

Ubuntu

I AM, BECAUSE WE ARE



OUR JOURNEY
CONTINUES...

WHAT WE DID...



Hi!



THE THEME OF OUR SECOND COMIC IS BASED ON THE AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY OF UBUNTU - "I AM WHAT I AM BECAUSE OF WHO WE ALL ARE".



WE SPOKE WITH SOME OF OUR INCREDIBLE YOUNG PEOPLE, WHO ARE PART OF THE DUDLEY CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL, ABOUT THEIR HOPES FOR THE FUTURE, THEIR IDENTITY AND HOW 'BEING IN CARE' IMPACTS UPON THEM.

WE ALSO EXPLORED HOW OTHER PEOPLES' VIEWS AND BEHAVIOURS TOWARDS THEM HAVE IMPACTED UPON THEIR CONFIDENCE AND SELF ESTEEM.



WE HAVE LISTENED TO THEIR RESPONSES AND FEEL IT'S IMPORTANT TO SHARE THEIR ANSWERS WITH YOU TOO! IF WE ARE TO ENSURE THAT **CHILDREN ARE FIRST AND IN THE HEART OF ALL WE DO**, THEN HEARING WHAT THEY HAVE TO SAY IS A GOOD PLACE TO START...

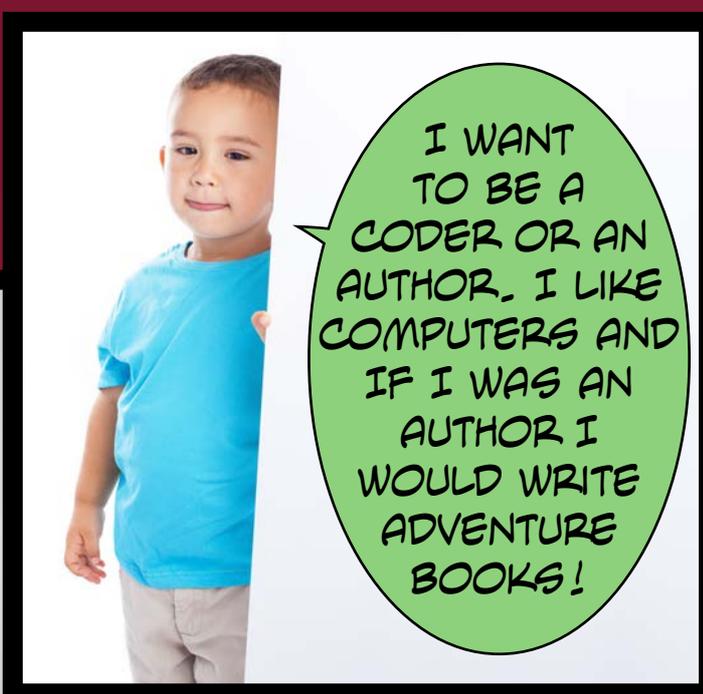
**...HEAR OUR STORY,
HEAR OUR VOICE**



WE ASKED OUR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHAT JOBS THEY WOULD LIKE TO DO WHEN OLDER?



PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHER

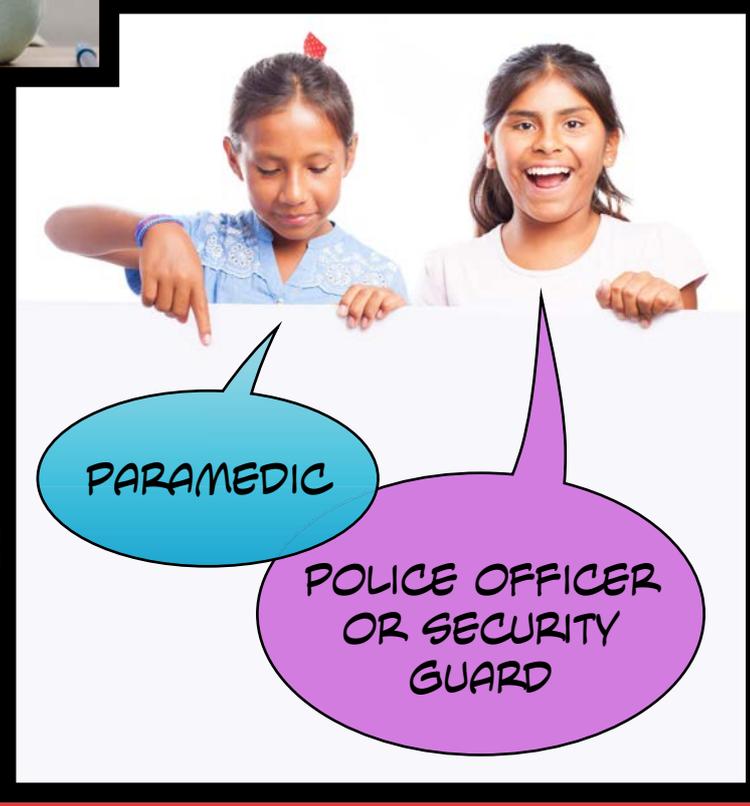


I WANT TO BE A CODER OR AN AUTHOR. I LIKE COMPUTERS AND IF I WAS AN AUTHOR I WOULD WRITE ADVENTURE BOOKS!



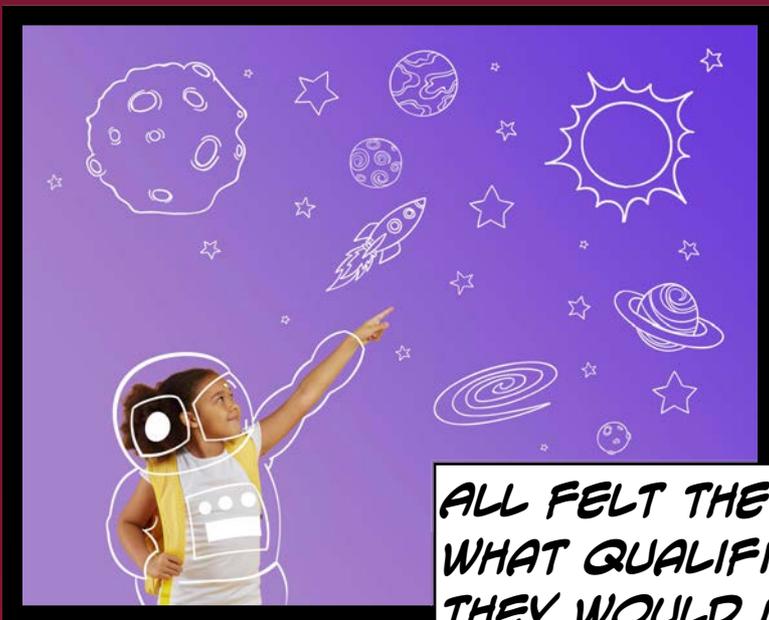
RECEPTION TEACHER

I WOULD LIKE TO BE A BIOLOGIST AND LIVE IN FRANCE



PARAMEDIC

POLICE OFFICER OR SECURITY GUARD



WE ASKED THE YOUNG PEOPLE ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCES IN EDUCATION.

ALL FELT THEY HAD A CLEAR IDEA OF WHAT QUALIFICATIONS / CAREER PATH THEY WOULD NEED TO ACHIEVE THEIR FUTURE EMPLOYMENT GOALS.

MOST FELT THEY WERE WELL SUPPORTED AROUND EDUCATION BY TEACHERS, SOCIAL WORKERS AND FOSTER CARERS.

SOME OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE HOWEVER SHARED EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS DIRECTLY SINGLING THEM OUT TO BE USED AS EXAMPLES IN CLASS DUE TO THEIR CARE EXPERIENCE.

A TEACHER ONCE TOLD ME I WAS GOING TO FAIL IN A SUBJECT I WAS STRUGGLING IN, WITHOUT OFFERING SUPPORT. I RAISED THIS IN MY PEP MEETING.



SUPPORT IS VITAL TO SET GOALS BUT IT'S HARD WORK TO PUSH THROUGH TO ACHIEVE THEM GIVEN OUR CIRCUMSTANCES. IT'S NOT ALWAYS EASY TO KEEP UP.

I FEEL I'VE BEEN PICKED OUT IN CLASS. IF PEOPLE FEEL I'M VULNERABLE, THEY PICK ON ME.

A LOT OF PEOPLE THINK CHILDREN IN CARE TURN INTO DRUGGIES AND 'ROTTEN EGGS'. WE AREN'T LIKE THAT. IT'S THAT ATTITUDE WHICH STOPS SOME LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN GOING INTO HIGHER EDUCATION.

CHILDREN IN CARE ARE LABELLED AND DON'T FEEL WORTHY TO GO TO UNIVERSITY.

WE ASKED THE YOUNG PEOPLE ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCES OF TELLING OTHERS ABOUT THEIR CARE EXPERIENCE...



