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The Primary Club ensures blind Sussex youngsters are 'sport for choice'

Grant funds activity sessions during school holidays

The Primary Club, the cricketers' charity for the blind and partially sighted, is helping to fund special activity weeks for children with visual impairment in the Sussex area run by Blatchington Court Trust. The 'Sport for Choice' programme involves sessions throughout the year during half term and summer holidays ensuring youngsters with visual impairment are kept stimulated and active during school vacations.

Typically between 10 and 20 young people aged 8-16 will take part in one session. In addition to specially adapted traditional sports such as football and cricket, the youngsters also try out adventurous activities such as horse riding and trampolining.

Recently 16 under 16s successfully completed a five-day residential outward-bound course in Little Canada. Highlights of the week included quad biking and a high ropes course.

"The Sport for Choice programme provides a vital source of stimulus, challenge and friendship to keep visually impaired young people occupied and active during the school holidays," said Andy Dalby-Welsh, programme co-ordinator at Sport for Choice. "Often children with partial sight can feel isolated and alone during school holidays when they must cope without the support of their friends and teachers - this can knock their confidence and undermine any progress made during the school term. Sport for Choice gives those young people a chance to meet with others who face similar challenges - we've seen great friendships formed in the two years the scheme has been running, with children returning every half term to catch up with Sport for Choice mates."

"Sport for Choice epitomises what the Primary Club stands for and originally set out to do," added Derek Underwood, Patron of The Primary Club. "It's about partially sighted young people having fun, gaining confidence and developing important life skills through sport and recreation. We're really pleased that we have been able to help purchase much-needed specially adapted equipment and subsidise challenging activities which are clearly valued so highly by the children concerned and their families."

(328 words)

About The Primary Club (www.primaryclub.org)

Founded in 1955, The Primary Club's mission is to raise money to fund sporting and recreational activities for blind and partially sighted children. Now in its fifty-first year the Club has almost 9,600 members having raised a total of £2 million. In 2006 the Club donated £200,000 to a number of UK-based charities including Linden Lodge School, The Royal London Society for the Blind and British Blind Sport.