

SOUSTER YOUTH ISSUE #2

ARTICLES, NEWS & INSPIRATION

Dave our volunteer

Survival School

Charlotte Croser
on Fundraising

Louise Willis
from Hope for
Families

JANUARY 2022



THE LATEST NEWS FROM SOUSTER YOUTH

What you can look forward to reading in his edition...

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Director's Letter: Jason provides an introduction to this issue.

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Charlotte Croser on Fundraising: Meet Charlotte, she loves take that and raising money for Souster Youth.

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Dave our volunteer: Meet Dave, one of our brilliant volunteers, who shares why he works with young people.

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Lousie Willis, from Hope for Families: Shares about the fantastic work of hope for families and the support their support available locally.

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Survival School: Read about our latest program launched in October last year.

Director's Letter

Well, the lockdown we all wondered about didn't arrive and, despite the continued presence of Covid, we're very much back into the swing of things here at Souster Youth HQ. This term we're particularly pleased to get back to running our 'Grow' course in 3 schools after group work was disrupted by the pandemic. Even our events for parents are returning, with the first one exploring Digital Technology taking place in early February.

What is in the pages that follow? I'm glad you asked.

You'll meet two brilliant local people who have supported our work through volunteering in very different ways. It is no exaggeration to say that there are whole areas of our work that simply couldn't happen without our volunteers who want to have a direct impact

on young people's lives in their community.

Fears of spiders and other nasty creepy crawlies frequently feature strongly in lists of things that people fear most. Last term we took 6 fearless young people into the woods of darkest Staffordshire to sleep alongside spiders on the forest floor! But, despite all of the vomit and late-night squabbles, this was no "I'm a celebrity" challenge, the young people were there to learn the principles of success.

You can read more in my article on page 6.

Also featured in this issue are our friends at Hope for Families. Louise Willis writes about how they support parents in small groups. Do check out their brilliant work online and consider getting behind them too.

I'll sign off by telling you about

Jarrold, a young person I met in school this week. Jarrold was referred by his school for some support and he shared with me that, despite his best efforts, he's been struggling to make friends. He'd even got to the point of asking peers why they didn't seem to like him, but he hadn't received any helpful answers. I was amazed by his openness as he told me he simply wanted to learn from their feedback so that he could grow as a person.

Jarrold's humility was enough to make him stand out among the many young people I've seen already this term. I have a sense that I'll be learning a lot from his wisdom over the coming weeks!

I hope you enjoy reading this issue.

Jason Royce leads the work of Souster Youth.



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT!

DAVE

We caught up with Dave, one of our Souster Youth volunteers, to find out what motivates him to volunteer with Souster Youth.

SY: Would you tell us a bit about yourself?

DH: My professional background is as an Aircraft Engineer. I served in the Royal Navy for 26 years on aircraft carriers and also shore postings in support of naval aviation. Service life can be tough on a family (although 3 years living in San Diego was certainly a highlight!). I left the Royal Navy in 2011 to take up a position as an Airworthiness Project Officer within the EU in Brussels, returning to Oundle in 2017. I am passionate about all things aviation related, and I enjoy DIY, woodworking and making paper models. I am also an avid board-gamer.

SY: Why do you give your time to helping young people?

DH: I was 'Skip' of the 2nd Oundle Scout Troop for 5 years which was pivotal in my interest in volunteering with young people. Our return from Brussels seemed like an ideal opportunity to take early retirement, where the change of focus and pace has provided me with the time to volunteer in support of developing our young people.

SY: So why Souster Youth?

DH: I am passionate about working with young people, but it is equally important for me that this is within a faith-based context. I have been very blessed in my life and volunteering through Souster Youth provides the perfect context to journey with our young people, where and when they need us.

SY: What has been a highlight of your time volunteering with Souster Youth?

DH: The lunchtime board game club at Prince William School in Oundle was a wonderful experience that allowed me to be alongside so many young people as they developed, matured and grew, all whilst having a great time playing games. What a privilege!

