

Lottery cash boost to Big Hearts

The Edinburgh-based Big Hearts Befriending Project is one of the over 900 projects to have been awarded National Lottery Community Fund cash during the last 25 years.

The news is highlighted as part of World Kindness Day and Big Hearts is delivered by Big Hearts Community Trust.

It offers the opportunity for children aged seven to 14 to engage in social activities every week in the company of a trained adult volunteer.

The project received a three-year National Lottery Community Fund award of £149,423 to support its Kinship care programme.

Cathy Owens, is a kinship carer to her 12-year-old grandson, Nathan, who was matched with a befriender in the project. said: "Befriending has been wonderful for Nathan.

"He gets to go out once a week with his befriender and enjoy a range of different activities which he chooses while I get some precious time to myself.

"I have seen him become more confident and self-assured and it's been wonderful to see his wee personality evolving, thanks to the magic of befriending."

Craig Wilson, the trust's general manager, said: "By building a trusted relationship with our trained Big Hearts Volunteers, these young people get to improve their emotional well-being and become more active.

“The support from The National Lottery Community Fund has enabled our Big Hearts Befriending Project to grow and involve many more isolated young people living in a kinship care setting across Edinburgh.”

Maureen McGinn, Scotland chair of The National Lottery Community Fund, added: “The National Lottery changes lives.”