

VOCAL POINT MAGAZINE

ISSUE NO. 2

???

QUIZZES

ART

RECIPES

POETRY

STORIES

Welcome to our world. Welcome to Vocal Point!

We're a group of home-educated young people from Kent Youth Voice's Not on Mute group.

This is the second edition of our magazine, created especially for young people. We were inspired to bring together a range of content celebrating our unique journeys, sharing our passions, and giving you a glimpse into our vibrant reality.

Inside this issue, you'll discover:

-  Art
-  Short stories and poetry
-  Recipes
-  Quizzes
-  Special features on what matters most to us and so much more...

We want Vocal Point to be a space where your experiences are understood and valued — a place shaped by people who've walked in your shoes. That's why we'd love you to send in your work so we can share it here.

Our goal is for Vocal Point to be your community hub: somewhere to feel inspired, feel heard, and most importantly, feel connected.

So, dive in, get involved, and let's show everyone the incredible things we can achieve — together.

This magazine and all its contents have been created by the Not on Mute group with contributions from other young people from across Kent Youth Voice groups.

For more information message us at KYCC@kent.gov.uk;

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EDITION

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WELCOME TO OUR WORLD

Hi my name is Adam.

I am 16 years old.

I am energetic, self-caring and very optimistic.

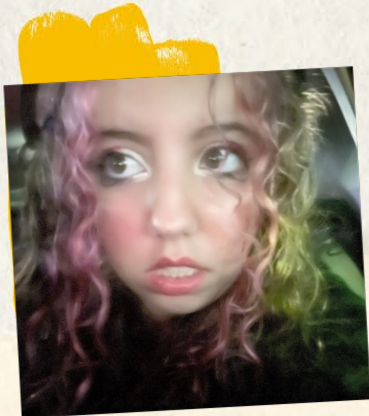
My dream job is to be an author and write books.

My dream holiday is to go to Japan and California.

I have two pet rabbits, Frisbee and Latte.

I am enjoying working on lots of creative things for our Vocal Point magazine.

My favourite food is spaghetti and carrot.



Hi! I'm Amie and I'm 16 years old !

My favourite food is probably Mac &

Cheese (specifically the one from Toby carvery).

My dream job is to be a Sociologist! (or make a living from my art).

I have 1 dog called Coco! (she's a French bulldog!) and a tortoise called Cosmos. He's great!

And my dream holiday is to go to any Universal Studios that has a Simpsons area! (as I am obsessed with the Simpsons and have a whole collection of Simpsons merch!!).



I'm Conrad

And I'm 16.

I'm currently making a tabletop role play games system and writing stories.

I dislike almost every kind of food.

And I can crash any computer with ease (when I'm not trying to).

Hi! I'm Evie. I am 12 years old. I love art, roller-skating, writing stories and hanging out with my friends. I have multiple jobs I want to do when I'm older, some of them are author, astronomer, zoologist, and baker.

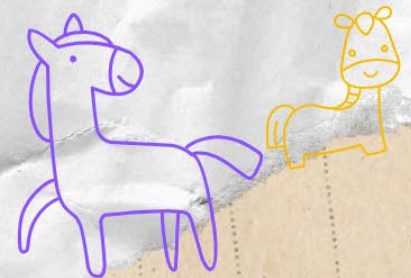


Hi, I'm Holly and I'm 13 years old.

My main hobby is horses; I'm with them as much as I can. I have pets too – a cat called Smudge, my rabbits – Gru and Nugget and my pony – Storm. I used to loan a pony called Hooch too and I still ride him occasionally and help look after him too. I also support Adopt a Donkey - Drizzle and Tornado.

My dream holiday would be to the New Forest or stay in a lodge outside a pony's field.

My dream job is to be a Liberty Trainer. This is where you work closely and connect with horses so much that they don't need bridles and reins, they just know what to do.



Hi I'm Scarlett!!

I'm 16, my favourite food is Pho!

For the projects I'm working on right now, my personal ones are to improve in ballet and just to generally try to have more time to focus on my hobbies (hardcore

procrastination) 🤪, and for Kent Youth Voice the main thing I'm doing right now is probably working on the new Vocal Point magazine! My hobbies/favourite things to do are dance, piano, listening to music, reading, making new friends, journaling and watching new TV series!!

I think the three words I would use to describe myself are: gentle, funny and kind. For pets, I have a boy dog, and I love him so so much he's the cutest angel ever. 🇪🇸 My dream vacation destination is Oregon, United States!! Lastly, my dream job is to be an entomologist. (I love bugs a lot)

Thank you for reading !!!

BOOK REVIEWS

The Reading for Resilience group at Kent Youth Voice tell us about some of the books they have been reading to inspire you.

The Lost Hero by Rick Riordan

A review by Scarlett from our Reading Group

The Lost Hero is the first book in Rick Riordan's Heroes of Olympus series—and for me, it's the start of my favourite collection he's written. Right from the beginning, readers are introduced to a brand-new character, Jason Grace. If you're used to Percy Jackson, this can feel a bit surprising at first. You might even wonder, "Where's Percy gone?" But this change is what makes the book feel exciting and new.



'One of the standout features of The Lost Hero is its storytelling.'

Unlike the original Percy Jackson series, which is told only from Percy's point of view, this book switches between three characters: Jason, Leo, and Piper. This gives the story more depth and allows readers to connect with each of them in different ways.

The story follows the trio as they arrive at Camp Half-Blood, discover their godly parents, and are quickly sent on a dangerous quest to rescue the goddess Hera. Along the way, they face powerful enemies, battle mythological creatures, and begin to understand their own abilities.

Riordan brings each character to life with interesting backstories and vivid descriptions, making it easy to get lost in the world of Greek mythology. The mix of action, humour, and character development keeps the story moving at a fast pace. Although it might not be my favourite in the series, *The Lost Hero* is a strong and engaging start. It introduces important characters who play a big role later and leaves you wanting to dive straight into the next book.

If you enjoy Greek mythology or are looking for an exciting fantasy series, this is definitely one to pick up.

Evie's Book Nook

I love reading and I wanted to create a space where I could read and feel cosy at the same time, whilst also being with my family instead of in my bedroom. All I needed to create my book nook was a lot of blankets, cushions, a comfy armchair, a good book and a lot of snacks along the way! Now I have created my book nook, I have read a lot more and I concentrate a lot better, which is hard at the best of times when you have ADHD!

I would definitely recommend making a book nook if you like reading as it is a really welcoming and a happy sight to see a place that is only for reading a really good book when you have had a tiring or tough day - or just want to get a book finished!



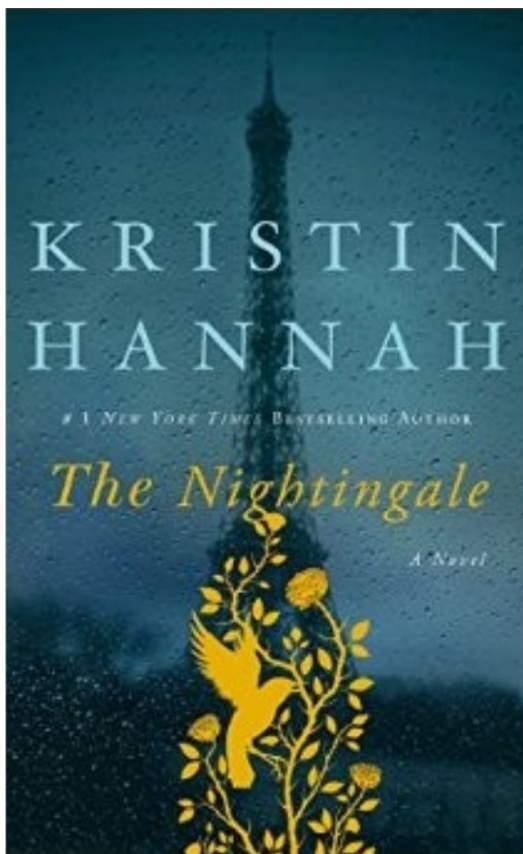
Create your own book nook and send us a photograph or write your own book review and we'll include it in our next edition.

