

## Report back to The Funding Network

### 1. Name of your organisation and date funded by TFN:

TheHorseCourse, December 2015

### 2. What was the project you sought funding for from TFN?

What are its aims and objectives? Have these changed since receiving TFN funding?

TheHorseCourse is aimed at young people aged 8-18 yrs. old who are/or have been excluded due to severely disengaged or disruptive behaviour caused by a lack of emotional and/or critical thinking skills.

The objective is to work with the referred participant over 5 days, using our specially trained horses, who give clear feedback on the 8 core skills we are aiming to develop: calmness, focus, empathy, responsibility, assertiveness, planning, confidence as a learner and effective communication.

These objectives have not changed since receiving TFN funding.

### 3. Were you able to do this work as you described it in your application and presentation?

Yes

What evidence do you have for the success or failure of the funded project?

The funding also paid for part of a barn to be converted with suitable flooring for horses that can be used in bad weather.

It also funded signage for our new centre.

The funding we received was for 8 participants to take TheHorseCourse and allowed extra funding for the set up of our new facility in Barnet, North London.

The funding allowed 8 participants to take TheHorseCourse, 7 young people from a local Pupil Referral Unit and 1 from a local school. All were presenting with severe behavioural problems, mainly stemming from anxiety.

We reported back to referrers with detailed Feedback reports for all participants who have completed the course, and the students went home with photos from throughout and a 10 minute video from their last day as well as a completed TheHorseCourse Skills Star on which we recorded (in a robust discussion with them) their progress in the eight key skills we teach (calmness, focus, empathy, responsibility, assertiveness, planning, confidence as a learner and effective communication).

### 4. If you were not able, please explain what happened and why?

Can you quantify any changes? Eg ...expanding number of employees, number of projects, geographical scope.

N/A

### 5. Can you measure, assess or describe the change that happened as a result of this work?

What actual change did the funded project generate? What proportion of the project/work did TFN fund (eg all/x%)?

The participants who completed the TheHorseCourse showed significant changes over the 5 days, recorded on the THC Skills Star. We later ask the referrers to give us feedback on how participants are doing 2 months post course, getting an external view on the Star plus additional questions. The feedback we have received so far shows that each participant has improved on eight skills from referral time to 2 months post-intervention (calmness, focus, empathy, responsibility, assertiveness, planning, confidence as a learner and effective communication). The average gain is just over one step on a 4 step scale. These skills are

playing out in “real life” with improvements noted in confidence and engagement/attendance at school, better relationships and less difficult behaviour. This is an excellent result and bodes well for those young people.

**6. As a result of presenting at TFN, did you experience any of the following;**

New subscribers to your mailing list

New volunteers to your organisation

Further funding from individual donors

Further funding from institutional funders

An introduction that benefited your organisation (e.g. to an individual, business or other organisation)

Other benefit (please describe)

We were able to leverage the TFN funding to gain Stepping Stones Funding.

Since we opened our centre in Barnet there has been interest from across the borough and from Hertfordshire Children’s Services who have visited to see what we do and hope to set aside a budget for 2017. We now have a significant database of referring professionals, keen to continue working with us.

**7. Could you give us an estimate of how many people have been reached by the TFN funded project/work and by how much?**

The funded project enabled us to reach 8 students in our community.

**8. Can you tell us any personal stories to highlight the value of funding from TFN?**

One example: a 15 year old girl who was unable to attend school because of her crippling anxiety. She barely looked up or spoke to anyone on day 1. By the last day she was making eye contact, smiling and making clear, assertive communication with not only the horse but the humans as well! She had tried out a number of strategies to calm herself when agitated, with in-the-moment feedback from the horses. They would back away from her and get confused when she was too stressed to communicate calmly and clearly, but collaborate fully once she was calm, focused and clear.

In her 2 month post-course follow up, we are told she is using the self-calming strategies we taught her and is now able to attend class with the other students, a massive step.

**9. Since presenting at TFN, has your organisation undergone any significant change(s) which our donors would be interested to know about (these changes do not need to be related to the experience of presenting at TFN).**

The HQ in Dorset has recently found new premises to set up a long-term secure base. Heads of terms are agreed and a lease is being drafted. There will be an urgent need for investment to change it from a dairy farm into an equestrian teaching space.

**10. Do you have any other comments regarding TFN funding?**

The funding we received from TFN allowed for the Barnet hub to get set up and ready to start offering courses from June 2016. At the start it was quite a learning curve for the new team: getting the right referrals and literally getting the participants to and from the venue! However, word soon got around and things started to snowball with enquiries coming in from the local and surrounding boroughs enabling us to offer courses up to October.

We already have people wanting to refer young people now for the Spring 2017 when courses will re start.