Melanie's Story

The Beginning:

Melanie has been a valued friend of InterACT Church and Community Partnership for many years. As a mother of seven, Melanie is widely respected for the care, commitment and values she brings to her family life. She loves to make sure her children have good and wholesome experiences in life and has shown the same care for other families in her community.

Over several conversations, Melanie shared her desire to run free, inclusive activity sessions for local families during the school holidays, hoping to create more opportunities within walking distance of her estate. While she had the ideas and motivation, taking that first step felt challenging.
With encouragement and support from the Community Builders at InterACT, Melanie felt ready to turn her idea into a reality.

"It's really good to have the funding and support to help someone give their idea a go. The process of trying it out seems just as valuable as the end product, and we've loved exploring possibilities with Mel."

(Vanessa, InterACT)



The Journey:

With help from her children, who designed parts of the event poster, Melanie launched the first Pop In and Play session during the February half-term. Local young people from a volunteering scheme run by InterACT and partner organisation Thrive Leeds supported the event, which ran alongside a Beckhill Community Garden activity, creating a lively community atmosphere.

Melanie has since delivered two sessions, attracting over 20 attendees. Funding from the ABCD Small Sparks fund enabled activities such as Lego, crafts and a circus performer, all of which were very popular with the children.
The sessions will continue in future school holidays, with Melanie aiming to make them sustainable so they can run even in her absence.

The Impact:

The play sessions have offered free, enjoyable, and creative activities that are particularly beneficial during school holidays, when many families experience increased financial pressures. Providing more free, local opportunities has helped to build a stronger sense of community.

There is hope that future sessions will welcome new families while also bringing back familiar faces, allowing relationships to continue to develop and grow.

The sessions have also enabled older children from the neighbourhood to extend their volunteering, and they were grateful to Melanie for offering this opportunity to support others.

