

Ahead of COP26 ‘Green Influencers’ network reaches milestone

Submitted by: Word Worker

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As the world gears up for COP26, an ambitious scheme to create a network of young people in England, enthused about the environment, has recruited 1,500 Green Influencers.

The Green Influencers Scheme is run by The Ernest Cook Trust, a national educational charity, which granted 37 host organisations funding to support the employment of 44 Green Mentors. The Green Mentors’ role is to enable young people to lead the way as ‘Green Influencers’ on social action projects in their communities.

Across England there are now 1,500 Green Influencers and the scheme is on target to enlist 5,000 young people between the ages of 10 and 14 to improve the environment for their schools and communities.

With COP26, the UN Climate Change Conference starting on October 31, and world leaders gathering in Glasgow to discuss global climate issues, the Green Influencers Scheme is demonstrating how young people are already trying to make a difference by getting engaged with their environment and improving the communities they live in.

The pioneering Green Influencers Scheme is a project match-funded through the #iwill Fund which is funded by The National Lottery Community Fund and Department of Culture, Media & Sport which are each investing £27million seed funding to support young people to access high-quality social action opportunities.

One of the Green Mentors, Alex Pang, whose host organisation is Global Action Plan, is working with 40 primary school pupils from three schools in Lambeth. They are part of a wider Lambeth Schools Air Quality Programme, which aims to improve air quality in a school’s environment.

The children have chosen to tackle the problem of engines being left running. Alex said:

“I have been amazed by the students’ maturity in learning about air pollution, as well as their creativity and enthusiasm in coming up with ambitious ideas to help raise awareness about the issue. They have all worked hard to produce a range of informative and interesting materials, such as posters, letters, and a video.”

As well as funding Green Mentors, The Ernest Cook Trust provides grants towards some of the projects designed and implemented by the Green Influencers. So far, these include a platform in Torbay to make accessing a local pond and its wildlife easier; a workbook for schools on the importance of wildlife in hedgerows, written and published by Green Influencers in Hull; and giving out seed packs to local residents in Southwark, London.

Applications for larger grants are assessed by The Ernest Cook Trust’s Youth Advisory Board, a group of eight driven and passionate 14 to 20-year-olds who recommend applications for funding to the Trust’s Board of Trustees.

Dr Victoria Edwards OBE, Chief Executive of The Ernest Cook Trust, said:

“What’s significant about the Green Influencers Scheme is the reach it has, and we are thrilled to be on course to enlisting 5,000 young people. The enthusiasm of those involved is inspiring, and we have

been so impressed with their ideas and their creativity. We are very grateful to the Green Mentors for the guidance they are giving.

“By establishing a Youth Advisory Board to assess applications for funding for projects, we are ensuring this really is a youth-led scheme, which will have lasting benefits to schools and communities.

“While the world talks about climate change, the young people of our country are getting out there and making a difference.”

For information about the Green Influencers Scheme visit The Ernest Cook Trust website or email greeninfluencers@ernestcooktrust.org.uk.

Notes to editors

Contact The Ernest Cook Trust press consultant Jo Smyth 07780639287 or email jo@wordworker.co.uk

Green Influencers Scheme

The mission of the Green Influencers Scheme is to assist young people to create deep, lasting and meaningful connections with the natural environment. Through this scheme young people will learn and build skills which will help them contribute to the local community through environmental action.

The scheme was developed by The Ernest Cook Trust in 2019 as a match-funded project with #iwill Fund.

Both the #iwill Fund and The Ernest Cook Trust will provide £1.5million resulting in a total of £3million to be spent over 3 years on youth environmental action.

The Ernest Cook Trust has provided grants to registered charities and non-profit organisations across England to employ Green Mentors to help young people between the ages of 10-14 years (Green Influencers) to create environmental projects in local schools, youth groups and communities.

Full list of recipients:

Action for Conservation (London), Action for Conservation (Manchester), Action for Conservation (Bristol), Ambition, Aspire, Achieve (Newham, London), Centre for Sustainable Energy (Bristol), Child Dynamix (Hull), East Riding Voluntary Action Services (East Riding of Yorkshire), ecoACTIVE (Hackney, London), Endeavour Training Limited (Sheffield, Yorkshire and the Humber), Field Studies Council (Shropshire), Friends of St Nicholas Fields (York), Global Action Plan (London), Global Generation (Islington/Southwark, London), Green Light Trust (Bury St Edmunds), Green Synergy (Lincoln), Groundwork Cheshire Lancashire and Merseyside, Groundwork Greater Manchester, Groundwork North East and Cumbria, Groundwork Northampton, Groundwork South Devon, Handsworth Association of Schools (Birmingham), OrganicLea CIC (Walthamstow, London), SOS-UK (Norwich/Southampton), The Children's Foundation (Newcastle), The Oaklea Trust (Kendal, Cumbria), The Prospects Foundation (Accrington, Lancashire), Voluntary Action North East Lincolnshire, Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust, Northumberland Wildlife Trust, Shropshire Wildlife Trust, Somerset Wildlife Trust, Staffordshire Wildlife Trust, Wilderness Foundation (Chelmsford), Woodcraft Folk (Leeds), Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust, Young Gloucestershire, Youth Work Unit Yorkshire and the Humber.

The Ernest Cook Trust

The Ernest Cook Trust offers children and young people, their families and communities, the chance to learn from the land through hands-on outdoor learning activities.

The Ernest Cook Trust is a charity limited by guarantee with the sole charitable objective of education. The Trust places education at its very heart by offering children and young people a chance to connect with nature and to take action on the environment in a meaningful and positive way.

The Trust awards around £2m per year in grants based on relevance and impact against organisational objectives. Grants are given to schools or charitable organisations for activities in the UK with a particular focus on areas where there are fewer opportunities to experience the outdoors.

#iwill Fund

The #iwill Fund is made possible thanks to £54million joint investment from The National Lottery Community Fund and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) to support young people to access high quality social action opportunities.

The #iwill Fund brings together a group of organisations who all contribute funding to embed meaningful social action into the lives of young people.

The #iwill Fund supports the aims of the #iwill campaign - to make involvement in social action a part of life for young people, by recognising the benefit for both young people and their communities.

By bringing together funders from across different sectors and by making sure that young people have a say in where the funding goes – the #iwill Fund is taking a collaborative approach.

The #iwill movement

- The #iwill movement is a collaboration of over 1000 organisations and 300 young #iwill Ambassadors from across the UK. They are united by a shared belief that all children and young people should be supported and empowered to make a positive difference on the issues that affect their lives, their communities, and broader society.
- #iwill was launched in November 2013 after an independent review into how different sectors could help more young people to make a positive difference.
- The #iwill movement is supported by an independent coordination hub, hosted by Volunteering Matters & UK Youth.
- Take the lead by signing up to the Power of Youth Charter at www.iwill.org.uk or follow us @iwill_campaign on twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn.
- About The National Lottery Community Fund
- We are the largest funder of community activity in the UK – we're proud to award money raised by National Lottery players to communities across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. National Lottery players raise £36 million each week for good causes throughout the UK. Since The National Lottery began in 1994, £43 billion has been raised for good causes which has supported over 635,000 projects, benefiting millions of people - that's 255 projects per postcode area.
- We are passionate about funding great ideas that matter to communities and make a difference to people's lives. At the heart of everything we do is the belief that when people are in the lead, communities thrive. Thanks to the support of National Lottery players, our funding is open to everyone. We're privileged to be able to work with the smallest of local groups right up to UK-wide charities, enabling people and communities to bring their ambitions to life.

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