

Young people in Basildon set sail for success

October 2023

Young residents from two supported housing services in Basildon took to the open waters and embarked on a sailing trip of a lifetime.



The Swan House and Dove Cott House, run by Swan Care and Support, part of Sanctuary Supported Living, teamed up with young people's charity The Cirdan Trust to offer their clients the chance to experience the challenge and adventure of life at sea on a large sailing vessel.

Under the expert guidance of the crew from The Cirdan Trust, 10 young people and two members of staff set sail from Wapping, London, to Ipswich and spent two days learning the fundamentals of sailing. From hoisting sails to navigating their course through the waters, every participant had the chance to take an active role in operating the craft.

Swan House and Dove Cott House are both foyer services that provide supported housing for homeless young people aged 18 to 24.

For all the young people involved, the trip was an opportunity to step out of their comfort zone, overcome their fears and push their personal boundaries, giving them a sense of accomplishment and new-found confidence.

As well as providing them with a unique chance to learn the art of sailing, their adventure also offered an opportunity for personal growth, learning key skills such as adaptability, teamwork and leadership, and the chance to learn about the importance of protecting our oceans and marine ecosystems. Participants also had a chance to develop their sea legs, thanks to the unexpectedly high winds they experienced.

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One resident said: “The best part of it was learning all about the sailing. I improved my skills in keeping calm under pressure.” Another added: “Even though I struggled with my medical condition I was not going to let it stop me. It was the most amazing thing I have ever done!”

Shani Levy, Head of Service for Swan Care and Support, said: “The positive experiences and lessons learned during this voyage will leave a lasting impact. As well as gaining AQA qualifications in both sailing and leadership, I’ve no doubt that they will be inspired for a long time to come, remembering that with determination, they can navigate any course that life presents.”

Swan Care and Support is a member of the Foyer Federation, and the trip took place thanks to funding from the Foyer Federation’s ‘Youth Power Fund’, which aims to bring about long-term change around youth leadership and sharing power with young people in supported housing.