



# NEWS AUTUMN 2020

WAM's Latest Update from Gemma gemma@wamyouth.org.uk

Well after a late addition to what was a fairly decent English summer we have well and truly reached Autumn! We've been thankful that the rain hasn't stopped play in the woods although we have some drainage to sort out before the winter rains arrive. It's been a bit of a whirlwind here at WAM in the last few months, like most organisations (and individuals) we're having to stay flexible and adapt to the changing situation around us, something that has only been possible due to the practical and financial support we've received from so many people and organisations.

This summer we ran some popular and fun-filled holiday club sessions at our woodland (with support from Tewkesbury Council's Covid-fund and Gloucestershire Community Foundation we were able to offer some funded places to those children who's families have been affected economically by the pandemic) and now in September we are so grateful to have been able to restart face to face group sessions in our local community of Winchcombe. New additions to our provision include a development of our lockdown helpline into a new WAM Chat service, including two weekly drop-ins in Winchcombe, a freephone line and text-back service. The set up of this is made possible by a grant from the Government's Covid-19 Fund for Charities, distributed by the National Lottery.

We've also been blessed to receive a grant from Gloucestershire County Council's Growing Our Communities Fund that together with a donation from Encounter Church has enabled us to employ our new Community Youth Worker, Carla! As well as running our youth groups, working 1:1 with young people and helping organise our holiday clubs Carla is going to be finding out more about what our local young people need from their youth service, reaching out to other groups and individuals to map community assets and making a plan for how together we can sustain the costs of this service beyond this year of funding. You can find out more about Carla overleaf.

Thanks to funding from Barnwood Trust and Gloucestershire Community Foundation we're able to continue to offer some funded spaces on our mentoring programme into this new academic year. We have also increased our staff resource on this project as a result of the Aviva Crowdfunding campaign earlier this year and donations from Tewkesbury & Winchcombe Rotary Clubs.

Whilst we're really grateful for all these donations we are still facing an uncertain future and need to raise our regular giving to a more sustainable level. Many grant funds this year have been closed to new applications due to a redirecting of funds to tackle issues relating to the pandemic. Whilst we have been in receipt of some of these diverted funds for the additional services that we've provided over the last few months, due to reduced income during lockdown, reduced school outdoor group bookings this year and lack of grants available for general running costs we are facing an uncertain year in financing both our Core Costs and our Outdoor Education. We need to raise another £30000 this academic year.

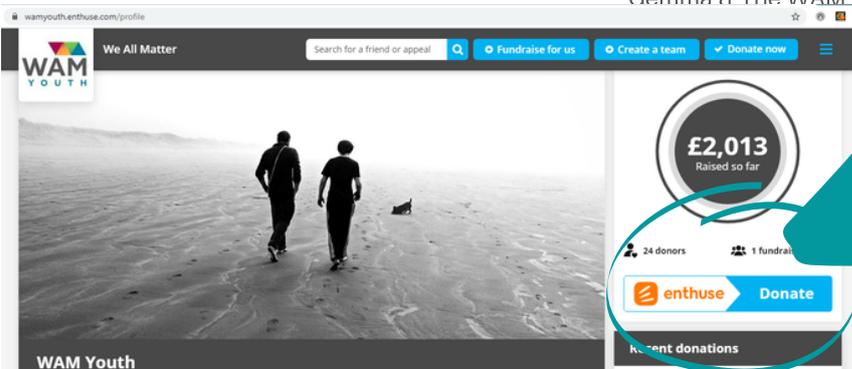
We have been running our 1000 Coffees Campaign for 2 years now as regular donations are a secure way for us to forward plan our service delivery. They enable us to respond rather than react to the need around us which means our impact as an organisation is more significant. Currently regular monthly giving provides around 11.5% of the annual income we need. If, as community, we can increase this support then we and the young people we support can have security in the longevity of the services they are in need of more than ever.

If you're able to sign up or encourage others to sign up to our coffee campaign or to make a one off donation they can do so by going to our donate page <https://wamyouth.enthuse.com/profile>.

Behind all of these numbers and activities are significant stories of lives that have been impacted by the time, space, place and relationships we've been able to provide. In the words of one Education Professional **"WAM really does support complex young pupils to see life through a different lens"**. Our annual report will be published next month and will showcase some of these stories so please do look out for that!

Many thanks for all the support, encouragement and prayer that we've experienced. We are grateful for the eternal Hope that is before us in what is yet another varied season!

Gemma & The WAM Team



You can donate here!

