

Benches for All: enterprising students improve access in community garden

Sandgate School is a community special school in Cumbria. It caters for students aged 3-19 with a range of severe learning difficulties.



'Giving Nation raises the profile of the work we do in school with the students to broaden and enhance their curriculum offer.'

Rachel Slattery,
Teacher, Sandgate School

In 2012 Sandgate moved location and students found themselves based on the site of Queen Katherine School. Next door to their new base was a community garden run by local volunteers. The garden was home to a number of raised beds, some of which students were given permission to use to grow vegetables.

To make the garden more appealing to visitors, students set themselves the challenge of raising enough money to buy a bench. Not just any bench, but a bench that was accessible to all - including those in wheelchairs.

Smart fundraising

With the Queen's Jubilee just around the corner, students decided to run a tea party to raise funds. As part of the tea party students made and sold cream tea boxes. They undertook careful research to find the most cost effective way of making their boxes and practiced making scones. Students made posters to advertise the event, which were displayed at their school and also at Queen Katherine School. They wrote letters to parents and also to local businesses inviting them along. They even convinced the Mayor of Kendal to visit. The day was a huge success and students made £185.50.

To further increase their profits and ensure they had enough funds to get their benches made students asked for donations, made and sold Easter chocolate boxes and sold knitted teddies at a local hairdressers. After extensive discussions with a local designer students were proud to unveil their two new, wheelchair friendly benches in July 2013.



National recognition

In October 2012 the group was awarded the first ever Giving Nation Spirit Award at a celebration at HM Treasury in 2012, receiving a £500 donation to their project.