The Nightingale by Kristin Hannah

A review by Lily from our Reading Group

Okay so first of all, *The Nightingale* is like super intense. It's a historical fiction book set during World War II, and I wasn't sure I was gonna like it at first because, you know, war books can be kinda boring.

But wow, this one was actually really good. I couldn't stop reading!! It's about two sisters, Vianne and Isabelle, who live in France and have to deal with the Nazi invasion.



They're really different from each other—Vianne is quieter and wants to keep her daughter safe, and Isabelle is super brave and kinda reckless. But both of them end up doing really dangerous things to fight back, in their own way.

The story made me feel a LOT of emotions. Some parts were really sad and I legit cried (not even kidding). It's crazy how much people went through back then and how strong they were. I also really liked how the sisters changed over time and how their relationship got deeper even though they didn't always get along.

This book is an excellent read; I can't recommend it enough.

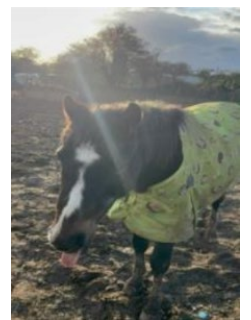
A Day in the Life of Storm

By Holly



Morning, it's about 7am, and I have just woken up to my best friend Hooch snoring! But that's okay, I will just go and snack on some hay, I prefer haylage, but hay will do. It's now nearly half nine so my mother will be here soon. Hooch is finally awake and as grumpy as ever, so I'm just about to go and get all up in his personal space.

Mother is here so I've just trotted over to the gate to hopefully get a treat, I'll add a little neigh in as well for luck. Just been caught and am now going to follow mother up to the yard like a good boy. Tied up with a hay net as I convinced mother I have been starved, she always falls for it! I'm now being examined by mother, and she called me a mud monster, how rude, I think I will forgive her though, as she has the treats.



I'm now being brushed but I have to check every brush for treats before she takes my mud layer off. Mother is now trying to pick up my feet but I'm going to be naughty and not pick the back ones up as I think she finds it funny! The tack has just come out, but no hi-vis so I think I might be jumping today, my favourite. I recently got a new bit and bridle, but I've been good about it as I get extra treats!

I'm about to go in the arena, but I think I might be picky about where I walk as I don't want to get my precious feet wet!! Made it in and nearly trampled mother as she was in the way. Mother is on and I'm ready to go. After many laps of boring walk, she let me trot but I may or may not have tried to canter instead, oops, I got a bit excited. There is now this long cylinder like think on the floor apparently called a pole but I don't really care. Mother made me go over the pole in trot but It was a bit confusing as it was still on the floor and not a jump.

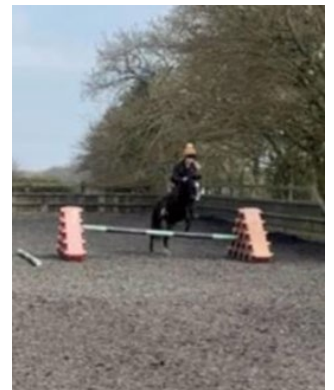




Mother has asked for a canter and of course I can't say no so, I zoooooooooomed! And didn't stop. I'm now being told to turn in a circle, but I think it's just mother trying to trick me into slowing down! I finally stopped and the pole got put on these block things I think that means aaaahhhhhh, pigeon! Never mind false alarm, mother still on board? Yes? Good!

Now, as I was saying I think were ahhhhh, it's was a pigeon! Ahhhhhhh..... Mothers just said its okay so think I will trust her, I think. Ok now where were we, ahh yes, JUMPING!!!

I see the jump, is mother looking? Good, that mean I can go. SPEEEEEEEEEEEEEEDDDD and WEEEE. Made it! Mother is hanging on for dear life for some reason, but we made it over, pole is up, yes let's do that again, see you on the other side.

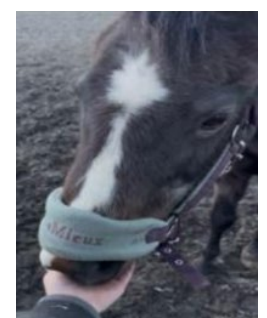
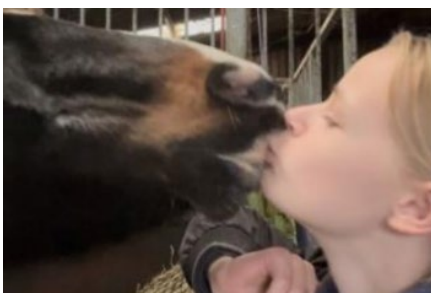


Pheww, we made it, oh hello again! We did the jump a few more times, then I had to walk around the arena again, but I'm finally done and should get a treat soon. Treat time!!!! Smile first...NOMM! Sorry I didn't leave you one, they are just so good!



Now time to make mother think I'm thirsty and then not drink the water she specially put in a bucket for me. Mother has now disappeared, but hopefully she will be back soon... Mother's back, I can't believe she left me for so long wait where is she taking me, ooohh, is it the stable? Yesssssss. I'm in the barn now with all my friends, apart from Gunner he tries to steal my food.

It's been a few hours, and mother has come to say her goodbyes, so will give her some snuggles and a kiss, then push her out my stable so I can eat in peace! And that's my day, hope to see you soon new friend! Xx



Footsteps in the Snow Part 2



A Story by Adam

[If you missed part 1 you can still read it in Vocal Point Issue 1](#)

Nadine received a warning from his boss about his actions. He was told that his employment records would include that he went against the general advice for not accompanying others on what is believed to be a fatal journey. He was given two options; either go back to the village or get fired from his post and subsequently penalised for ignoring the rules and guidelines. Nadine had no choice but to take a very difficult decision to turn around and abort the expedition.

Although Nadine was open and honest with Daniel and Lucas about his superior's warning, they refused to follow his advice and persisted to carry on with the climb. However, they were empathetic and supportive towards Nadine who offered to leave them with his old Russian map and a basic compass.

Two days and two nights passed and Daniel and Lucas made progress with the climb. All seemed peaceful. Suddenly, they heard rumbling in the distance that seemed to get louder and closer every second. Instantly, they both looked at each other as they came to the same realisation. It was an avalanche!

There was no time to act. It came fast and furious! Their screams and cries were buried by the deafening roar of the avalanche. Moments later, all went blank and they were under twenty feet of snow. When one of the most powerful natural disasters settled down, Daniel woke up to find himself buried in snow and in the distance, he could hear Lucas calling his name and asking, "WHERE ARE YOU? ARE YOU OKAY, DANIEL?". The calling was repetitive and seemed to be moving in a direction away from him as Lucas was frantically searching for his friend's traces.

When Daniel paused to listen out for any hopeful responses to his cries, he heard heavy footsteps and a low bellowing sound. His heart started racing as he feared that it might be a polar bear close by. However, he quickly realised that there were no claims of polar bears existing in Nepal - they are arctic animals who inhabit Canada, Greenland, Norway, Russia and Alaska. Then, he had a sinking feeling and overwhelming realisation that if it could not be a polar bear, it would only mean one thing and one thing only.

