenship Service who we work closely with.

Below are some examples of our students' volunteering activities:

**Art, Media and IT**

Students have worked on creating fund raising events for three charities. They were given a brief and asked to research a charity then present their ideas to the group. Our students run their own internal TV Channel and interviewed representatives from the chosen charities. The winning idea from each group was then adopted by the class and the events were organised and delivered. These events included bingo, a fashion show, a talent show, printing t-shirts, selling gifts for Valentine's Day and a fancy dress competition.

**Bexley College Students Union**

At the end of 2012/13 the Students Union proposed that the College adopt two local charities to support in the following academic year. The two charities that were chosen are a local children's hospice and a local community hospice. This created additional opportunities for students to gain work experience and
opportunities to expand their knowledge of these organisations and to become actively involved in charity work.

**Health and Social Care and Childcare**

Students visited the hospices and volunteered to support the Charities at their events.

**Construction**

In 2013/14 our students volunteered to build 2 picnic benches using the skills they had learnt during their study programme. They wrote the project brief and designed the benches. They worked out the amount of materials they would need and consulted with the staff and residents at the Hospice. The benches were then presented to the Hospices.

This year they have built sound boxes for the Children’s Hospice to help deaf and hard of hearing children.

**IT and Media**

We also work closely with Bexley Age UK on their Intergenerational MiCommunity ‘We Just Clicked’ project.

Our students volunteered to act as mentors to local residents and help them understand how to use their computers, mobile phones, social media and digital cameras. We ran sessions in our Learning Resource Centre once a week and this helped to build positive relationships with the older residents and our students. At the end of the programme students receive a reference from Age UK.

At our end of year awards ceremony the Student Union presented the money that had been raised and the Construction Team presented the benches to the Representatives of the two adopted Charities.

One of our students won the Volunteer of the Year award from Bexley Age UK. We are now in our second year of this fantastic project and hope to continue into the future.

**Hair and Beauty**

A spin off from the project was that our Hair and Beauty students gave demonstrations on the services they provide and a number of the residents then became clients in the hair and beauty salons.
At Bexley College social action is recognised as an integral part of a student’s Study Programme one that will support them to develop their employability skills and contribute positively to the local community.