

Above and Beyond: Community spirit transcription (opening 01:15)

[Opening drone footage with voiceover showing the North Sea coastline, rural road, child looking out of house window, woman dressed as elf waving to care home residents through window, police officer dancing in residential street, families sharing sweets, two women opening scrunched paper with the words “stay” and “connected”]

In every community, there is work to be done and so often in the busyness of our lives we forget that. But the pandemic caused us all to stand still and reflect. As physical distance was put between us all, the feeling that we are all in this together became central to our feeling of connectedness. As we recognised that we need and appreciate each other, the sense of community spirit grew across the County.

Will Coulter started a collection of toys and books for the “Make a Child Smile” campaign so children could have presents at Christmas.

[Images of Will Coulter with the presents he’d collected.]

Soon, rainbows, a symbol of hope for better times, filled our streets.

[Image of rainbow painted rock, house window with encouraging words and pictures]

William McGurk painted rocks and hid them around his home town to make other children happy.

“My name is William and I xxxxxxxxxxxx rocks and paint them and hide them for people can find them and it makes them happy.”

[Video of William and images of the rocks he painted and hid]

Clap for carers became a collective expression of gratitude for the front-line staff going above and beyond to keep us all safe. [videos of clap for carers residents]

Across County Durham, schools, settings, children, young people and community groups launched initiatives to bring people together and a strong sense of community spirit, perhaps not seen since war time, was re-born.

[Images of children litter picking with one child raising money for charity]

“Hello, my name is Andrew I did a litter pick in November. I collected over 40 bags and raised over £350 for the World Wildlife Fund. I did it because I hated litter lying around, it looked ugly and it hurts our environment. So, I think I should stop that.”

[More images of children litter picking]

This community spirit and sense of collective purpose has provided us with the hope we need for brighter times ahead.

[Dancing outside of care home]

Aidan Marmont sold plants from his garden wall to raise funds for the NHS. After hitting his £100 target, Aidan then sold fruit and veg from the allotment. Donations totalled an impressive £2,314.

[Images of Aidan and plants and then fruit and veg]

Alfie used his pocket money to provide survival packs for hundreds of children. The packs included chocolate, colouring sheets and other ways to cure boredom.

[Images of Alfie buying the items for the survival packs and packaging them up]

Keeping Connected with Ouston Primary School.

During the pandemic, we used creative activities to retain our sense of school community and bring hope and positivity to our families and community. Being creative also enabled us to express ourselves, be social, and proud, during these unsettling times.

[Images of school's Christmas windows]

We looked forward to Spring and we used those pictures to make cards to send to residents at the local care home.

[Images of spring paintings and cards for care home residents]

The Brit Kids Show with Ethan Fletcher

In the first lockdown Ethan set up his own radio show for children. He found home schooling at that time quite difficult and the radio show gave him a more creative outlet.

[Voiceover of Ethan Fletcher: "The Brit Kids Show bringing you kid friendly radio every Saturday from 1.00."

It motivated Ethan to get his school work done so that he could then work on his show. Almost a year on and Ethan is still broadcasting every 2 weeks.

[Voiceover of Ethan Fletcher: "Hello I'm Ethan I see you've found yourself of my Youtube radio talk show, The Brit Kids Show bringing you kid friendly radio from 1.00 pm every Saturday. We'll have a laugh, we'll have some interviews and get the lowdown on the latest news and weather so why don't you join us and if you don't want to miss a show click the subscribe button ."]

Ethan produces the entire show himself. The show features quizzes, reviews and interviews. He has spoken to children around the country about life in a pandemic, as well as a young person who had COVID, a young film maker, dancer and many more.

One, two, three, four. Cream Tees Folk Group kept music alive online through virtual rehearsals and performances.

[Video of the folk group rehearsing virtually.]