"Could it really be the white one?", he wondered. His thoughts took him back to the enormous unusual footprints. As he was carefully linking these incidents together, he heard a scream from his friend. He remained quiet and could hear Lucas calling, "HELP! AHHH!". A sudden thump was heard followed by the sound of a sizeable object being dragged across the snow. The loud cries of "NOOO! NOOO!" faded away into the distance.

All went silent! Daniel's heart was still racing while he was trying to make sense of what he experienced and heard. Trying to dig himself out of the snow could be a thin line between life and death. By disturbing tonnes of piled snow on top of him could potentially bury him.



A few hours later, the loud blade slap of an approaching helicopter could be heard. A search team, who were made aware of the avalanche and its risk to the lives of two young men, were prompted to initiate a search party. With their sophisticated equipment, the search team were able to detect someone under the snow by using their thermal imaging sensors.

Finally, Daniel was located and dug out of the snow safely. It was a race against the clock to ensure his body temperature did not drop below a critical point. As soon as he was free, he looked around for his friend but only spotted the Russian map and the compass that Lucas was using, and a trail marked by his friend after being dragged across the snow. One of the search team members collected the map and the compass before handing them over to Daniel, who upon inspecting them noticed that the compass had a red mark that resembled a blood spot.

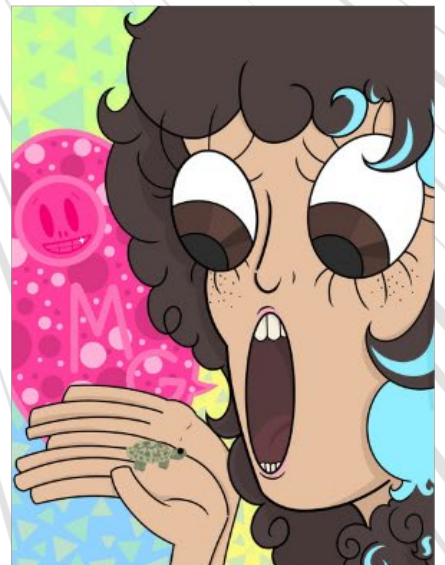
Daniel was rushed to a hospital immediately. The search party remained at the avalanche site in the hope of finding Lucas, but to no avail. However, they stumbled upon a large cave filled with ancient carvings on the wall, primitive symbols and bones. After a few weeks of recovery from hypothermia, Daniel was discharged from hospital. As he was stepping out of the building, his phone notified him of a video recorded message. He was stunned by what he saw on his phone. The recording showed Lucas, alive, addressing Daniel and something out of the frame with a deep rumbling voice repeating what Lucas was saying!

To be continued



Character Designs

by Amie



POETRY

Incomprehensible by Emily

One Icy Morning by Ifan

Nature stands.
Icy powder stiffens all
To a stasis.
Crystalline dusting
From a baker's hand.
Early sun beats down softly,
Catching diamonds on the hillsides.
Blurry shadows fall,
Setting slurred lines on blank canvas.
Mist envelopes the scene.
Hanging in the air
Like a thought of nature,
Suspended loosely.
Birdsong floats on the breeze,
Melodies purely random,
In our world of random faces,
In our world of random places.



The thick cage of my humanity traps my thoughts,
Skeletal bricks grow around my passionate wonder,
Marking the barriers of the explosive constellations,
Seeping from my tear ducts, pupils they rest under.

'Windows of the soul' a soul with no body,
Or else I would find flesh and bone suffocating,
My own raw image- the painter holds the gouache,
My very future is one I have made self-deprecating.
Meteoroids burn away and scar beneath my surface,
A siren awaits an opening until a sailor she can lure,
Perhaps an orca whale circling weeps and scorns,
Oxygen is all it needs to function, yet, no more.
The depthless tank my mind needs to operate,
Takes nothing but oxygen from gasping
throats and lungs,
The body I must fuel and nurture
to think these thoughts,
The whale sinks to demise, passionate sand falls
through mesh.
My mind is much too complex,
To be bound by the simplistic layers of my flesh.

From City Grey to Sunny Day by Ifan

We start the way in gloomy grey,
Buildings in place of trees.
The sun won't show, and this we know,
Is causing us to freeze,
But the ferry moves fast through waves,
And trundles over sea.
The wind loud howled as it wanted to say,
There will be brighter sights to see.
So, when we arrive, the sun so shines,
That it illuminates the green,
Blue water around leads me to long,
For this paradise island we've seen.

Untitled by Emily

My singular desire is for you to share
the same passion
To debate and question the substance
of humanity's fashion
Yet, to interlink our hearts would be giving
you only a ration
Where you will infinitely within my soul wish to ashen
It is not you I shame, but my own naive perplexion
Are you truly captivated by me,
or is it only an extension
Of the emptiness of love,
you bear for your very reflection
That you wish for another to return as
sorrowful 'repention
If each singular vessel of my heart
were to praise your name
My mind would leave these vessels
to suffocate your fame
And would this shoot you in the heart
as if to rip it apart?
As I can never be yours, not in any universe or art
'You cannot speak poetry to someone who does not
for poetry read'
Every fleeting romance refuses to read my soul, thus
without heed
Such is my proclivity,
I love with the entirety of my flesh
Whilst every other soul allows theirs
to fall through mesh
I am content to lend some to these pages,
to fill my heart with word
Yet would it alter the earth to find another with whom
I am heard?

Trees by Evie

Tall and magnificent,
Looming, growing, swaying,
Fun to climb,
Forever there.

Stars by Evie

Beautiful and bright,
Shining, sparkling, surrounding,
Glinting in the sky at night,
Till dawn will you be there.

A Limerick by Evie

I had an apple tree and it grew,
I also had a pear tree too,
The bluebirds loved my trees,
But then came a breeze,
And down came my wonderful trees!

Untitled by Evie

The punishing emotion of life,
Is that you only have one,
One that comes and goes,
Like the wind in the air,
One that sees life of want or not,
One that seeks either the devil or the angel,
But the beauty of life is enchanting,
It fills the soul and it smiles and laughs,
Dances and endures the lengthy wait of
growing up,
And in the dreams and wishes,
Ones that float away,
Like stardust in the night,
Death comes and takes away the meaning
of life,
And you have lived.

***Somnia* by Emily**

My chest bears a great emptiness as I find my
mind emptier
of ideas that are not sculpted to dance on a
page or tongues.
My clay bears no weight as I weigh it with
strictness higher
than the poetic greats; whose passages never
leave my lungs
Another vast idea- to become one of the
greats in my lifetime,
yet I feel sculptures fall through my grasp
even in my prime.
I have kneeled before God and pleaded with
an infinite amen;
Why give me this hand if it was only ever
meant to hold a pen?
My social behaviour has no clay to be
weighed while I find my desire
to write overbearing, it bears me in chains
that only I hold the key.
The only behaviour I find is envy in those who
can in numbers acquire
knowledge of what I never have, writing is
entirely all the good I can be.
Yet good can become great, perhaps
ambition can become fruition.
'Mori memorias non somnia, I refuse to die
with a premonition that I am never able to
sculpt into life, I remain isolated from the key
that leaves me bound to sit before pen and
paper, dreaming for eternity.
If my writing is all I am, a soliloquy I will be.

