



Smallshaw-Hurst
Children's Community



KEY IMPACT AREA

Community Engagement and Support

with a Focus on Long-lasting Impact

Case Study

Understanding the Community and Making a Change

We realised that Smallshaw-Hurst needed some big changes, and to do that we needed to talk to everyone - children, families, and young people. We believe that everyone's voice matters if we want to make things better.

That's why we teamed up with Sheffield Hallam University to create a special survey using emojis. It was a bit surprising because, even though the survey showed that our community faced some tough challenges, people still felt positive about living here. This made us realise that we needed to really get to know our community better to understand what they really needed. That's why we started doing things like crafting sessions and giving out free lunches during school holidays. These activities weren't just about helping out practically, they were also about getting to know each other better and building trust within the community.

Seyedoh, 7, makes art during school holiday activities, supported by the Smallshaw-Hurst Children's Community in Greater Manchester.
Credit: Jonathan Hyams/Save the Children.

Co-creation with the Community

During the pandemic we brought together local charities and groups like Ashton United in The Community, St. John the Evangelist Church and the Broadoak & Smallshaw Community Association. Together, these organisations comprised the Smallshaw-Hurst Community Action Group, which set out to help families during the pandemic. The mission was simple: to make sure nobody felt alone or unsupported. They didn't ask for anything in return - they just wanted to help.

The group recruited volunteers and worked hard to create a hub in the neighbourhood. This became a place where people could reach out for help, get information and connect with others. The volunteers provided activity packs for kids, helping families without internet access get connected and even gave out money for essentials like food and bills.

In the summer of 2020, something really exciting happened - lots of people started to get on board with our mission. Our social media following grew, with people finding support, conversation and connection. Ashton United Football Club stepped up big time to support local families during the holidays. What began as a short-term solution blossomed into something amazing: a permanent Pantry Store right in Cedar Park. The store has become a lifeline for our community, ensuring that nobody goes hungry or feels left behind.

But it's not just about handing out food. It's about creating a safe space where people can come together, share stories and support each other. This has helped to cultivate an invaluable trust and connection with the Smallshaw-Hurst Children's Community. Now instead of us always going to families, they're coming to us.

From this collaboration, a weekly Pantry Store membership scheme was born in 2021. These ideas weren't just cooked up by a few people in charge, they were shaped by everyone in the community. We believe in treating each other with dignity, grace and choice.

The Pantry Store isn't just run by some big organisation. It's run by local people, for local people. This shows how strong our community is becoming. We're not just solving problems, we're growing together.

And to top it off, the Football Association recognised how brilliant our local football club was in supporting the community. They described Ashton United's contribution as "a national model of best practice". This shows that grassroots organisations like sports clubs can be a vital part of the wider community, even if you're not into football!



Credit: Smallshaw-Hurst
Children's Community

Meet Emma

Emma has been a part of our community since the very beginning. She's been there for every activity, pouring her heart into making a difference. Now, she's not just attending; she's leading. Emma is a proud member of the Parent Champion group, where she advocates for other parents and caregivers.

Reflecting on her journey, Emma describes how the activity packs were a lifeline during the pandemic, keeping her kids engaged and excited when staying indoors was tough. Emma vividly remembers the joy on her children's faces each week as they explored new crafts together.

She's been a loyal member ever since, recognising the immense support the pantry store provides. "Without this, getting through the week would be really difficult," Emma admits. The pantry store has become a lifeline, offering essentials she couldn't afford otherwise. But it's more than just groceries, it's about confidence and community.

Emma's confidence has soared since getting involved in the Children's Community; she no longer carries the weight of "Mum Guilt" because she can bring her children to the park and enjoy quality time without worrying about expenses. It's not just about the activities; it's the connections she's made with other parents, the peer support that means everything when raising a family.

Being a part of this community has inspired Emma to give back. With support from her Housing Provider, Jigsaw Homes, she's helped start a community group near her home, organising activities for local families and planning initiatives for other residents. Emma is also an active member of the Parent Champion group, attending events focused on solutions to the cost-of-living crisis and breaking down barriers to work.

Even as she searches for employment, Emma continues to learn and grow, volunteering in the community and acquiring new skills along the way. Her journey is a testament to the power of community, resilience, and the transformative impact of support and solidarity.

