



Holly's Story

The Beginning:

Holly lives with her children in Meanwood and first came to the attention of the Community Builder at a community celebration event funded by Small Sparks. Holly had never attended any previous community events but came along because her children wanted to participate in a hip hop event and a graffiti workshop. Holly spoke of her isolation and loneliness and of never leaving the house or knowing her neighbours. With encouragement, Holly agreed to attend a community picnic but did not maintain contact after the event. Sometime later Holly's mum died. Finding it difficult to cope, Holly reached out to the Community Builder for help and support.

"For the first time ever, I feel like I belong".
Holly



The Journey:

Holly was desperately in need of support and community connection. The death of her mum and the absence of a friendship network had exacerbated her sense of loneliness and lack of support. Through conversations with the Community Builder, Holly was encouraged to participate in community events and activities including attending the Community Café where she could meet and chat with others in a safe, supportive environment. Holly began participating in various activities over the summer holiday period, attending an event every week. As she got to know other women on the estate, she felt herself becoming part of a friendship network her confidence and wellbeing improved substantially.



The impact on her children was also evident, as they made new connections with other children on the estate. Holly confided to the Community Builder that she felt like she belonged and had found her place in the local community. As a result of this new confidence and connections, Holly felt inspired to think of how she would like to use her experience to support others locally.

The Impact:

Holly's confidence, self-esteem and emotional wellbeing improved substantially through community participation, enabling her to adapt to difficult and changing circumstances.

Feeling part of a friendship and support network gave Holly a keen sense of belonging and motivated her to set up a new group, 'My Community United' to support other local people to find friendship and create opportunities for collective community action.