Do you have time to spare?

If you are interested in volunteering with Souster Youth you can get in touch with Tim or complete a volunteer application form via our website www.sousteryouth.org.



Tim Sandford
Schoolworker

How to get in touch:
e. tim@sousteryouth.org
t. 01832 735999

Survival School

Last term we launched a completely new programme for Souster Youth; Survival School. It uses Bushcraft and Survival training as a way into a conversation with small groups of young people about how to make the most of school. It runs over 7 weeks and includes a night out in the wild, sleeping deep in a Staffordshire forest.

We worked closely with a local school, we both felt that an immersive educational experience would have a significant benefit on the success of this group, now and in the future. We wanted to create an experience they'd never forget; a 24-hour Bushcraft residential in a Staffordshire forest. They were put through their paces by a highly trained team of experts; learning and practising the skills needed to survive in the wild.

Our programme

Each student needed to miss 6 days of their normal school programme. But, for those who made the most of the opportunity, it has the potential to significantly increase their achievement over the next two years. This can be a really valuable investment of time. Six young people were identified by their school as wanting some extra support to reach their potential at GCSE

level. We helped each of them ask four basic questions about success:

- What gets in the way?
- What can I do about it?
- What habits do successful people have?
- How can I look after myself?

To answer questions about habits that support success we used a teenage version of the classic personal improvement book 'The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People' by Stephen Covey.

Added to this was our best thinking on the kinds of things young people can do to look after their psychological health.

Our innovative programme included a day with a music producer and another with a former Navy Commander (read an interview with Dave on PAGE 4). Using the power of story, games and group challenges we explored each of the habits of success.

In the forest

The learning and fun continued in the forest as the group built shelters, lit fires and cooked some of their own food.

The skills and techniques you need to live in the wilderness were expertly demonstrated and explained by our instructors so that we could master them before leaving the course. This was learning through experience at its best.

All of the young people achieved their target of NCFE Level 1 Bushcraft, Survival and Wilderness Living Skills Training Course.

The celebration!

At the end of the course all the group (and parents/carers) were invited to attend an evening celebration event to mark their achievements. We provided food and entertainment, and took time to think about what things the students need to keep doing to make the most of school.

What young people said:

"I've learnt to control my anger!"

"I know a lot of the time I can get away with the bare minimum which is why I don't put enough effort in or contribute as much as I can. (I do want to change though and I know I can.)"

"Don't charge into things without knowing the full story!"



"If I try my hardest I can achieve what I want"

Signs of impact

Over the 4 classroom based sessions 2 students in particular made outstanding progress, moving off of the school's watchlist for behaviour and showing signs of real progress. Here are some summary statements by the student's head of year on the progress she saw:

"Student A – Came into his own on this course, every week he stepped up and watching the confidence grow week on week was a great pleasure."

"Student B – Over the weeks he grew in confidence and opened up relating the "weeks lesson" to his normal life, he was one of the first of the group to relate the lessons to his everyday life."

In addition, two of the group were nominated for Headteacher commendations and had dropped off the school's behaviour watchlist.

We'll be staying in contact with the group to find out how they get on during the rest of their time in school. For them, the hard work starts now!

FUNDRAISING MEET CHARLOTTE

I've run three tribute party nights since 2020 – two Take That and one ABBA – all in Thrapston. I enjoy seeing the real Take That live, and thought what fun it would be to host a tribute night in Thrapston – the town community centre is a great concert venue, and I knew that lots of locals see Take That when they tour.

The first Take That concert was in February 2020, right before COVID hit. We raised a fantastic £1705. The tribute act was excellent and it was such a good night, I was getting requests for more. I approached an ABBA tribute act they had worked with, so I booked them for a late 2020 date.

