

## Grow and Play at Plot; 22 April- October 2019

\*please note, this project was funded between the Nineveh Trust and Fonthill Foundation over 2 years. This is the first part of the report and the second part will contain in depth case studies from participants and more photos\*

*"This is a wonderful initiative. It is just so good for children to see growing gardens and where the food in the supermarket comes from. My son adores nature. This is the only real chance we have to explore it."* (Group participant, May 2019)

### About the project

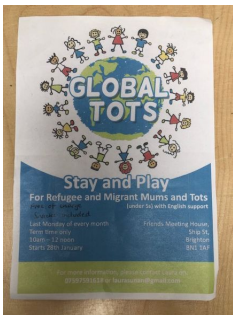
**PLOT 22** is a community allotment providing communal gardening, outdoor cooking and crafting opportunities for local residents, families and groups experiencing specific challenges. Volunteers come from across Brighton & Hove (B&H), build friendships and confidence, learn new skills, grow fresh food and increase their connection to the natural environment. Our range of projects and partnerships are volunteer driven and maximise the social benefit of this small plot of land, engaging hundreds of people. The PLOT 22 site is cared for and maintained year round by volunteers using organic and permaculture principles to maximise biodiversity.

**Grow and Play** is a project that provides outdoor learning opportunities for young children and families living in deprived areas of the city who may not have access to a garden. It teaches participants about conservation, wildlife, nature, food growing and cooking.

Thanks to funding from the Fonthill Foundation/Nineveh Trust, 'Grow and Play' ran on a monthly basis between April - October 2019. Each session aimed to host 8 children with a parent/carer. New participants came each month. Any 'last minute' cancellations were filled by a waiting list of previous participants. We calculated 51 children from the community benefited from this project (a total of 102 people including adults).

Participants were mainly recruited at the local children's centres in Hove and Portslade. The project lead went to 'stay and play' sessions and to talk about the project. Working with community services in this way removes potential barriers to attending such groups, especially for more isolated families who might otherwise not find out about these opportunities. Those without access to a garden were particularly encouraged to attend.

It was also promoted at a Brighton based group for refugees called 'Global Tots' (see image of flyer below) and to parents in the Hangleton & Knoll community via the Hangleton & Knoll Community Project and Hangleton Food Bank.



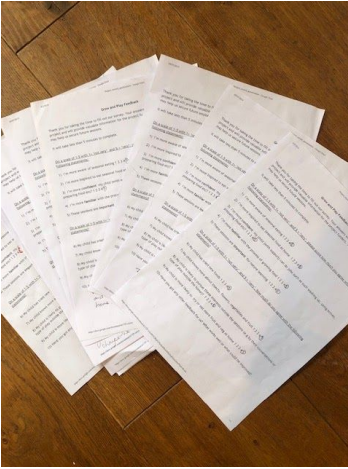
## What we did

Session	Example of what we did	Example of what we learnt	What we went away with	Comments
April (7 children attended)	Looked at thrush and tit nest, dug for worms, pond dipping and insect identification, made bird feeders	Food chains using birds and worms as an example	Bird feeder	"Brilliant session. Great free play and structure. Great snacks"
May (6 children attended)	Searched for bluebells, planted peas, watering, hunting for woodlice	Learned about seasonality using spring flowers and seed planting as examples	Sown marrowfat pea in a pot	
June (8 children attended)	Sensory hunt of leaves, flowers etc and made lavender bags for the Plot summer fundraiser event.	Learnt about the 5 senses; smell, sight, taste, touch	Lavender bags	'It was a lovely session- thank you'
July (8 children attended)	Harvested courgettes, cherries, peas. Pond dipping and watering plants	How to prepare a seasonal snack. How to wash and prepare and serve food.	Punnet of cherries	"Great session, great free play and structure. Great snacks"
August (7 children attended)	Harvest tomatoes and figs. Clay modelling	How to prepare a seasonal snack. How to wash and prepare and serve food (Crackers with cream cheese and tomato or fig)	Clay model inspired by nature in the plot	
September (7 children attended)	Read 'jack in the beanstalk' together and harvested beans. Foraged for blackberries	How to cook with foraged and seasonal foods; blackberry and apple compote	Punnet of blackberries to try and make compote again at home	"We enjoyed learning about new things to do outside and about what can be foraged and eaten at home. I hope to come again."
October (8 children attended)	Pumpkin carving and pumpkin soup making, seasonal flower collection and making 'bonfire bread'	The origins of 'Halloween' and autumn traditions, How to cook safely on an open fire.	Carved 'jack o lantern' pumpkin	



To view all the photos from each of the sessions see <https://www.flickr.com/photos/125197255@N08/sets/>

## How we evaluated our project



Participants filled out a questionnaire after each session to evaluate the project. Results were positive and we found that the majority of participants either 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that:

- They are more aware of seasonal eating
- They were more inspired to eat seasonal food at home
- They were more **confident** that their child (with support) could do jobs such as washing up, using knives, preparing food etc
- They were more **familiar** with the process of growing food
- The sessions are **important** for nature learning
- Their child tried new foods
- Their child knows more about insects, flowers, vegetables and fruit
- Their child is likely to pursue these interests outside the sessions
- Their child is more likely to try or eat more fruit and veg at home

Due to a combination of very wet weather and parental demands it wasn't always possible to get the questionnaires completed as surfaces were wet and rain damaged the paper. Next years project will focus on running in depth case studies.

The sessions were run by 2 two co-hosts and a volunteer helper. This volunteer is now being supported to develop her role and contribute her creative skills to the sessions (e.g children's mindfulness and yoga).

The wet weather also prompted the charity to fundraise for a larger, permanent weather shelter which next years participants will benefit from.

The parents also benefited from the sessions as they got to know about Plot22 and in some cases, get involved with other Plot22 projects such as Dementia Inclusive Gardening sessions or Mediation sessions. Also, several parents have now taken up volunteer roles for this year's Grow and Play.

For more information see <http://www.plot22.org/grow-play>