***Emerald, Olive, Jade and Lime*
by Evie**

Emerald, Olive, Jade and Lime,
The colours of a tree in its summer
season,
Swishing, swooping, gliding, shrieking,
The sound of a parrot enjoying its fun,
Sleeping, playing, calm and collected,
The gentle nature of a gorilla,
Dense, muddy, squelching and brown,
The mud on a paw that dared to tread,
Snoozing, stretching, lazy and
peaceful,
A sloth lays dozing in a tree,
Happy and free,
These animals' plea,
That their jungle will never know he.

***Untitled* by Evie**

A wisp of purple grey and white,
A storm they may bring,
To the ones that children draw,
To the ones that cry rain,
The ones that block the sunlight,
They can see the universe,
Travel with the stars,
Smile at the moon,
And touch the top of the Earth,
They watch over us,
And create the weather of dreams or
dread,
A cloud is always there,
A guardian floating through the air.

If you would like to see your own poetry in print then get in touch

kycc@kent.gov.uk

We would love to share it with our readers.

Animation Quiz

by Adam

1. Who is the creator of both Wallace and Gromit and Shaun the Sheep?



2. Can you name the celebrity who voiced Woody in Toy Story?



3. What is Bugs Bunny's catchphrase?

4. Which cartoon character is known for the line 'Th-th-th-that's all folks!'?

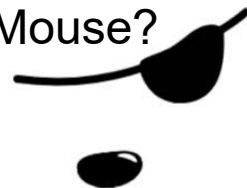


5. Who created the comic strip Peanuts?

6. Which company produced the animated TV series The Flintstones?



7. What British animated cartoon series was a spin-off from Danger Mouse?



8. What is Postman Pat's last name?



9. Name the fictional cat created by the Japanese company Sanrio?



Animal Quiz

by Scarlett

1) How many times does a Bee beat its wings per second?

- A: 300
- B: 200
- C: 500

3) Around how many species of beetle are there?

- A: around 400,000
- B: around 500,000
- C: around 300,000

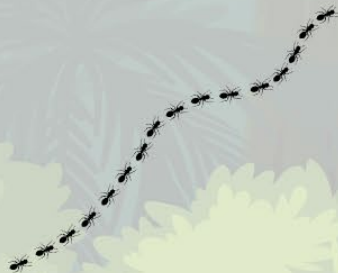


5) Which bird is the only bird that can fly backwards?

- A: Parrot
- B: Hummingbird
- C: Puffin

7) Roughly how many ants are there for every human on the planet?

- A: 3.5 million
- B: 4 million
- C: 2.5 million



9) What were the first species domesticated by humans?

- A: Cats
- B: Sheep
- C: Dogs



2) Which is the largest Wild Cat in the world?

- A: Black Panther
- B: Snow Leopard
- C: Tiger

4) Which is the longest amount of time a snail can hibernate for?

- A: up to 4 years
- B: up to 3 years
- C: up to 5 years



6) What is the largest living rodent?

- A: Capybara
- B: North American Porcupine
- C: Eurasian Beaver

8) What is the largest animal group?

- A: Mammals
- B: Arthropods
- C: Reptiles

10) Which is the fastest swimming fish in the ocean?

- A: Sailfish
- B: Mako Shark
- C: Black Marlin



Space Quiz

by Evie



1) What is the hottest planet in the solar system?

- A: Neptune
- B: Earth
- C: Venus
- D: Mercury

2) What are the two main gases that make up the sun?

- A: Carbon Dioxide and Hydrogen
- B: Hydrogen and Helium
- C: Nitrous Oxide and Oxygen
- D: Helium and Methan

3) In the solar system, which planet has the largest volcano?

- A: Venus
- B: Pluto
- C: Jupiter
- D: Mars

4) In the solar system, which planet has the coldest recorded temperature?

- A: Neptune
- B: Pluto
- C: Uranus
- D: Mars

5) What planet in the solar system is known as the Red Planet?

- A: Mars
- B: Jupiter
- C: Pluto
- D: Venu

6) What planet in the solar system has moons named after Shakespearean characters?

- A: Mars
- B: Venus
- C: Uranus
- D: Saturn

7) What is a comet mainly made out of?

- A: Ice, Light, Dirt and Pebbles
- B: Light and Oxygen
- C: Ice, Water, Dust and Rock
- D: Dirt and random space objects

8) What is a satellite put into space by humans called?

- A. A fake satellite
- B: An artificial satellite
- C: An unnatural satellite
- D: A forged Satellite



Recipe Time

Sarah's Mug Cake



1) You will need...

Ingredients

- 4 spoons self-raising flour
- 4 spoons caster sugar
- 1 spoonful cocoa powder
- 1 medium egg
- 3 spoons milk
- 3 spoons vegetable oil or sunflower oil
- a few drops of vanilla essence or other essence (orange or peppermint work well)
- 2 spoons chocolate chips (optional)

Equipment

- Dessert spoon
- Very large mug or pyrex jug (or two average mugs)
- Small plate to stand your mug on
- Microwave oven



2) Then follow these steps....

- Add 4 tbsp self-raising flour, 4 tbsp caster sugar and 2 tbsp cocoa powder to the largest mug you have (to stop it overflowing in the microwave) and mix.
- Add 1 medium egg and mix in as much as you can, but don't worry if there's still dry mix left.
- Add the 3 tbsp milk, 3 tbsp vegetable or sunflower oil and a few drops of vanilla essence and mix until smooth, before adding 2 tbsp chocolate chips, nuts, or raisins, if using, and mix again.
- Centre your mug in the middle of the microwave oven and cook on High for 1½ -3 mins, or until it has stopped rising and is firm to the touch.

Warning, adult supervision advised as hot temperatures from microwave cooking.

Sarah's Omelette Recipe



1) You will need...

Ingredients

3 eggs
Butter
Salt & pepper

Equipment

Frying pan
Spatula

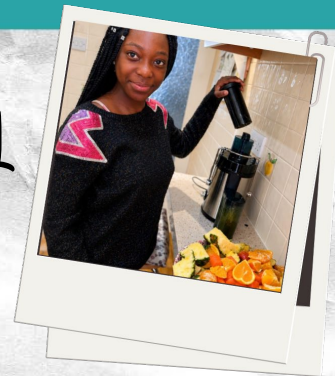


2) Then follow these steps....

- **Beat eggs:** Whisk eggs in a bowl with salt and pepper until the yolk and white are combined.
- **Heat pan:** Melt butter or heat oil in a non-stick pan over medium heat.
- **Cook eggs:** Pour in the egg mixture, tilting the pan to cover the bottom. As the edges set, use a spatula to pull them to the centre, allowing the liquid egg to fill the gaps.
- **Add fillings:** Once the omelette is mostly set but still soft, add your desired fillings (cheese, ham, spinach, etc.) to one half.
- **Fold and serve:** Fold the other half over the filling and slide onto a plate to serve.

Warning, adult supervision advised.

Whitney's Healthy Suggestion



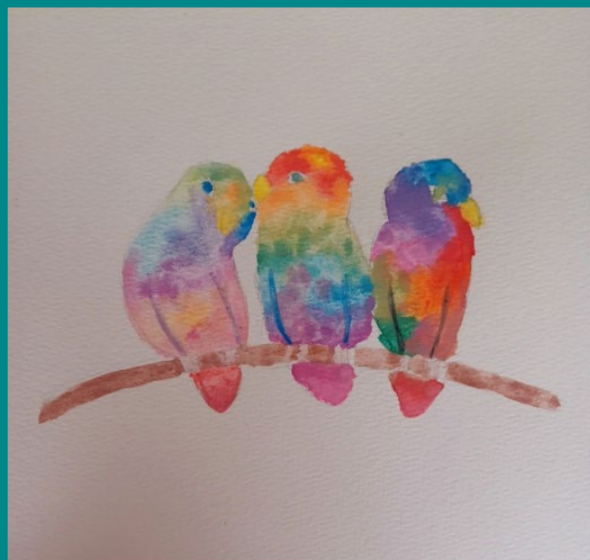
I am making fresh fruit and vegetable juice using oranges, carrots, pineapple and other healthy ingredients. I enjoy preparing healthy drinks because it teaches me about nutrition and healthy eating.