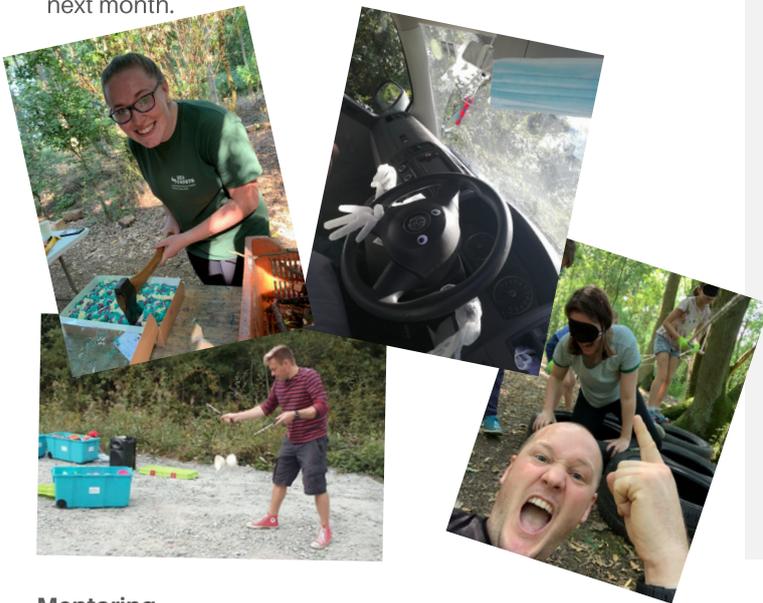
<https://wamyouth.enthuse.com/profile>

WAM Youth (Charity No. 1170638)  
9 Gretton Road,  
Winchcombe  
Gloucestershire GL54 5EE  
01242 603678  
[www.wamyouth.org.uk](http://www.wamyouth.org.uk)

# EXISTING SERVICES UPDATE

## Outdoor Education

After a very exciting holiday club season in the summer it has been a slow start to our term-time outdoor education as we are still suffering from the effects of school closures and restrictions on school trips. We are still providing one-to-one support and education as we did throughout lockdown but due to the space this year in our outdoor calendar we've started to run some sessions for home educated children and young people which have so far been a great success! At our 1:1 sessions we're busy building shelters, cooking over the fire, joining in with some of the woodland maintenance. Dave and Jon have helped keep everyone's spirits up in the more challenging times and practical jokes were aplenty during the summer holiday sessions! One of our 1:1 young people is featured in our annual report so look out for his WAM story next month.



## Mentoring

WAM Mentoring has now returned to face to face for those who are safe to meet in person. We are still facilitating mentors and mentees to meet online where face to face isn't possible and see this as being a development of our service now that allows us to work more flexibly rather than a temporary adaptation just for lockdown. We are grateful to our mentors who have continued to support their mentees throughout this challenging period, whilst facing their own challenges as well. Ali continues to manage the project and whilst we aren't in a position yet to recruit the second person on this project that we had planned for this year we are using other WAM Staff to help her pick up the new referrals we're receiving. This means we can best use the resource that we have already and help towards balancing the books this year! We're excited that we've just finished training 4 new mentors and look forward to supporting them on their mentoring journey!

## Youth Groups

Following the separation of our elev8 youth group during lockdown into two groups to better accommodate the different ages and the arrival of Carla to the team we decided to keep the two groups as we returned to face to face sessions. We are really grateful to Winchcombe Sports Hall for letting use the Hall for two sessions per week and to Encounter Church for the provision of their hall and No.9 Cafe. Face to face sessions obviously have a different feel now than pre-Covid as we have secure bubble arrangements, copious amounts of hand sanitiser, temperature guns and face masks but we are still managing to have lots of fun and have had visits from the very talented Thomas Trilby and next week will be enjoying Crazy Golf!

## Relationships and Sex Education

This term we're running sessions on emotional wellbeing to Year 7s at Winchcombe School. These lessons are a great opportunity to help young people to begin to recognise when they are feeling overwhelmed and to develop strategies to manage that. It is such a privilege to be invited into the school and again to be working face to face, especially with students who are new to the school. Sessions later in the year with other age groups will focus on healthy relationships and consent and we'll also be running Kintsugi Hope Wellbeing Groups.

# WHAT'S NEW!

Hi everyone! I'm Carla, WAM's new Community Youth Worker. I grew up in Cirencester, not too far away, but lived in various places including Madrid, Spain and California in the USA for a number of years. I'm excited to be back here in England, despite the rain ;) I originally trained and worked as an actress, and have a lot of experience working with young people in Theatre-In-Education companies, and lots of youth camps! I love the great outdoors, playing sports and games of all sorts, and generally having fun. Alongside working four days a week at WAM, I'm a ministry trainee at St Luke's church in Cheltenham. I'm looking forward to getting to know the local youth and wider community, and exploring activities and ideas for future projects!

