



Smallshaw-Hurst
Children's Community

KEY IMPACT AREA

Empowerment and Capacity Building

Case Study

The Journey of Parent Champions

“At the heart of our mission lies a profound belief, you can only change a system by listening to the people that the system is failing”. This ethos has been the driving force behind our work with Parent Champions, a group of passionate individuals dedicated to making a difference in their community.

How It All Began

Our journey started with humble beginnings, meeting parents at our co-produced Pantry Store and holiday activities. We invested time and effort into building genuine relationships, earning confidence and trust – essential elements in community work. From these interactions, a group of proactive parents emerged, eager to lend their voices to the cause.

Initially, there was hesitation among parents to get involved. However, witnessing the experiences of others and with the support of vocal community members, they found the courage to join us. This group has since become integral to our work with Save the Children, contributing to various initiatives and seizing opportunities arising from national campaigning and advocacy efforts.

Jamie and her sons Lachlan, 7, (left) and Harley, 11 at an event held by Smallshaw-Hurst Children's Community.
Credit: John Owens/Save the Children.

Shining in the Spotlight

Our Parent Champions have not shied away from the spotlight. They've been featured in renowned publications like Stylist magazine, highlighting their advocacy on International Women's Day. Additionally, their insights have been shared through platforms like the Manchester Evening News Cost of Living Diaries and even on the Discovery Channel. Their influence extends to social media, where they engage in meaningful conversations through platforms like the National Parents Forum and local peer support.

Shining in the Spotlight

The journey of our Parent Champions has taken them to prestigious round table events. These events, organised by large NGOs including, Save the Children and Action for Children, provided a platform for our champions to discuss critical issues directly with policymakers. From nervous beginnings to confident advocacy, their growth has been remarkable, leaving an indelible impact on those around them.

Beyond Media and Politics

Yet, their involvement extends beyond media appearances and political engagements. They play a pivotal role in community activities, facilitating summer holiday programmes and shaping the offerings of the Smallshaw-Hurst Children's Community. From local activity attendees to national decision-makers, they lead by example, ensuring our work resonates with the community's needs.

A Transformative Journey

The transformation we've seen in our Parent Champions is awe inspiring. From overcoming personal barriers to becoming active members of the Cedar Park and Hurst Community Group, their journey exemplifies the power of peer support and collective empowerment. Their involvement in the National Parent Panel underscores their growing influence and commitment to driving positive change.

Looking Ahead

As we look to the future, our focus remains on nurturing and amplifying the voices of our Parent Champions. We are committed to transferring power to the community, whether through advisory roles in local schools, shaping holiday activities or contributing to the Hurst Festival. Their journey is a testament to the potential within every individual to affect meaningful change, and we're privileged to be part of their empowering story.

Meet Jamie

Meet Jamie, a remarkable Parent Champion for the Smallshaw-Hurst Children's Community and an integral part of the Save the Children National Parent Panel. Jamie's journey with the Children's Community began from its very inception, attending activities in local neighbourhoods, volunteering during the Pandemic, co-producing the Pantry Store and gradually evolving into a passionate advocate and organiser.

In her own words, Jamie shares, "Getting involved with the Children's Community has given me a voice. I can now speak about the challenges families face and be a voice for those who may not have the opportunity to engage with decision-makers like the MPs I have. My confidence has soared, and I've had the chance to connect with others who share similar experiences."

Through her involvement, Jamie has been presented with numerous opportunities, including visits to Parliament where her voice was heard by politicians. She has also participated in various media engagements, such as filming for the BBC, Discovery Channel, giving interviews to newspapers and meeting Prospective Parliamentary Candidates.

Reflecting on the impact of her journey, Jamie expresses, "The Children's Community has not only empowered me but has also supported my family through difficult times. From activities during school holidays, bringing the community together during the pandemic, creating a Pantry Store, they've been there for us, even in the smallest gestures."

Moreover, Jamie highlights the profound effect on her children, stating, "My involvement has instilled confidence in me and my children. We all feel empowered to speak up and share opinions, opening doors to new possibilities and careers we never imagined."

Jamie's story exemplifies the transformative power of community involvement and advocacy. Through her journey, she has not only discovered newfound confidence and skills but has also widened her aspirations for herself and her children. Knowing that she is capable and supported, Jamie continues to thrive and inspire others within her community.