

Venture Scotland awarded National Lottery funding

Edinburgh-based charity, Venture Scotland, has been awarded nearly £100,000 in funding, over three years, from The National Lottery Community Fund.

Since 1989, Venture Scotland has used the outdoors as a vehicle to transform the physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing of young people across the Central Belt. Every year, the charity's small team delivers four, progressive outdoor-based personal development programmes, known as the "Journey", to over 50 young people who are facing challenges to their mental health. Using Scotland's natural environments to deliver group-based outdoor activities, such as gorge walking, kayaking and hill climbing, alongside groupwork, 1-to-1 support sessions and remote bothy residentials. The charity's ethos is to use the outdoor experience to help the young people gain confidence, overcome challenges, and discover their potential – all of which they can channel into their daily lives.



The National Lottery Community Fund has made it possible for the graduates of the various courses to “give back” to Venture Scotland. The innovative Ambassador Programme has embedded four of the graduate Young People at all levels of Venture Scotland:

- They attend and offer feedback at Board meetings
- Support the fundraising team
- Help the Outreach Worker engage with new Young People
- Volunteer with the delivery team on activity days
- And have helped recruit new staff and trustees.

Most importantly, the Ambassadors bring their “lived experience” to motivate and inspire the young people and ensure that their wellbeing is at the heart of every activity.

Jo graduated from Venture Scotland’s Journey Programme in 2019. Before Venture Scotland, Jo was stuck in a cycle of self-destruction and experienced crippling anxiety, eating

disorders and isolation. After completing the Journey Programme, Jo became a Venture Scotland Ambassador.

Jo said: “The Ambassador Programme has given me a purpose and structure in these turbulent times, a chance to connect with people, learn new skills, keep up old ones and a chance to give back to a place and people that changed my life. It has given me hope; something to hold on to.”



The National Lottery Community Fund will allow the charity to officially launch the Ambassador Programme to a whole new generation of Young People.

The National Lottery Community Fund, Scotland Chair, Kate Still, said: “National Lottery funding can make amazing things happen in local communities across the country. This project delivered by Venture Scotland is a great example of community activity in action, showing just what can be achieved when people come together for a common cause or to help others. National Lottery players can be proud to know that the money they raise is helping to support this vital work and to help

communities thrive.”

Venture Scotland’s CEO, David Brackenridge added: “Our Ambassador programme has put the voices of young people at the heart of our organisation and this has already had a transformational effect. So often, our Ambassadors have given us a whole new perspective on the work we do and the decisions we make and this has changed the way we operate, govern ourselves and has shaped our strategy going forward. I already can’t imagine them not being an integral part of Venture Scotland. A massive thanks to the National Lottery for funding this programme and for ensuring we can grow and develop it with young people.”