Making juice helps my wellbeing by encouraging me to make healthier choices, be creative, and feel proud of making something myself. It also helps me feel relaxed and gives me more energy throughout the day.

Gallery



Paintings by Evie





Youth Voice Matters



This year's Youth Voice Matters Conference saw disabled children and young people and those with special educational needs from across England come together to develop their participation skills and recognise the impact they can have when taking part in strategic participation.

The conference is co-developed and co-delivered by FLARE, the young SEND advisors to the Department of Education and welcomed children and young people to take part in interactive workshops, learn, build connections with other children and young people, and share their voices.

Four young people from Kent travelled to Birmingham to take part and were fortunate to meet the current Parliamentary Minister for School Standards, Georgia Gould, who was keen to find out their experiences of school from a young person's perspective.

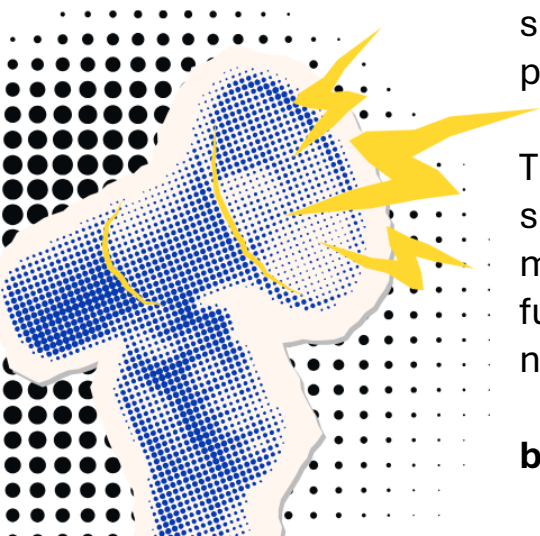


By Sarah - Emotional & Wellbeing Participation Worker

On the 18th February, I was invited to attend a conference in Birmingham. Along with other young adults from the Have Your Say forum, I spent the day attending workshops and listening to a speaker. The workshops allowed us to show our creativity and casting our votes around better pay for hard workers.

There was also a speech about mental wellbeing and supporting children's mental health. It was a chance for me to engage with other young people in a friendly and fun environment. It was my first experience, and I hope it's not the last. I enjoyed it very much!

by Adam



Zara's Adventure

By Evie

A creative writing exercise, using different styles in one short story.



Once upon a time there was a princess. She had long fair hair and eyes that were like pools of rich, dark chocolate. Her name was Zara. Zara lived in a beautiful castle with her parents and siblings, but she always longed for adventure.

One day she was wondering one through the many ornate passages to her turret when she paused at the fireplace. On the carpet a piece of coal lay slowly burning, the now blackened carpet flickering with fire. The royal family did not have any servants or cooks, so they did everything themselves from the preparation of meals to tending to the fireplaces. Panicked, Zara grabbed a poker and speared the burning coal back into the fireplace. Stamping out the fire with her soft satin slippers, she heard a slow, rumbling creak and looked back at the crackling fire. The fireplace was moving! It moved back through the stone wall before stopping abruptly and the low, echoing creaking ceased too.

Curious and startled, Zara peered through the hole which was covered in cobwebs and dust floated about, disturbed by the sudden movement. Coughing and spluttering the excited princess pushed through the layers of thick, stringy webs, only to discover... a massive spider staring back at her! But this was no ordinary spider, this was a Gruntlenark and one thing you need to know about Gruntlenarks is that they're not friendly, at all. The creature stared at the intruder, its eight eyes glistening with rage. Its huge, hairy body was almost as big as the hole itself, and Zara leapt back in shock and disgust.

She had heard of Gruntlenarks before and being a keen reader, knew all about them. When stressed, angry, confused or even sad, the huge not-a-nice-friendly-Daddy-Long-Legs spider, puffed up to almost the size of its surroundings and would give out a warning scream to its babies to attack the apparent predator. As if the Gruntlenark knew what Zara was thinking, it let out a bloodcurdling howl and one by one tiny baby flesh eating monsters came out of the fireplace hole. They crawled over to Zara who was paralysed with fear and letting out their own little screams bit into her. Luckily for the scared princess, the soft, pink silk gown and petticoats gave her a good makeshift armour, before she snapped to

her senses and gathering up all her Gruntlenark knowledge, shook the horrible, creepy crawly monster-spiders off of her dress. Then reaching for a sword from a real suit of armour, she speared each one viciously until she could be certain they were all dead. Zara then stormed bravely over to the fireplace and inserted the sharp end of the sword right into the Gruntlenark's ugly head. It dropped to the dusty floor with a thud. Surprised herself by the violent nature that had taken over her, Zara dropped the nasty body of the Gruntlenark into the hot fire beyond it. Then she walked calmly back to the suit of armour and inserted the sword back into its case, skipping back to the hole to continue on a hopefully Gruntlenark free journey. She wondered about telling her mother or father but decided not to, and she certainly didn't want to include her silly, snotty little brothers and sisters in this adventure, no it was Zara's very own journey.

She knelt down and scuttled through the dirty hole. She stopped and turned when she saw that one side of the passage was blocked off and was relieved to see that the secret tunnel just had a different course of direction, so with lots of shuffling and squeezing, Zara managed to turn round and continued on through the musty passage.

Eventually, the tunnel widened out, and the princess found she could stand. She tiptoed through to a large hall and almost fell over in her surprise. For standing in front of her, faces as happy and excited as a bee who had flew into a meadow full of pollenating flowers, dresses as pristine as the gold porcelain vases in the China cabinet in the castle were lots and lots of magical fairy tale characters! Aurora, Belle, Ariel, Tiana, Cinderella, Rapunzel, Snow White, Pinocchio, Hansel and Gretel, Tinkerbell and Peter Pan were all grouped together, faces glowing as they saw Zara's astonished face peering back at them.

"Hello" she whispered. "Hello there, have you come to rescue us?" asked the princess who looked an awful lot like the Snow White that Zara had so often looked at in her storybook at night. "Yes, yes I have." said the little princess standing up a little straighter and smiling. "Oh, how wonderful, my Phillipe will be so happy to see me again." Princess Aurora cries her blue eyes filled with glossy tears.

"Before we go, I'll just tell you about us and how we got here. I am pretty certain you recognise us, don't you?" asked a smiley, short nosed Pinocchio. "Yes, I do, I love all your stories, I think they are wonderful!" gushed an overwhelmed and excited Zara.

"Well, I was the first one to be captured by the Gruntlenark, the huge spider-monster thing, and taken here. I wasn't scared at all." Pinocchio's short wooden nose grew about 6 inches outwards.

“Oh, blast my silly nose, anyway the rest were captured soon after and here we have been ever since. It was horrid the way he would rip us out of our stories and take us here but none of us were hurt. All we have to do to get back to our stories is touch the book we were taken from and then we will be reunited with our tales again.”
“I shall do my best to return you to your tales.” and with that the rather large party of fairy tale characters bundled into the narrow passage again, the fearless Zara leading the way.