Helping the Community created by Silver Tree Primary School and Nursery

[Accompanied by folk music]

We helped those by delivering food parcels to the local community. [Images of school staff in local supermarket; images of thank you notes] We wrote letters and created rainbow hands and pictures to go with the letters! [Images of school children writing letters and cards] We even celebrated a local lady's 100th birthday with cake and flowers. (Image of birthday lady with bouquet] And at the heart of everything were the children who attend our school. Packs were made to support children who were working from home. [Images of bag of goodies for school children]. Special messages were sent virtually [Image of teacher holding large message]. We read daily stories and gave daily tasks. [Video of teacher reading story]. Year 6 enjoyed a special farewell where they could see each other one last time before moving onto secondary school. [Images of school yard with socially distanced bags and balloons]

[Continuation of video of the folk musicians playing virtually]

Cook Together East Together - with Selby Cottage Childcare Centre

[Video of crates with slow cookers and food]

The Cook Together Eat Together Project saw over 80 families receive a hamper containing everything they need to cook a hearty meal. From the ingredients to recipe cards, video guides and even the slowcooker. [Video of food preparation and then final meal; images of children enjoying preparing and eating the meals at home.]

Thank you messages and pictures from families: "It was lovely to cook as a family and having so much left over we were able to blend and freeze for our youngest who is peg fed saving even moor time. Thank you Team Selby." "This was delicious with some chicken meatballs added in. We also made our own garlic bread with the baguettes we had left over".

Children have been inspired to create their own demos. [Home videos and pictures of children preparing, cooking and eating the meals prepared.] In the future, Selby Cottages Childcare Centre will further inspire creativity with the next phase of the project: Invention Hamper which will inspire families to create their own dishes.

Community Spirit with North Durham Academy

To our community at this challenging time from students at North Durham Academy. [Images of positive pictures, words and quotes]

Support the Community with Easington Colliery Primary School

School meal deliveries direct to homes. Keeping in touch with families. [Videos of school meal deliveries to homes.] Always on the end of the phone. Learning to use technology to reach our pupils.....and each other. Laptops became gateways to learning and communication. [Video of teacher using laptop to communicate.] We made sure technology was available to those that need it [Image of person surrounded by laptops] We shared lessons virtually [Video of person using laptop]. Pupils shared learning with us [Home videos of children] We even made the local news for our Facebook video [Video of news programme showing Facebook video] We made school full of opportunities and normality. We welcomed pupils into school supporting everyone to understand the one way system and all the safety measures [Video of school entrance]. Enjoyed a full curriculum [Image of children playing instruments in front of interactive whiteboard] and enriched school with even more! [Image of children cutting up vegetables] Despite the challenges we remain a team [Images of staff] and make sure we all stay connected [Video of two women opening crumpled paper with the words "stay" and "connected"]

Winter Wonderland created by Lanchester EP Primary School

[Images of school children in warm clothing outside with Santa

[Video of child speaking] "I think it was probably just as good as Lapland honestly. It was just and especially the fact of being with your friends as well it was just very nice"

"Our winter wonderland was quite a journey for us all in school. I think last year was quite a unique year. I think having the lockdown, having children out of school for so long, then returned to school but nowhere was open around about Christmas time. We thought what can we do for our children at school to try and make it just a bit more memorable. An idea could we not transform our forest and have some winter activities in there. [Video of teacher speaking and images of children in the winter wonderland]

Mrs Stephenson, headteacher at All Saints Catholic Primary School, was thrilled that Lanchester EP extended her school an invitation to join the Winter Wonderland [Video of the headteacher speaking] "The dedication of the staff of EP??? were really second to none. They gave so much time, so much energy to ensure that the children really, really had a magical experience, an experience filled with joy".

[Video of child speaking] "There was lights across from all the trees and there was a really nice entrance. We sat around the campfire and we melted the marshmallows inside" [Images of children roasting marshmallows]

[Video of children being interviewed] "So we got to have hot chocolate with cream and we got to see Santa in our classroom." "I liked having the chocolate at the end of the day that they gave us".