That event had to be postponed twice in the end due to COVID, but we finally went ahead with it in August 2021. Another great night and we raised £265 – a lot less than last time because I

decided to cap the ticket numbers and simplify the bar menu to reduce the risk of spreading COVID.

I held another Take That night in October 2021 which raised £1455. I felt more confident selling more tickets this time as COVID cases had subsided, so more people came, and they drank a lot!

Most of the income for the charity at my events comes from running the bar in-house. I had friends to help out and I bought the drink and added a reasonable mark-up. The ticket sales mainly cover the band, venue hire and alcohol licence, so the bar is crucial to raising funds. I also introduced a raffle to the previous two events which brought in some extra money.

Charlotte



SY: Why do you fundraise for Souster Youth?

CC: As a trustee of The Arthur Souster Trust, my first instinct was that Souster Youth would be the ideal charity to benefit from funds raised. I knew that local awareness of SY would be helpful too.

SY: Tell us about your last event

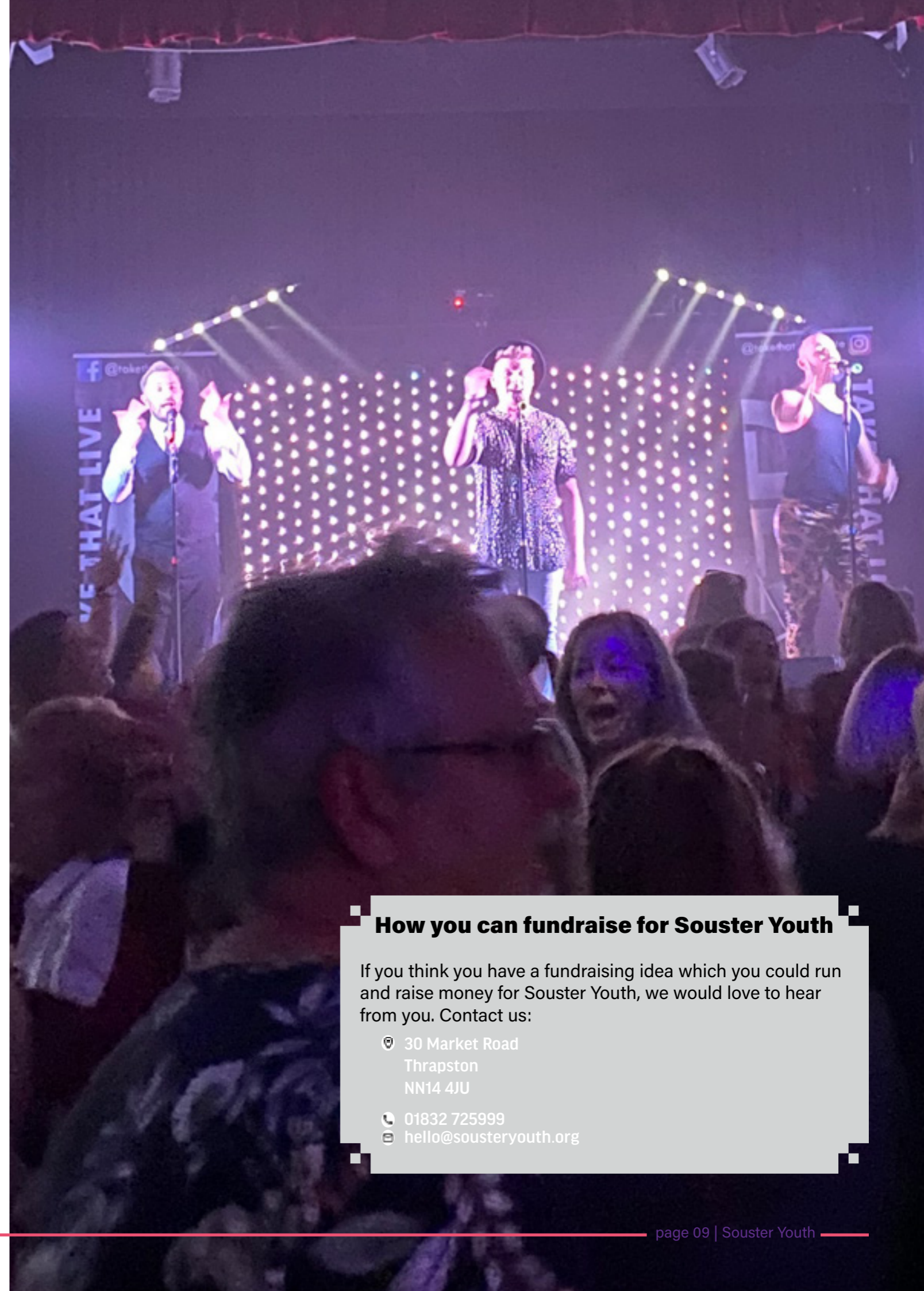
CC: I held a Take That night in October 2021 which raised £1455. I felt more confident selling more tickets this time as COVID cases had subsided, so more people came, and they drank a lot!