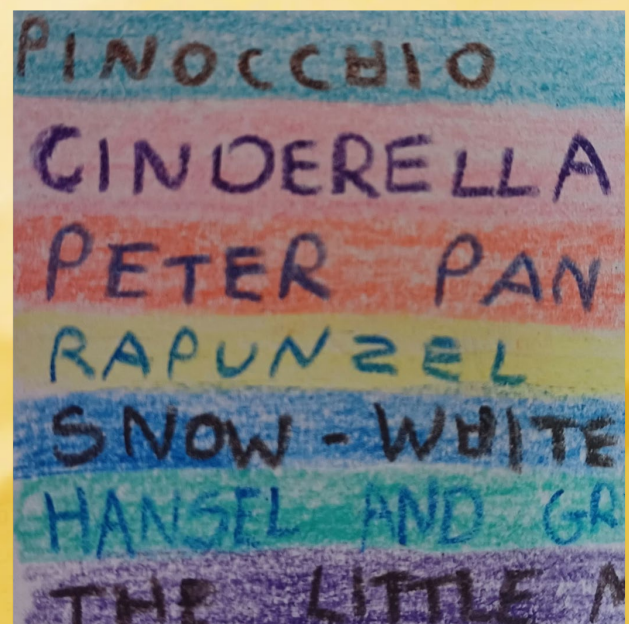
They all fell over each other as at last they tumbled through the small opening in the wall and as if by magic, the fireplace slid smoothly back into place. “OK, to the library” said Zara, who knew where all of her fellow companions' stories were. Clutching the hands of Hansel and Gretel, she picked her way over the dead bodies of baby Gruntlenarks and turning swiftly, marched the rather interesting bunch of fairy tale characters down the hall to the library. She led them in and they settled themselves onto Chaise lounges and expensive cream-coloured sofas while Zara found the stories.

Before long every single story was laying in a line on the smooth carpet, and it was time to say goodbye. The characters knelt next to the books and cries of “Peter” and “Ariel” and “Children” filled the room.

Aurora was kneeling next to her book weeping in happiness as her Phillipe reached out and tried to hold her hand, desperate to be reunited with his one true love.
“I shall go first.” Aurora said. “Thank you, my fellow princesses and fairy tale characters i have loved getting to know you and thank you Zara for rescuing us from that horrible tunnel, you will make a fine queen one day.” with that Princess Aurora laid her hand onto the smooth pages and in a blink of an eye was back in the illustration, blowing kisses and waving and hugging Prince Phillipe before the picture was still again, just like nothing had happened.

The rest of the characters said goodbye and also waved and blew kisses and hugged, inside the pages once again. Zara closed the books carefully and returned them to their places on the bookshelf.

“That was the best adventure ever.”



Lola's Stone

By Evie



“Come on girls let’s go to the beach.” It’s a sunny day, the breeze is light, the seagulls are screaming and the flowers are beautiful, but I don’t feel the urge to say yes. My little sister is obviously feeling the complete opposite and is excitedly bouncing around.

“Grab your hats and shoes and let’s go” Mum says smiling. The trek to the beach is long and tiresome but finally we get there. “We here” shouts Izzy but I just sigh.

“Oh, don’t be so grumpy Lola” Mum says. I try to smile but she just rolls her eyes. I’ve always come second best. Mum likes Izzy for her cuteness and happiness not me for my quietness and shyness. It does hurt, knowing your sister is the one your mum loves the most. Tears prick my eyes, but I don’t let them trickle.

“Shall we run?” I ask trying to distract myself. I run and run; I don’t want to stop. In the distance something is shimmering on the rocks. It’s probably just a plastic bottle glinting in the sun but no, as I get closer, I realise it’s some sort of stone. I pick it up it’s a flat oval shape, lightly shaded grey.

Curious I turn it over and gasp! I glance round, no-one is in sight except mum and Izzy, so I am free to look at this mysterious stone. In the stone I see me! I think I’m walking along the path towards the supermarket. I look angry. Behind me I spot Izzy close to tears and mum with a face like thunder. I am coming up to the road now, mum is shouting at me, but I take no notice. I gasp scared of what may be next but can’t take my eyes off the miniature screen reflecting back at me. A car suddenly came out of nowhere and then... WHAM.

“Lola! “Mum screams but it’s too late. I drop the stone in horror before looking back to where mum and Izzy had been but there gone. I feel so scared and then... Beep Beep Beep. “Lola please wake up “The voice is strange and robotic. I fight to open my eyes and see Mum and a lady in nurse’s uniform staring back at me. Mum lunges forward to hug me. I hug her before words come blurting out of my mouth. “I’m sorry mum.”

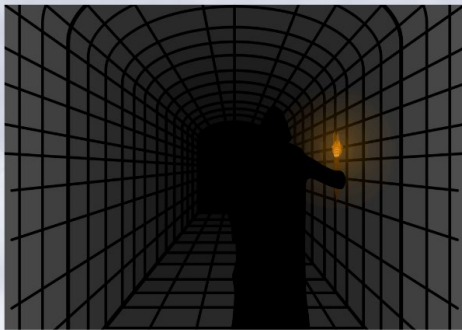
She gasps and starts to cry. Izzy rushes forward shooting me the happiest face in the world which makes me smile. I suddenly realise where I am. I remember the car, the desperate scream of mum and the grinding halt of brakes. “Why is Mum crying?” I ask the nurse. “She’s just happy you’re okay but you must rest.”

She faffs around me and mum sits down next to my bed. She takes my hand, placing the oval stone in it “Everything will be okay”, she whispers and I believe her with all my heart.



A Short Story

By Conrad



I pulled up a stool near the back of the bar, a corner a bit too far from the fire for my liking. The nights were getting old and yet I was still young. A cloaked traveller ordered a drink at the counter, the cheapest you can buy. They approached me absent mindedly, as if trying to decide whether I'd chosen to sit apart for a reason or simply didn't appreciate company. The answer was both, I had a job to do.

"Care to wager some coin?" The traveller spoke with a slightly husky voice.

"Depends, if you had loaded dice in your pocket then I'd refuse." I didn't enjoy being civil, but it could earn me some knowledge if nothing else.

"Can you bluff well?" The traveller took the stool opposite me. I would have a long night ahead if they had more coin than they spent on a drink. But it would give me an alibi, when I needed one. So, I accepted his offer and we began to play.

"You don't happen to make a living off of gambling, do you?" I don't think this 'Max' as he calls himself is a threat, but he isn't trustworthy. "Two fours." I added

"No, no, I have a job which seems to concern you. Three fours" He glanced at my cloak, not looking me in the eye. It wasn't a tell, but it was odd, nobody knew who I was here.

"You're bluffing." I didn't have time to prolong this game; Max was odd and certainly not an informant for us. I raised my hand and he raised his, he had two fours and I had none.

"You play well." Max remarked. I ignored him, I had learnt enough. Walking towards the bartender, I began to mutter under my breath until I was in a dark corridor that smelled of ash and decay.

I began to wander the labyrinthine corridors; I was out of that cursed tavern. I was home. No. I was free.



Shine On Talent Showcase

Some evenings stay with you long after the lights come up again — and Kent Youth Voice: Shine On Talent Showcase was one of them. Held at Ark, Cliftonville Cultural Centre in Margate, we were treated to more than a show; it was a vibrant celebration of courage, creativity, and the unstoppable spirit of young people. From soulful vocals to dynamic dance to poetry that held the room in stillness, the stage became a space where young talent didn't just perform... it burst into life and became a night that sparked something bigger.