[Video of the headteacher speaking again] "At such a difficult time, after such a difficult few months it was wonderful to be able to bring a little bit of magic and joy to the children and families in the area and I think we certainly did that with what [Image of children seeing a reindeer and handler]

[Video of children being interviewed]

Interviewer “We missed out on quite a lot in 2020?” Children “Yeah we missed out on all the fun stuff we got to do.” Interviewer “But was this like a nice unexpected fun thing?” Girl “Yeah I wasn’t expecting it to happen at all” [More images of pupils in winter wonderland]

“The week itself of Winter Wonderland was the pinnacle of my career. Even now I get quite emotional thinking about the children coming in, their excitement, their anticipation of going into the Winter Wonderland which was such so magical. I think I was a little bit anxious about our Year 6 children, the oldest children, but actually they seemed to appreciate it more than anyone and they just said, you know, the thanks of the children “oh thank you miss this is just brilliant”.

Because we’d put so much time and effort into it, we wanted to open it up to the community, so All Saint’s School they came across and it was wonderful to welcome them. We knew some of their children cos they’d attended our nursery so that was good. Staff have said they wanted to do it bigger and better next year. Something that we started in lockdown but I think it’s just going to get bigger and better as the years go on.

Santa Visits Isolating Children with Wingate Nursery

[Images of Early Years Educators from Wingate Nursery, dressed up as Santa and an elf, with the help of a local hero Rocky and Shire horse Tom. Images of children at their front doors receiving presents from Santa and waving to Santa and elf. Elf and Santa smiling and waving to children and elderly residents to brighten their day.]

Jack Drum Arts – Doorstep Gigs

[Video of 4 musicians performing outside for local residents in the street. Residents dancing and smiling. Video of drummers dressed as elves performing in the street]

[Resident interviewed] “At the end of the year, it’s absolutely brilliant, it’s brought us all back together and had a bit of a laugh. Just great.”

Nordic Storytelling

“.....was just about to sit back down, when all of a sudden there was a knock knock knock (sound of knocking on the door) another knock at the door.the snow is really coming down, and we’re really cold, aren’t we?”

Rockin’ Robbins

[Images of two people dressed up in robin outfits dancing to the song ‘When the red, red robin’]

“I booked the Rocky Robbins for my mam, sad and lonely this Christmas. To bring some joy and Christmas spirit. Fantastic.”

“It’s really enriched our Christmas. Excellent.”

[Video of Elton Wrong – singing hits from Elton John while on a moveable piano and dressed in uniform, to the community in the street].

Raiju the Arctic Fox

[Video of man and other person dressed as an arctic fox dancing in street]

“Agatha and I will be performing this evening at the theatre. I’ve been teaching Agatha to tango, and she’s not quite getting it, she’s not quite getting it, so that’s what I need some of your help for.”

“She was amazing. She was amazing we loved it. Thank you. Was that the best present ever? Yeah!”

Elf Drummers

[Video of Policeman dancing in the street with residents to the music of the drummers]

“It cheered everybody up. It was excellent. Absolutely marvellous.”

“To put the effort in and the time it takes to do everything, I’m immensely grateful for everything they’ve done for us. Certainly, cheered us. Woken up the estate this morning I think.”

Ox Close Primary School – Don’t Rush Challenge

[Videos of children getting ready for school in their Oxclose Nursery sweatshirt, hoodies, jumpers and cardigans]

County Durham Community Foundation – Investing in Children Summer Packs

[Images of the County Durham Community Foundation distributing packs, containing gifts for the disadvantaged families and your people.]

Doorstep Gigs with Runaway Samba

[Images of Runaway Samba performing outdoors to residents in the street. Residents loving the display and joining in with dancing]

Lumley Infant and Nursery School with Lumley Junior School sing ‘One Moment, One People’

[Videos of children getting ready to sing; singing in bedrooms, gardens, school hall and all schools together].

Credits

Thank you to the following:

Aidan Marmont

Alfie the Kid

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Cream Tees

Easington Colliery Primary School

Ethan Fletcher

Investing in Children

Jack Drum Arts

Lanchester EP Primary School

Leah Carr

Lumley Junior School

Lumley Infant and Nursery School

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Ouston Primary School

Ox Close Primary School

Pemberton Pickers

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Silver Tree Primary School and Nursery

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