

Providing fun times for families

For the seven Home-Starts across Greater Manchester we are now starting to think about our summer outings for the families we support. Sometimes we are lucky enough to have donations that allow us to plan our trips, other times we have to seek funding across the year.

We work especially hard to provide our families with a day to remember in the summer months. Like Christmas, it's a time of year where so many families feel under pressure to find money to do something nice with their children. Across Greater Manchester, in the communities where we work, we know only too well that so many families simply do not have those extra funds for trips to the seaside, theme parks or activities away from school.

We know that hundreds of the children our volunteers support do not have summer holidays, and so the long weeks away from school cause many families extra stress. For lots of parents they struggle with feeding their children in the summer holidays, never mind find money to keep their children entertained.

This is where we step in, what we do is help to create a special memory for a child whose parents may be struggling to cope financially. Over the years, we have recognised that there are many barriers in place for families accessing a summer outing. So we make sure that everything is covered from picnics through to transport. It may seem obvious to some, but we really do support lots of families where they don't have any spare money at all during the school holidays.

Home-Start believes that every child has the right to a happy childhood, and we do our up most to provide all the children that we support with a happy memory.

One mum supported by us said: "None of my children had ever seen the sea, or even been away from the town where we live. Imagine how that made me feel as a parent? I felt like a failure, and I felt that I was responsible for them missing out. My heart used to sink when it got close to school ending for the summer. And I could have cried when I'd hear them saying where their school friends were going. But it changed when I got support from Home-Start. My volunteer encouraged me to go on the summer trip with her and other Home-Start families. I will never, ever, forget the look on my children's faces when our mini bus came over the hill and they saw the sea for the first time. It will stay with me forever, so thank you Home-Start."

If you'd like to help one of the seven Greater Manchester Home-Starts with their fundraising for their summer trips, please call 0800 068 63 68 or visit the national website where you can find details of all seven Greater Manchester Home-Starts. www.home-start.org.uk