The atmosphere was electric even before the first act began as friends and families, filled the hall, eager to see their loved one perform.

It was a year in the making for Kent Youth County Council's - Opportunities for Young People project group have dedicated one hour each month to build something extraordinary, an event

created by young people and for young people. Their hard work materialised into a polished, joyful, youth-led showcase. It was a masterclass in what young people can achieve when they're trusted to lead.

The stage was alive with potential as performers aged 11 to 18 brought their own styles, stories, and sparks to the stage.

The young comperes set the tone immediately — confident, warm, and engaging — turning the evening into a shared celebration.

The evening flowed like a perfectly curated playlist, each act bringing its own flavour. We saw dancers who moved with a raw, unfiltered passion, poets

whose words painted vivid worlds, and musicians who made the air hum with possibility.

What stood out wasn't perfection — it was the authenticity. Every performance carried something personal, something brave and gave us performances that moved us.



- Singers delivered everything from soaring ballads and musical theatre to vibrant pop, each voice unique and honest.
- A dancer lit up the stage with raw energy and commitment, earning spontaneous applause.
- A poet offered a moment of stillness, weaving themes of identity, hope, and resilience — the audience hung on every word.

Between acts, the young hosts kept the atmosphere alive, blending humour, confidence, and genuine care for the performers.

By the end of the evening, it was obvious: the success of Shine On belonged to more than just the acts on stage. It was a victory for the young organisers who spent the year shaping every detail and a triumph of youth participation and leadership.

The final ovation was not only for the performers, but for the collaboration, creativity, and courage that powered the entire night. What made Shine On truly special wasn't just the talent. It was the bravery. Stepping into a spotlight — some for the first time ever — these young people shared parts of themselves with honesty and pride. They were sharing pieces of themselves. Whether or not they continue into artistic careers, the confidence, discipline, and joy they showed will stay with them beyond one evening.

Hopefully, it is unforgettable for them.

Watch the video here:

<https://youtu.be/4G05qvhKqMw?si=8wBWoaz4RV88FB8f>

Quiz Answers

Animation Quiz

1. Nick Park
2. Tom Hanks
3. 'What's up Doc?'
4. Porky Pig
5. Charles Schulz
6. Hanna-Barbera
7. Count Duckula
8. Clifton
9. Hello Kitty

Animal Quiz

1. B: 200
2. C: Tiger
3. A: Around 400,000
4. B: Up to 3 years
5. B; Hummingbird
6. A: Capybara
7. C: 2.5 million
8. B: Anthropods
9. C: Dogs
10. C: Black Marlin

Space Quiz

1. C: Venus
2. B: Hydrogen and Helium
3. D: Mars
4. C: Uranus
5. A: Mars
6. C: Uranus
7. C: Ice, Water, Dust and Rock
8. B: An artificial satellite

Young Leaders Programme 2026



The future of youth leadership in Kent is looking brighter than ever following the launch of the Kent Youth Voice (KYV) Young Leaders Programme 2026 (YLP2026).

The programme began with an action-packed two-day training event, bringing together passionate young people from across the county to build the knowledge, skills, and confidence needed to become effective youth leaders and advocates for change.

From the outset, participants were encouraged to connect through icebreakers and team-building activities, creating a welcoming and supportive environment.

"I was nervous at first, but the icebreakers made it easy to relax and be myself straight away," shared one participant.

Throughout the training, young leaders explored what leadership means in practice, learning that effective leadership is built on empathy, responsibility, and positive influence rather than authority. Interactive workshops encouraged participants to reflect on their strengths and develop confidence in their ability to support and inspire others.

The programme also covered a range of important topics, including understanding behaviours that challenge, equality and inclusion, mental health awareness, health and safety, and risk assessment. Through discussions, scenarios, and practical activities, participants developed skills that will help them lead confidently and support their peers.

A highlight of the training was a powerful session on the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)**, designed and delivered by a graduate of the Young Leaders Programme 2024. Young people explored children's rights and discussed the importance of ensuring that young voices are heard and respected. *You can read more about Nate's experience of this session later in the magazine.*

The training concluded with a focus on presentation and communication skills, equipping young leaders with the confidence to engage with peers, professionals, and decision-makers. By the end of the two days, participants were already demonstrating the enthusiasm, teamwork, and determination that will drive their work throughout the year.

Reflecting on the experience, one young leader said: *"This has already helped me grow so much. I'm excited to see what we can achieve together."*

With a shared commitment to making a difference, the Kent Youth Voice Young Leaders of 2026 are already proving that the future of youth voice in Kent is in capable and inspiring hands.

"Being a Young Leader is about listening and supporting others as much as speaking up."





By Evie!

AuDHd!

Autism and ADHD



Important things you should know about these neurodiversity talents:

- ADHD stands for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, and it can be really hard to sit still or relax without moving or concentrate on a task such as schoolwork or reading.
- Autism affects how an individual processes and interacts with the world and their environments. People with autism have what we call Special Educational Needs Disability - SEND for short.
- Everyone with autism and ADHD is different. We are not all the same because these neuro-diversities affect us differently and we all have our own unique experiences of living with these disabilities.
- Being an individual with both of these disabilities, I find it really hard to concentrate when reading, doing work or listening to someone, and I can zone out, meaning I go into a world of my own and don't listen to anything, and having autism has an impact too. Autism can make loud, busy places, crowds or social areas really overwhelming and I can rarely understand jokes or expressions.

Important things you can do to help:

There are a number of different ways you can help neurodiverse people, here are a few simple, easy ways that make a huge difference!

- Treat neurodiverse people with respect and treat them like a neuro-typical person, meaning someone without autism, ADHD or some other disability. ADHD and autism are hidden disabilities, so it is not always obvious that some people have these disabilities.
- If someone looks overwhelmed, talk to them, make them feel Ok and safe, or lead them to a quiet environment and just sit with them until they calm down, if they ask you to leave, you should, as it is important to respect the wishes of another person.
- You should always include a person with disabilities in any activity or thing you are doing as you should never leave a person out of anything because of their disability, looks or behaviour because this is known as discrimination.

The important thing of all is to never judge anyone and to always treat people in the same way, whether they have a disability or not.



This is important and something every young person should know about...

The United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is the most important document in the world for young people, agreed to by nearly every country. It sets out the basic rights that every child should have what they need to live a comfortable childhood; no matter who they are, where they come from, or what their situation is. These rights include things like the right to education (Article 28), the right to be safe and protected from harm (Article 19), the right to be heard and have your views taken seriously (Article 12), and the right to grow up healthy; with access to healthcare (Article 24).

But why is this piece of paper important - and why should you care?

At its core, the UNCRC is about fairness for young people like us - exactly what we represent in Kent Youth Voice (KYV). It recognises that children and young people are not just “adults-in-training,” but individuals with our own voices, needs, and rights. Governments that agree to the UNCRC (such as our own) promise to protect these rights, and make sure young people are treated with the respect and dignity they lay out.

But here's the catch: these young people's rights only actually work, if we know about them!

That's why awareness of the UNCRC is such an important issue. If young people don't know their rights, it becomes much harder for them to speak up when something isn't right - when their rights are being violated. It makes it harder for communities to support each other and hold the systems which govern them accountable. Knowing your rights gives you confidence, and it gives you power; the power of informed decisions, standing up for yourself and others.

This idea is reflected in Article 42 of the UNCRC. Article 42 says that children and adults should both know about the Convention and understand the rights it contains. In other words, it's not enough for the UNCRC to exist; it needs to be shared, talked about, and understood in our everyday lives.

That's where you come in.

