

Application to Children and Young People's Fund ARMY

My name is Debbie Fallaha and I am the Community Development Worker for the Army Welfare Service. I work with military and civilian families in Corsham and Colerne (which has isolated status), providing activities and events for all ages.

There is a need in both locations for a 'club' for the 5-7 age range as the majority of military families in service accommodation in the area are lower rank personnel, and consequently younger parents with young families. In addition, there has been a large deployment of soldiers to Afghanistan recently and the respite for the spouses and children left behind is very important.

Since coming to post last year I have engaged the military and wider communities in regular sessions such as Rhyme Time and Play Time for the pre-school children, and Junior Youth Club for 8-11 year olds. With the exception of family events and half term activities which cater for all age ranges, there is no regular provision for the 5-7 age group.

I have 'piloted' a club for this age group in Corsham over the last few weeks just to see how it would be received and it has proved to be very popular. It has given the younger siblings of youth club members their own space and identity, and parents have commented favourably.

I would like to properly establish this club (which we have called Kidzone) in both Corsham and Colerne – opening up to the wider community, as the pilot has involved only military children. The methodology used for this age range is Playwork (as opposed to youth work) and we have no resources to support sessions in either Corsham or Colerne. The pilot has been successful thanks to the generosity of one of my community volunteers (and indeed her children) – as they lend their toys and play equipment to Kidzone each week.

An award from the Children and Young People's Fund would enable me to purchase equipment for the two locations – duplicating the larger items in each venue and perhaps transporting smaller items between locations to give a variety of choice each session. Quality play equipment is expensive – even the smaller items, such as a standard set of Lego bricks can run to hundreds of pounds per item. Larger static items are also needed. For example the children love playing table tennis on our mini table that I picked up from Freecycle, however it is quite unstable with not much life left!

For the reasons stated above, and given that I am applying with two very different locations and communities in mind, I would ask the Board to consider an award of £4,000.

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