



Sporting Champions Visit Report

Children's Adventure Farm Trust
24 February 2006 – Sarah Bailey MBE

Many of the young people who attended the Adventure Farm on the day of my visit were from deprived backgrounds and the majority came from foster homes. From talking to the group leaders at the Farm, several suffered emotional difficulties due to the fact they were no longer living with their birth family. With this as the background of the children I think my visit gave them a small insight into a world they have always viewed as being something unreal and like a fairytale. I showed them that gold medallists are real and they do live "normal" lives. One of the nicest things about the group was that they all lived very close to my house and they all knew some of the routes I used for cycling and I could say that I cycle past their schools at times.



It was non stop activity and interaction with the kids!! I arrived and we had an informal group chat where questions were asked and the ice was broken and then we went straight into a round robin tournament of 5-a-side! After that I presented Sporting Champions goodies and certificates and we took loads of pictures and I signed everyone's card and t-shirt. It was great that the kids were able to chat to me all the time and we spoke about loads of different things throughout the afternoon.

There was only time for 5-a-side footy, but the interaction during the questions and the prize giving was good fun and the kids were very enthusiastic about finding a sport they could excel in.

I tried to answer each of the questions with a positive link to their situation and demonstrate that sport would always be a part of my life even once the competition is over. They all started asking questions that were more about themselves and how they could do certain things, which for me showed that they were starting to think about the opportunities they did have available to them.

The questions the children were asking clearly showed they were very keen on sport, the opportunity to continue following the visit would be down to the situation at home, but I certainly got the vibe they were very keen and would like to try and keep playing sport, even if it was just football after school or at lunchtime. Some of the skills shown at the 5-a-side suggests they were very good at the game already!!

Inclusion and Diversity was the key theme for our event and this was easy to promote as all the kids came from such deprived backgrounds. We talked about their situation, my situation (coming from a disability angle) and talked about getting on with things even when people try and put hurdles in your way. The kids liked the idea of achieving above all odds and the "proving people wrong" theme was also touched upon.

This organisation provides activity weeks for deprived and disabled youngsters throughout the year, which makes them quite unique. The approach is one of inclusion and no matter what the circumstances of the young person there is always a way of introducing them to activity. I think that regular visits from a Sporting Champion would ensure that as many different groups of children get to be inspired by a "hero" as possible and would enhance the themes for the organisers at the Farm tremendously.

Sarah Bailey MBE – five times Paralympic gold medallist