Sharing knowledge about the UNCRC doesn't have to be complicated. It can be as simple as talking to friends about what their rights mean, bringing them up in group discussions, or simply just being aware of how these rights apply in your own life. When more of us understand the UNCRC, it creates a stronger, tighter community - where we (children and young people) are more likely to look out for each other.

For a community like KYV, this is especially important. Youth spaces are all about growth, inclusion, and support - and the UNCRC fits in perfectly with these ideas. By learning about children's rights and sharing that knowledge, you help build an environment where we, as young people are empowered and better protected.

You could say the UNCRC isn't just a piece of paper - it's a tool. A tool that helps protect young people, amplify their voices, and shape a better future for all children - in Kent and elsewhere. But, like any tool, it only works when people use it.

So, learn your rights. Talk about them. Share them. Because everyone should know their rights - and sometimes, it must start with you.

by Nate



BEING PRESENT, ACTUALLY MATTERS

by Temiola

Have you ever seen a TV show where a parent is always buying their child loads of gifts? It's always money, money, money—but they never really give the child what they actually need.

At first, it might seem nice. Who wouldn't want loads of presents? But when you really think about it, those gifts don't replace things like being listened to, having proper conversations, or just feeling loved. The parent gets so caught up in their own idea of being “good” by buying things that they forget to actually be there for their child.

If they just took the time to slow down and actually spend time with their child, they'd probably realise something important—the presents aren't always helpful. What really matters is attention, understanding, and connection. And honestly, that would be way better for the child's growth and happiness.

That's what being present really means.

But it's not just about parents and children. Being present applies to pretty much everything in life. It can mean showing up for your friends, actually listening instead of scrolling on your phone, or even just taking time for yourself.

Sometimes, we're so busy or distracted that we don't even notice what's going on around us. But when we stop, think, and actually pay attention, we start to make better choices. Whether that's improving your own wellbeing, noticing what's happening in your school, or thinking about your community—it all starts with being aware.

So being present isn't pointless or “boring” like some people might think. It's actually kind of powerful. It's like an investment—putting time and effort into things that actually matter, instead of just rushing through everything.

Next time someone tells you to “be present,” don't just brush it off. Think about what it really means. It might seem small, but it can make a big difference—not just now, but for your future too.

RIDDLES

BY ADAM



Why can't a nose be 12 inches long?

Because then it would be a foot.

What's the difference between spring rolls and summer rolls?

Their seasoning.



What do you call a happy cowboy?

A jolly rancher.

What falls, but never needs a bandage?

The rain.



Where do young trees go to learn?

Elementree school.

Why do bees have sticky hair?

Because they use a honeycomb.





KENT YOUTH VOICE

Opportunities

Here are some fantastic ways you can get involved, be heard, and make a difference:

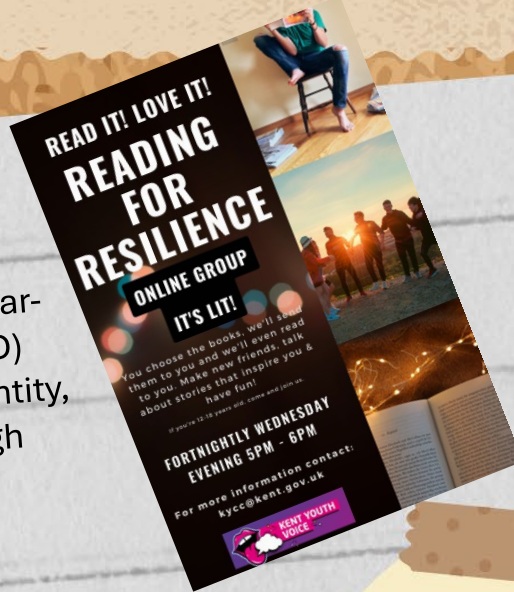
Not on Mute

An online group for 11–18-year-olds that are home schooled. providing an opportunity to make new friends, learn new skills and have fun. Vocal Point magazine is a project by Not on Mute.



Reading for Resilience

An online book group for 12–18-year-olds (especially those with SEND) exploring themes of resilience, identity, and emotional wellbeing through storytelling and discussion.



"I like Reading Group because now I enjoy reading. I read more and more. We get to do activities and it's always fun as well as enjoying being read to. The fact that we choose the book, get it sent to us is great. Being read to is great. It holds your attention and it's calming. This has really helped me. Reading is now a pleasure and something I do on my own and it helps me relax. It helps with my anxiety too. And all the things we talk about in the group. It's another one of my safe places."



"The thing I enjoy most about Reading Group is feeling I am in a community where people appreciate me and it makes me feel safe."

"Being part of Reading Group means a lot to me, because the group has helped me overcome my anxiety, and get through times where in my life, things have been difficult for me."

Speak Out



A vibrant group for 11–18-year-olds to make friends, learn new skills, and influence services. Members co-produce content, raise awareness, and represent youth voice at events.

"At Speak Out, everyone is so accepting."

"... it gives me something to do and they're fun. I am part of something, I can share information about things we talk about to my friends to help them too."

KENT YOUTH VOICE

SPEAK OUT

Make new friends, have fun, learn new skills, develop your resilience & wellbeing and make a difference!

**FORTNIGHTLY,
ONLINE
WEDNESDAY EVENING
5PM - 6.30PM**

For more information contact:
kycc@kent.gov.uk

KENT YOUTH VOICE

HAVE YOUR SAY!

KENT YOUTH VOICE
For young people aged 11-18

Come and join our group at County Hall, Maidstone

One Saturday morning per month 10am - 12pm

Make new friends
Travel provided
Learn new skills
Play games
Free lunch

Would you love to make a difference for young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities?

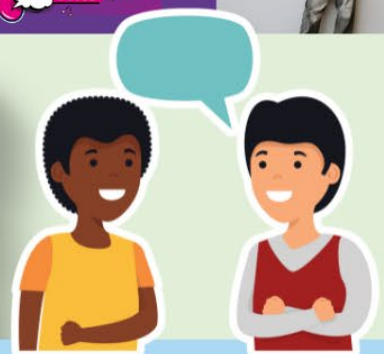
Sign up here <https://forms.office.com/e/wjza7w53cp>

Have Your Say

A welcoming space for young people with SEND to share views, develop resources, and help improve services. Monthly sessions include fun activities and discussions in a safe, supportive environment.

"Being part of HYS is really fun. I haven't been part of the group for long but can already tell it's going to help me."

"I have been sharing my opinion and stuff and talking openly in a group because a year ago I wouldn't have been able to do that."



KENT YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH FORUM

EVERYONE HAS A DIFFERENT STORY

OPEN TO YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 11-17.

WE MEET MONTHLY ACROSS KENT OR ONLINE

ACTIVITIES, WORKSHOPS AND OPPORTUNITIES TO LEAD PROJECTS AND INFLUENCE SERVICES.

SNACKS AND REFRESHMENTS PROVIDED

SIGN UP HERE

"I LOVED MEETING NEW PEOPLE AND SHARING MY STORY"

"IT'S A SAFE SPACE WHERE I CAN BE MYSELF & MAKE A DIFFERENCE."

NHS
North East London
NHS Foundation Trust

Kent
County Council
Kent Council

Find out more about Kent Youth Voice activities and how you can get involved on [MoodSpark.org.uk](https://moodspark.org.uk)

MOOD SPARK

Youth Mental Health Forum

A safe space for 11–17-year-olds with lived experience of mental health services to share ideas, improve support in schools, and drive change. Meetings are held online and in-person during school holidays.

