



Artwork by Cameron Macphail, Growing2gether Youth Advisory Board member

## CASE STUDIES SERIES

### Lisa

Lisa is an S3 pupil who struggles with confidence and her inability to voice an opinion, even when she is knowledgeable about the topic. Her voice is quiet which she believes to be a disadvantage. At the start of the G2g programme she was clear about this when we spoke to her on a 1:1 basis. It was the only time she would really speak at all. As we got to know her she began to converse a little en route to the nursery and slowly trust between Lisa and the facilitators began to build. She held the opinion that everyone would judge her negatively and therefore it was not worth saying anything.

Initially working in the nurse environment was a challenge; Lisa picked her way around delicately, almost as if she had no right to be there and the staff did comment that she was very quiet. They cleverly matched her with a very shy child with whom she found it easy to bond. They enjoyed drawing and reading together and every week the smile on the child's face was matched by the one on Lisa's.



As time progressed the positive affirmation from the child, our weekly observations about Lisa's developing interpersonal skills and gentle acknowledgement from the staff, all helped her to realise that she was doing 'an okay job'. Indeed, she was doing much more than that.

In the group she also began to change her position and it was wonderful when her peers pointed this out to her. It was obvious that this had made an impression. She went from strength to strength and began to share more of her personal details, hobbies and aspirations with the group; she seemed surprised that we were interested. We used one of the coaching exercises to produce some options for her to move forwards with a particular aim she had regarding a hobby and a few weeks later she reported her success in carrying out her plan. Another noticeable aspect of her behaviour was that she began to ask a lot of questions about topics which are related to teenage life. She let us know how helpful the ensuing discussions were and how they made her realise that she wasn't alone with her concerns and queries.

In nursery she managed to push her limits and intervene in a dispute between some of the children. Lisa used her voice appropriately and the children listened to her and the situation was resolved. I had witnessed this and to begin with I thought I would need to intervene on Lisa's behalf because she might need help. This was not the case.

Afterwards in the group, I mentioned the incident. Lisa spoke up "Actually that's not what happened ...." and shared the actual sequence of events with her peers. This was a real turning point for her as she challenged the adult's incorrect version (some portant learning for me clearly) and proceeded to relate the tale. Her peers were impressed and so were we. I acknowledged my mistake and delight in Lisa's obvious progress.

In one of the final sessions Lisa and a facilitator took part in a coaching exercise where Lisa was the coach. I witnessed her ability to pose open questions and listen attentively to the responses before processing the information and moving on appropriately. The facilitator felt it had been a powerful and helpful conversation and she thanked Lisa.

By the end Lisa had a full understanding of the process she had undergone and of her effort and achievements. She wrote a beautiful review of her G2g time thanking us for our support.

*"I started off shy and with all the inspiration I have become the most confident I have ever been."*

Staff in school reported an increase in confidence which is resulting in Lisa taking part in more classroom discussions and being able to express her opinions. As she moves towards her National 5 subject choices, this ought to be highly beneficial. A parental feedback slip was returned; the comments tell the same story and added that she is now a more thoughtful person.

It has been a delight to witness the progress made by this incredibly hard working and committed young person who attended every session of the programme.