Looking Ahead: Embracing Community's Strength

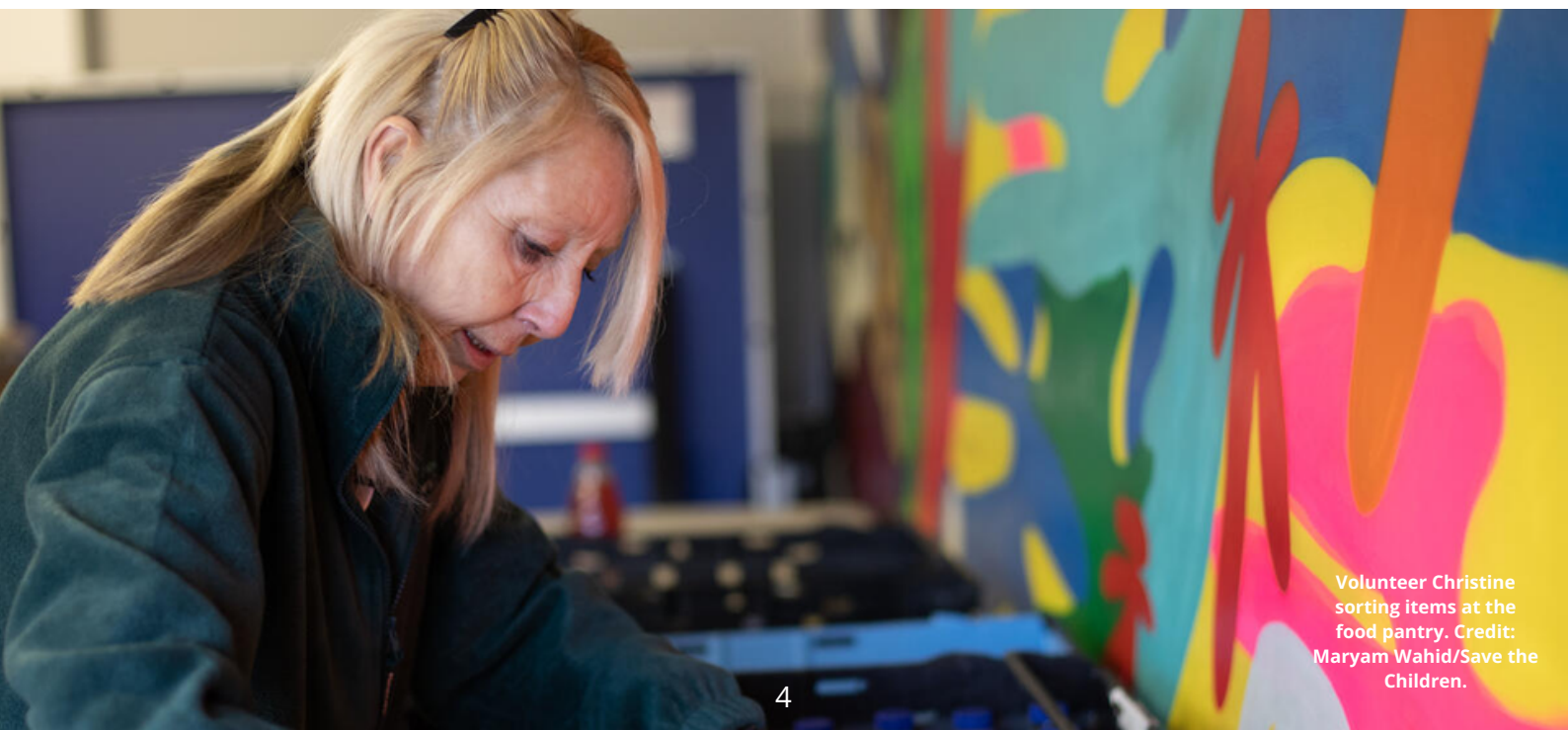
As we look to the future, the journey we've travelled fills us with pride and excitement. Together, we've recognised the need for change and embarked on a journey of empowerment and solidarity. Now, as we move forward, we're not just looking at what's ahead; we're celebrating the impact we've already made.

The recent creation of the Cedar Park and Hurst Community Group marks a significant milestone. This initiative is a testament to the strength and resilience of our community, showcasing our commitment to long-term sustainability. With power transferred to the hands of the community, we're paving the way for a future where everyone has a voice and plays a role in shaping our collective destiny.

As Christine, the the founder of the Cedar Park and Hurst Community Group, says: "We all get involved in planning and organising activities, we're making our community even better. It's all about creating a space where everyone feels welcome and included. We're not just talking the talk; we're walking the walk by raising money for important stuff like the baby bank and making sure everyone feels fabulous for prom with dresses and suits."

And we're not stopping there. We've got some great plans in the works, like Friends Around Friday which will bring people of all ages together for some fun times in Cedar Park. Bingo nights, social walks, you name it, we're making sure there's something for everyone to enjoy.

We're proud to look back at what we've done so far in Smallshaw-Hurst. It's not just about the things we've accomplished, it's about the friendships we've made and the ways we've helped each other out. Together, we're like a big family.



Volunteer Christine sorting items at the food pantry. Credit: Maryam Wahid/Save the Children.