

Helping children overcome trauma with play

Clear Sky Children's Charity was shortlisted for the UK-wide Charity Today Awards 2019. The local organisation is one of just four charities from across the entire UK to have made the category's final shortlist. Although they lost out in the final, the Awards gave the charity the opportunity to raise their profile and tell their story to both national and regional audiences.

Clear Sky's story begins when the charity was set up by Sophia Giblin to help children who are struggling with mental health or emotional issues due to trauma and early life challenges. Sophia was inspired to set up the charity after losing her Mum as a teenager as there was a lack of age appropriate support available to herself and her three younger siblings. Clear Sky Children's Charity provides Play & Creative Arts Therapy services to children and young people in Oxfordshire and surrounding counties in order to help them can overcome traumas and challenges early on in life so that they don't compound into complex mental health difficulties in later life. Through play, drama, art, storytelling, sand and puppets children

are able to 'play out' difficult things they have witnessed or experienced and make sense of the world around them.

As well as providing therapeutic provision for children they also support the systems around the children to provide long lasting change within families and schools. All of their work is based on the power of play to strengthen relationships. Strong relationships are the foundations for good mental health.

Due to the sensitive nature of their work, they only use fully qualified therapists to work with the children and families they support. Clear Sky needs volunteers to support them at their head office with administration, fundraising and event management.

The charity is looking for volunteers who are self-motivated, determined and committed. They are a small team and they do the best they can with the resources they have available to them. The charity says: "it's always great to have volunteers who are happy to come in and throw themselves into the work and proactively find ways of supporting us."

VOLUNTARY VOICE

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One of their volunteers, Fiona, says: "It is very fulfilling and rewarding to be able to help out at Clear Sky with anything that needs doing - no two days are the same! It is also a brilliant opportunity for getting back into the working environment after a long break"

One of their beneficiaries says: "This course, above all, has taught me a very important life lesson, that of taking care of myself first in order to take care of all around me. As an essential homemaker, mum, wife, it's something I learnt late but soon realised the massive difference it made in the overall wellbeing of our family. One cannot pour from an empty cup!"

To find out more about this and lots of other volunteering opportunities in Oxfordshire visit oxonvolunteers.org, or visit Clear Sky's website www.clear-sky.org.uk, contact them via email info@clear-sky.org.uk or telephone 01865 362789.

This article was developed in partnership with the Volunteer Centre at OCVA. If you would like a feature about your community group, charity or social enterprise in Voluntary Voice, email: vol@ocva.org.uk