



Wallace High School
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28 August 2015

Dear Parent Teacher Network

Wallace High School's Young Carers

Over the last few years Wallace High has made significant progress in the support offered to Young Carers within our school community. The number of pupils identified has grown exponentially year on year and is now a priority focus within the school. It should be noted that the pupils concerned are in most ways like any other Wallace High pupil, displaying a great blend of hard work, commitment, maturity, humour and resilience.

On a day to day basis, pupils and staff could be oblivious to the fact that our Young Carers have been working hard at home with caring duties that keep them busy before and after school and at times throughout the night. Over a school year it is natural for our Young Carers to struggle at times with the balance of school and caring responsibilities at home. This has led us to the point of providing a Young Carer group at Wallace High.

It may be helpful to consider the National Picture of Young Carers and how a young person can be defined to have a carer role within their household. A Young Carer is defined as someone aged 7 and above who help to or have the responsibility of looking after a family member who suffer from; a long term illness, disability, mental health issues and or substance misuse. The Carers Strategy 2015 states that almost 1 in 10 young people in every class have caring responsibilities (excluding 17 and 18 year olds). Currently, there is huge political and HMI/Education Scotland focus on supporting Scotland's Young Carers, making them a national priority.

Thanks to awareness raising around the school, Wallace High School has already identified at least 36 Young Carers. To acknowledge and support these young people, we run a timetabled YC group, who meet once per week. During this time, we learn to cook healthy, easy recipes which can then be recreated at home. It is extremely important that the group meet during school hours and not after school or during break and lunch as those times often cross into caring duties. The group not only provides valuable life skills, but also provides an informal/no pressure setting for the young people to chat with other Young Carers who may be experiencing similar situations to themselves. As the group is of mixed age, an additional benefit is that some of the older members have become peer mentors to younger members.

The group incurs some small week to week running costs for ingredients etc. However, the young people are always keen to contribute, where possible, to whole school events such as the Winter Fayre and Annual Ceilidh to raise money.

Recently, the group have been presented with a fantastic and life changing opportunity, to take part in a tall ship voyage in June of 2016. This trip is supported, run and partly funded by the Ocean Youth Trust. Children in Need are also partly contributing to the funding.

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Ten of our Young Carers will have the opportunity to take part in the experience of a lifetime – spending 5 days and 4 nights sailing around the islands of Scotland, learning valuable new skills and doing something for themselves.

During this time, Stirling Young Carers Service will provide respite care. All young people taking part will be able to achieve a partial or full Silver Duke of Edinburgh award which will be invaluable for their CV's. It is our intention that this will become an annual event for Wallace High Schools Young Carers, so that as many as possible can access this amazing opportunity.

Despite winning fundraising, we still have a shortfall of funding to meet in order for the trip to go ahead, which we partly hope to meet through the group fundraising throughout the year and with your support. We are asking that you support this life changing cause by donating £600, which will go towards: funding ingredients for the group, equipment and spending money for the voyage and generally supporting Young Carers every day at school.

It has been proven that this group not only improves the Health and Wellbeing of the young people, but also impacts positively on their attendance and attainment. It is hoped that if we can continue this group, more Young Carers will come forward and reach out for support. We would be delighted if you came along to one of our groups and saw for yourselves how beneficial this project is.

I look forward to your response

Yours sincerely



Adele McAdam