

Young people mobilised to tackle poverty and isolation

In 2014, Giving Nation partnered with the Creative Education Trust (CET) to support an inter-academy *'Day of Service'* across seven secondary schools.

Two of the academies, **Fair Oak** and **Hagley Park**, joined forces to run their project. Having spent some time surveying their local community they identified poverty and social isolation as one of the key issues that was affecting many residents.

'In the context of unrelenting pressure to drive up academic attainment, we are acutely aware of the need to keep education expansive; to open students' minds to the opportunities that await them as citizens in the world beyond school. Giving Nation was the perfect social action challenge, brilliantly conceived by the Citizenship Foundation and thoughtfully developed over a number of years into a magic combination of a tight practical brief with infinite scope for local interpretation.'

Emily Campbell, CET Director of Programmes

Active citizenship driving student-led learning

After much debate students hit on the innovative idea of creating a **toy library** to tackle both these issues. The initiative aimed to offer low-income families in Rugeley an affordable way to provide their children with toys, whilst also offering them a safe space to socialise with others.

Importantly, their activities reached out to the **wider community**. They pitched their offer to parents at local primary schools and

partnered with a local designer. Students secured venues and adult volunteers to support the project. They used **local and social media** channels to spread their messages to potential donors, service recipients and to local businesses.



'We are thrilled at just how important they feel their project is to the community and how they have flourished whilst planning it. Their confidence has grown and they feel like active members of their local community, gaining a voice and making a mark.'

Emily Knight, Humanities Teacher



Giving Nation creates a dual benefit

The students involved developed **strong links within the community**. They supported some of the more marginalised and disengaged local residents whilst also forging stronger working relationships between themselves and their partner school.

Secondly, they **developed crucial employability skills** to support their preparation for the world of work. Students attested to developing their project management, communication, problem solving, advocacy, time management and negotiation.

Creating a legacy

The students intend for this business to stand the test of time. There is commitment from both schools to see that the Toy Library will be an ongoing Year 8 project, handed on to new students to manage every year.