WHEN I FIRST WENT INTO CARE I ONLY TOLD ONE PERSON I THOUGHT I COULD TRUST. EVERYONE FOUND OUT AND THOUGHT I WAS NAUGHTY AND TROUBLE.

WHEN PEOPLE FIND OUT I'M A LOOKED AFTER CHILD THEY HAVE PITY, WHICH I DON'T LIKE.

PEOPLE ARE NATURALLY INSENSITIVE - THEY DON'T MEAN IT.

I AM OPEN IN TELLING PEOPLE I AM IN CARE -IT'S NOTHING TO BE ASHAMED OF. IT'S NOT THE CHILDREN'S FAULT - IT IS WHAT IT IS.

IT'S HORRIBLE, WE ARE MADE TO FEEL ASHAMED OF OUR PARENTS PROBLEMS AND US BEING IN CARE.

I AM OPEN AND TELL PEOPLE I AM IN CARE, I DON'T WANT PEOPLE TO THINK I LIE ABOUT OTHER THINGS.

SOME THINK LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN ARE NAUGHTY - HAVE A LOT OF BAGGAGE AND YOU SHOULD STAY AWAY. SOMETIMES PARENTS DON'T WANT THEIR CHILDREN HANGING AROUND WITH CHILDREN IN CARE.



SOME PEOPLE DON'T UNDERSTAND AND EVERYONE HAS DIFFERENT EXPERIENCES. ISSUES ABOUT LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN'S TREATMENT IS UNDERVALUED IN SOCIETY - WE ARE FALLING UNDER THE CRACKS.

WE ASKED THE YOUNG PEOPLE TO THINK OF A TIME SOMEONE HAS SUPPORTED THEM TO REACH THEIR GOALS...

AND HOW THIS MADE THEM FEEL?

I'VE HAD REALLY GOOD EXPERIENCES WITH MY CARER. I'VE BEEN IN THE SAME PLACEMENT FOR 4 YEARS BUT THERE ARE OTHER CHILDREN WHO DON'T HAVE THIS AND NEED MORE SUPPORT.

MY CURRENT SOCIAL WORKER IS VERY SUPPORTIVE OF THINGS I AM DOING, THIS IS NICE TO HAVE.



MY SOCIAL WORKER SUPPORTS ME IN PSYCHOLOGY, SHARING RESEARCH. SHE SEEMS TO CARE AND TRIES TO HELP ME - IT'S NICE TO HAVE SUPPORT AND KNOW THEY CARE.

MY CARERS ALWAYS PUSH ME TO BE MY BEST. I WAS STRUGGLING WITH SCHOOLWORK, MY CARERS SAT ME DOWN AND SPOKE TO ME ABOUT FOCUSING ON EDUCATION WHICH GAVE ME THE PUSH I NEEDED TO GET THE GRADES I GET NOW. WITHOUT THEM, I WOULD NOT BE PASSING ANYTHING IN SCHOOL. THEY ALSO HELP ME DO THINGS OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL LIKE SWIMMING AND DRAMA.



MY SOCIAL WORKER SUPPORTS ME, SHOWS AN INTEREST IN WHAT I AM DOING AND GIVES ME PRAISE.

MY CARER SUPPORTED ME THROUGH MY GCSE'S LAST YEAR. MY GRADES WEREN'T WHAT I WANTED BUT MY CARER WAS REALLY SUPPORTIVE AND WAS THERE FOR ME. I'M NOW DOING MY A-LEVELS AND I'VE DONE MY DUKE OF EDINBURGH BRONZE AND SILVER AWARD WITH MY CARER'S SUPPORT.

WE ASKED THE YOUNG PEOPLE TO THINK OF A TIME SOMEONE HASN'T SUPPORTED THEM TO REACH THEIR GOALS...

AND HOW THIS MADE THEM FEEL?



PEOPLE GET LABELLED AND BECOME WHAT THAT LABEL IS. IF I AM LABELLED AS AN ARSONIST AND A BAD PERSON/TROUBLE MAKER, I WILL BELIEVE AND BECOME THIS.

MY PREVIOUS SOCIAL WORKER SPELT MY NAME WRONG ON MY PASSPORT - THIS DID NOT MAKE ME FEEL LIKE SHE COULD SUPPORT ME IN LIFE.

A PREVIOUS SOCIAL WORKER WAS VERY 'TICK BOXY' AND DIDN'T GET TO KNOW ME PERSONALLY. SHE SAW ME ONLY AS HER JOB AND MADE ME FEEL I WAS NOT WORTH HER TIME. SHE WAS ALWAYS LATE AND MADE ME FEEL WORTHLESS.



