

Waterstart

Residential Trip Report 25/26 July 2006

By Vanessa Hall - Student Development Worker



The residential trip was an extremely enjoyable experience for everyone concerned. Although it was hard work for the staff and volunteers involved we all agreed it had been very rewarding and worthwhile.

Those involved included 12 local young people, 2 Waterstart staff members and several willing and capable volunteers whose help we could not have been without. Their involvement helped ensure the smooth running of the trip and led to the success of the whole event. I feel that Waterstart is very privileged to be able to rely on these individuals who give up their time and who put in so much effort on our behalf.

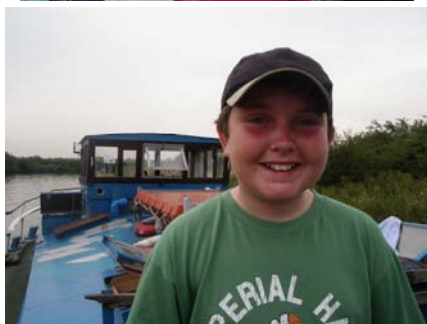
The event took a lot of organising as we decided to use both our Waterstart vessel and Sobriety which is the residential vessel based at The Sobriety Project in Goole. The whole of the day before and the day after the event was taken up with the task of making sure both Vessels were available at the pick up point which is actually much more complicated than it may seem! We also had to ensure that we had sufficient food and drink for two full days which is not always straightforward when you have 12 hungry teenagers to feed.



The weather was wonderful and turned out to be extremely hot on both days so hats and sun lotion were also required. We were concerned that sun-burn would spoil the event but all the kids were very aware of the consequences of sun stroke and did not always have to be reminded to put on lotion or to cover up if necessary.

All the young people followed instructions when given and most volunteered for various tasks such as preparing the barbeque, cooking and washing up. For those that didn't, tasks were allocated to encourage team building and any complaining was met with humour and a 'take it or leave it' attitude. Everyone had a chance to improve their boat handling skills and most learned new skills particularly around locks as some had never operated one before.

The late evening contained card playing and group activities and several problems were encountered around bed time as expected between the boys and girls being separated. Strict measures were imposed and finally everyone went to sleep.



The next morning was a breakfast barbeque which was really great as some of the young people decided to entertain everyone singing pop songs in a group which turned out to be hilarious which was a good start to the day. The rest helped with cooking on the barbeque.

We then prepared to leave and clear the site where we had stayed to ensure it was properly cleaned and litter was removed. We left our moorings later in the morning and in the afternoon we were surprised to find that a buffet lunch had been prepared by some of the kids which was delicious and much appreciated by all. A different group did the clearing away and washing up without being asked and we were impressed by the initiative they had shown and we ensured that many thanks were given.

Although we had been a little apprehensive and unsure of what it would be like to take this group out on a residential they had all contributed in a positive way and there had been a lot less problems than we had anticipated.

I was pleased that all the young people had thanked us for the trip. One boy stated that he had never gone away over night before as his parents could not afford any holidays.



I particularly enjoy working with young people and from personal experience I have found that teenagers who have behavioural problems are often bored when they have nothing to fill their time. At school they are often mis-understood and teachers are under pressure to teach and not to cope with bad behaviour. There is not always time to devote to what each particular child is interested in and that is why I feel residential trips such as this are successful.

We tried to fill the time with specific activities and some took part in a wildlife survey which they completed along the way.

At the end of the trip everyone got together for a short meeting to evaluate what had been gained from the experience. Our skipper expressed his thanks to all the young people concerned. He said he had been surprised by the level of effort that had been put in to making the trip so enjoyable and was particularly impressed with the buffet lunch.

I added that I thought the kids should be proud of themselves and that they had made my job easier by responding to instructions without argument. I asked each one to fill in an evaluation form to comment on their own experience of the trip. These were all positive and I had to disappoint several of the group when I explained that NO we could not go every week!!

