

Business Comment

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Special Report:
Community, Culture
and Heritage

Edinburgh
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
Inspiring Connections

#BeTheBridge for young people in Edinburgh with MCR Pathways

“It makes such a difference to a young person’s life to have a person coming from outside of school to see you once a week. That one-to-one relationship, I think, is invaluable.” Craigroyston Community High School Deputy Headteacher, Karen Smart

Every young person has something special to offer. However, Edinburgh’s care-experienced and disadvantaged pupils face challenges outwith their control that make it more difficult to succeed. These are young people in our community, but we don’t always see their struggles.

Scottish charity MCR Pathways is working to ensure that every young person in Scotland gets the same education outcomes, career opportunities and life chances as every other young person, no matter their home circumstances.

And they need your help to make this happen.

MCR Mentoring

MCR Pathways recruits and trains volunteer mentors who are matched with a young person based on personality, interests and career aspirations. Mentors come from all walks of life and meet with their young person for just one hour a week to provide a non-judgmental, listening ear.

In schools before MCR mentoring, only 48% of care-experienced pupils left school to a positive destination while last year 86% of MCR mentored young people did.

Since 2018, MCR Pathways has been working in Craigroyston Community High School and in 2020 the charity is expanding into Broughton High School, Drummond Community High School, Forrester High School, Gracemount High School, Leith Academy, Liberton High School, St. Augustine’s High School and Wester Hailes High School.

Craigroyston’s Deputy Headteacher, Karen Smart, has already started seeing the programme’s impact and believes schools throughout Edinburgh will benefit.

Meet Daryl & John

Each young person we work with has unique challenges to overcome and they’re matched specifically with a mentor who can help



them succeed. For Daryl, a 6th year pupil at Craigroyston, disruptions at home were beginning to have an effect before he met John.

Speaking of his experience before mentoring, Daryl said: “It was a lot more chaotic. Since I’ve had John as a mentor, he’s really helped me with the UCAS and personal statement stuff, so that’s really relieved the stress a lot, so I can focus.”

Meeting each week, their conversation topics range from exams to football, from music to university. As the mentoring progressed, Daryl started coming out of his shell and was even voted Head Boy.

John, who worked at the Royal Bank of Scotland, told us: “Daryl is a really talented young guy. He’s a little bit shy and lacks confidence sometimes, but he just needs a bit of a nudge to get over that.”

When asked about why he likes having a mentor, Daryl told us: “I can always speak to John about something. That’s really good as well, to have someone else there.”

Can you support a young person in Edinburgh to be their best? MCR Pathways is looking for more individuals to #BeTheBridge for a young person between potential and possibilities. Visit mcrpathways.org for more information and to sign up.