MY PREVIOUS SOCIAL WORKER WROTE ABOUT MY SISTER IN MY LIFE STORY WORK. I FEEL I AM IN A GOOD PLACE IN MY LIFE AND I FEEL LIFE STORY WORK SHOULD BE DONE IN OUR TIMEFRAMES. I DON'T WANT TO BE DRAGGED BACK TO THE PAST.

THE WAY WE ARE SEEN AND TREATED ISN'T GOOD. WE NEED TO BE KNOWN PERSONALLY AND AS AN INDIVIDUAL, NOT JUST AS A CHILD IN CARE. IF YOU DON'T GET TO KNOW ME, YOU WON'T GET TO UNDERSTAND WHAT IS REALLY GOING ON.

WE ALSO SPOKE WITH THE YOUNG PEOPLE ABOUT THE IMPACT COVID-19 HAS HAD ON THEM...



WHEN I HAD A NEW SOCIAL WORKER IT WAS DIFFICULT TO GET TO KNOW THEM BECAUSE OF THE COVID RESTRICTIONS. I HAVE ONLY SPOKEN TO HER ONCE ON THE TELEPHONE. IT GIVES ME A SENSE OF INSTABILITY, ESPECIALLY WHEN ALL THE RESTRICTIONS KEEP CHANGING AND I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT'S GOING ON.

IT'S BEEN A REALLY BIG STRUGGLE. I'M A SOCIAL BUTTERFLY, I LIKE BEING OUTSIDE - COVID HAS MESSED UP MY SCHEDULE AND I HAVE REALLY STRUGGLED.



CONTACT WITH MY SOCIAL WORKER HAS NOT BEEN GREAT. I HAVE HAD 3 SOCIAL WORKERS DURING COVID. I DIDN'T HAVE NOTICE OF MY WORKERS LEAVING BEFORE THEY LEFT.

GOING BACK TO SCHOOL AFTER BEING ALONE HAS BEEN DIFFICULT.

THIS MADE ME FEEL WORTHLESS AND AS A STATISTIC, LIKE WE AREN'T IMPORTANT. YOU HAVE TO RELIVE EVERYTHING WHEN MEETING A NEW WORKER - I DESENSITISE MYSELF FROM IT NOW.

I DON'T LIKE TALKING ON THE PHONE - IT FEELS IMPERSONAL. IT FEELS LIKE THEY MAY NOT BE PAYING ATTENTION.

FINALLY, WE ASKED THE YOUNG PEOPLE TO SHARE THEIR THOUGHTS ABOUT WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE TO IMPROVE OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN IN CARE...



AS A CHILD IN CARE, IT'S A LOT HARDER TO DEPEND ON PEOPLE BECAUSE THEY MAY DISAPPOINT US. BECAUSE OF THIS WE NEED TO KEEP PUSHING AND PUSHING OURSELVES TO REACH OUR GOALS.

THE NEWS NEVER TALKS ABOUT CHILDREN IN CARE; THIS DOESN'T HELP WITH THE STIGMA. THERE ARE NEVER POSITIVE STORIES IN THE MEDIA - WE ARE INVISIBLE.

YES, WE HAVE BEEN THROUGH DIFFICULT STUFF BUT WE DON'T WANT TO BE TREATED DIFFERENTLY. WE ARE AS NORMAL AS ANYONE ELSE.



DON'T PITY ME BECAUSE I'M IN CARE. THINK ABOUT THE CONSEQUENCES OF YOUR ACTIONS AND WORDS AND HOW THESE IMPACT US AS PEOPLE. TRAINING IS NOT THE ANSWER - IT'S AWARENESS THAT'S NEEDED.

SOCIAL WORKERS SHOULD TAKE TIME TO GET TO KNOW US ON AN INDIVIDUAL LEVEL AND ESTABLISH A RELATIONSHIP - ESPECIALLY BEFORE LIFE STORY WORK IS STARTED.

'UBUNTU' CONTAINS MESSAGES FROM OUR VERY OWN CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL, TELLING US ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCES OF THEIR PERSONAL JOURNEYS IN CARE. IT'S TAKEN A LOT OF COURAGE, AND THE MESSAGES SHARED HAVE BEEN VERY POWERFUL.

THANK YOU!



THIS HAS BEEN DEVELOPED BY VICKI SILVESTER-GRANT FROM THE CENTRE FOR PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE AND THE DUDLEY CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL