

## TFN Impact Report

<b>Name of your Organisation:</b>	Downright Excellent (DEx)
<b>Date of TFN event which you pitched at?</b>	03/12/2018
<b>Name of the project TFN funded:</b>	The Older Tweens Accelerate
<b>Were you able to undertake your project as you outlined in the application?</b>	Yes
<b>Can you describe and/or demonstrate the specific impact that TFN funding has had against your initial objectives?</b>	<p>TFN funding enabled DEx to turn a short pilot project into a more permanent service to help teenagers with Down syndrome (DS) acquire much needed skills for life. We would not have been able to do this without the TFN funding. At DEx, we call the young people aged 10 – 16, 'Tweens'. H's parents say: 'without the funding, the older Tweens (14 - 16years) would have had to abruptly leave DEx and do so at a time of life when there are so many skills yet to be developed.' J's parents said: ' We felt that J was a trailblazer in piloting an amazing and incredibly unique experience for older Tweens. However, he is only able to be a trailblazer if there is funding in place to support this service. The funding from TFN, supporting Jane's post, has enabled him to continue and had great impact on his skills development.' Other parents' observations are: 'the funding has enabled the start of the journey to gain new skills essential to post 16 and young adulthood ..... and an enduring structure for the older Tweens has been created.' The accompanying photos show some of the skills developed solely because of the TFN funding. We were able to hire Jane, a specialist in assisting those with learning challenges and making it fun. Jane has long experience in working with the specific learning profile of those with DS so the new TFN project has helped our Tweens make great progress. Sadly, unexpected demands in Jane's personal and professional life meant she had to stop working with DEx Tweens at the beginning of September and we are still seeking a successor. An unexpected result of the accelerated skills development is that 2 Tweens left in the summer because they had gained sufficiently in confidence and other skills such as dexterity or following instructions to join mainstream clubs on Saturdays (when the DEx Tweens meet); one is enjoying football and the other, drama. 'New' Older Tweens joined the group in September as they are now 14 and they moved on from younger Tweens groups. TFN funding has also prompted us to re-design Tweens i.e. looking for different spaces locally in which to meet, advertising for local volunteers and inviting other DS organisations to visit to see the unique Tweens model. Sandra, Jane's colleague has made presentations at conferences and attracted interest; this will be an ongoing effect of the TFN funding after the end of the project. So far, for this project, impact has been assessed by asking parents and schools to comment on progress/specific achievements and to wholly or partially attribute to Tweens if possible. Observations of this type also help Jane or facilitator to focus on specific areas. The Older Tweens self-assess when working with smiLE activities and this is a method that helps</p>

## TFN Impact Report

	<p>them decide on ways to improve - based on learning to make their own observations. This is a huge learning curve and is giving them an incredibly valuable lifelong skill that they can continue to build on. Other skills and impact the TFN funding has generated are: the group has learnt to respect one another, giving each other time to speak and listen, whilst respecting values and opinions – crucially, this will have an impact on social skills and acceptance in the wider community. In an impact survey, parents said, ‘the impact of the project means more choice, more confidence, more engagement ....being more ready for college, volunteering, work opportunities.’ They also commented, ‘Jane and the team are very skilled in their experience and knowledge of working with young people with DS and it highlights the ultimate goal to engage our young people in an inclusive way and support them in giving them a very special tool kit to go onto to training or work. Without these tools J might not have had a successful work experience. Without these tools J might not have had the confidence to want to play basketball and – hopefully – have an opportunity to participate in the next Special Olympics.’</p> <p>An initial objective was to organise expeditions for the Older Tweens but for various reasons the expeditions to date have all been to local venues and on foot. The Tweens are however, booked to see Snow White at Chickenshed in January - and, although this is beyond the end of the project, we are counting it as part of TFN's Older Tweens Accelerate. Thank you!</p>
<p><b>What portion of the project did TFN fund?</b></p>	<p>100%</p>
<p><b>How many direct beneficiaries did the TFN funded project reach?</b></p>	<p>7</p>
<p><b>How many indirect beneficiaries did the TFN funded project reach?</b></p>	<p>127</p>
<p><b>Were you able to leverage further funding as a result of TFN support?</b></p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p><b>If yes, how much were you able to raise and from whom?</b></p>	<p>The 'yes' is actually pending but the answer is definitely not 'no'. The TFN Tweens project which has incorporated smiLE activities has attracted interest from other DS organisations across the UK. There are not many organisations that specialise in lifeskills development for this age group - most clubs are activity based such as for sports or leisure activities. Next year, DEx will host paid visits from other groups</p>

## TFN Impact Report

	and will train them in our methodology and the Older Tweens' objectives - this is a direct result of the TFN funded project. Thank you TFN!
<b>Has the training you received from TFN better prepared you in pitching your organisation to potential funders?</b>	Yes
<b>Did you receive any pro-bono support, volunteer offers or introductions as a result of the event?</b>	Yes
<b>If yes, can you provide details on the support you received.</b>	4 attendees of the TFN event last year provided their email address and expressed willingness to be contacted and involved. It is my shame that owing to a series of disruptions and non-stop work, I have not yet contacted anyone - although I know it will benefit DEx. These benefactors never slipped off the radar but I have horribly neglected them and their undoubted potential. I planned to make contact with Season's Greetings at the end of this year. Very sorry indeed.
<b>Has TFN Increased your capacity to raise further funds?</b>	Yes
<b>How important was TFN funding in helping you achieve your objectives?</b>	We wouldn't have been able to achieve our objectives without TFN funding
<b>Since presenting at TFN, has your organisation undergone any other significant changes?</b>	There have been and are several changes in personnel. Jane, our amazing Tweens facilitator and lifeskills coach, left a few weeks ago due to unavoidable personal and non-Tweens work pressures. We miss her tremendously and are seeking anyone with relevant experience who would like a fantastically rewarding paid role on Saturday mornings. Two Trustees have resigned during the year - one to move away and the other to get married- but we are successfully recruiting from outside the parent body which will bring in new skills to the Board. We are always thrilled to be asked at any time if there are Trustee vacancies! Sadly, our great Chair must step down in January 2020 as she has completed her term of office. DEx is still seeking applicants for this fascinating role and will be delighted to send information to anyone who is interested in finding out more about us. We said good bye to our long term administrator in October but were very lucky that she stayed within reach to effect a smooth handover - amazingly we were able to recruit her successor immediately.
<b>Do you have any other comments or feedback on the experience of the TFN process?</b>	Just our great thanks to the TFN team and members. TFN funding for the older Tweens has made a significant lifelong difference to several young people with DS. This is a learning disability that presents severe challenges but, with the right help, young people can achieve more than was ever thought possible and can maximise their potential. This is, however, an expensive and resource intensive process; it is not provided by the state which is why DEx exists. This year has been

## TFN Impact Report

	<p>wonderful and exhausting! TFN has enabled DEx to break new ground and we will continue to do so from the springboard you provided. Heartfelt thanks from all at DEx to all associated with TFN.</p>
<p><b>Can you tell us any personal stories to highlight the value of the project?</b></p>	<p>These are stories about the direct beneficiaries and all show how valuable the TFN project has been:</p> <p>H made a presentation at TFN December 2018, and shared that she would like to work with children and manage a nursery when she started work. Her ambition is still to work with younger children in a Nursery type setting. The skills she has developed this year in TFN-funded Older Tweens have contributed to her enjoying and coping with a work placement at a local Nursery school - spending half a day per week over the summer term. H commented that 'It was amazing... I enjoyed it .... I want to do more.'</p> <p>The interaction with peers and adults has supported the older Tweens into understanding and building on social skills such as keeping eye contact and appreciation of personal space. It has also encouraged confidence and perseverance skills, for example if X can't make himself understood first time he will now either try again, or look for other ways, such as write a word, draw a picture or use his Augmentive and Alternative Communication (AAC) device at home and in school. He has become much more confident in his communication.</p> <p>Ys parents said, 'Y's most recent school report and annual review acknowledges how much more "grown up" Y has become in the last year and considerate in his behaviour, which we can attribute, in part, to Tweens. Jane offered a unique set of skills within her understanding of working with people with DS, particularly specific to this age group. The teaching of these unique skills to the Tweens, has helped them grow in confidence and experience. For example, given some pocket money, Y might not have previously had the confidence to go into a shop to buy himself something. Whether it is useful to come out of the shop with shaving foam and a hand soap dispenser is questionable, but it is inspiring that, through his "shopping experiences" with DEx Tweens, he has mastered the concept of choice to take care of his personal hygiene and behave in ways he associates with adults e.g. shaving and buying the products a grown up world.'</p> <p>J has undertaken some work experience in school helping out in the IT room at lunchtimes – helping some of the younger ones with their passwords, or to log on or tidying up. His mum says, 'I can honestly say, J loved the role and responsibility and he wanted to wear a shirt, tie and smart jacket on each work day; we are sure this must have been influenced by the TFN evening event James enjoyed last year. He feels proud to be helpful and useful and takes pride in his desire to</p>

## TFN Impact Report

	<p>look smart. Another story about J - he goes to a basketball club which he started about a year ago. He used to take a back seat and wait for the ball to come his way. He was pretty quiet and often wasn't sure where he was meant to be on the court. The communication skills and the team work he has learnt at Tweens have had a great impact on his playing. He is a new person – more confident and has positively learnt to participate and work as part of the team....and he makes eye contact before passing the ball. It is wonderful to see how much more self-assured he is and, as a result, he may be going to play in a basketball match in Nottingham.'</p> <p>Finally, a dad felt he could ask for extra skills development to be included in the Older Tweens' programme: 'please help him understand that when his girlfriend breaks up with him at school, there are probably more acceptable ways of showing distress and displeasure than throwing blue paint over her.'</p>
--	---