SY: How much did you raise?

CC: Over all 3 concerts I have put on, I have raised £3,425. One evening only raised £265 – a lot less than the first time because I decided to cap the ticket numbers and simplify the bar menu to reduce the risk of spreading COVID.

SY: What was the best thing about doing the events?

CC: I've really enjoyed organising the events and my favourite part is the live music and watching people enjoying themselves. The boys from the Take That tribute act I use are a pleasure to work with, as are my bar team of friends who make the night even more fun. It's hard work and takes commitment, but it pays off when you can raise funds and awareness for a worthy cause.



How you can fundraise for Souster Youth

If you think you have a fundraising idea which you could run and raise money for Souster Youth, we would love to hear from you. Contact us:

📍 30 Market Road
Thrapston
NN14 4JU

☎ 01832 725999
✉ hello@sousteryouth.org



HOPE FOR FAMILIES

WHAT A DIFFERENCE A YEAR MAKES!

I pause for a moment and let my mind wander back to this time last year - January 2021. Like many other parents, I find myself catapulted back to a time when the aftermath of the Christmas holidays and the desperate hope of a return to normal routine spectacularly collided with the reality of schools closing once again, many as soon as they had re-opened. Another period of home-schooling was upon us and if you're anything like me, this time it was met with less-than-enthusiastic groans as parents and children alike considered the possibility, once again, of yet another lockdown.

It's fair to say that the COVID-19 pandemic has dealt an exceptionally tough blow to many families. Family life has been challenged and stretched in previously unimaginable ways. Families of all shapes and sizes have struggled under the immense pressures of lockdown, home school and isolation. No one has been immune.

I have the privilege of leading Hope for Families, a charity working to support parents and carers across the county of Northamptonshire. Born out of Hope Church in Corby, Hope for Families was launched in November 2020 and in May 2021, we became a registered charity. When plans started coming together for a new organisation at the beginning of 2020, we had no idea that the looming pandemic would result in families needing our support more than ever before.

At Hope for Families, we work at a preventative or universal level, helping parents with a range of common challenges. Our licensed facilitators run courses and events aimed at helping parents, carers and couples build strong family relationships, empowering them to make positive and sustainable changes in their lives. As a Christian charity, we work closely with the national charity, Care for the Family, to deliver their full range of courses and events which are accessible to all parents, carers and couples, regardless of their faith background.

When we advertised our first online course back in April 2021, we were overwhelmed by the response we received. The impact of the pandemic on family life was starting to become clear and many parents were looking for support. Our '**Handling Anger in the Family**' course has proved to be particularly popular in our first year. The pressures of the pandemic have only made it more difficult for many parents and carers to manage and handle their anger in a healthy way. Anger is a real emotion that we all experience in 'normal' life, never mind during a pandemic, and the course provides practical tools for parents to try, along with the vital opportunity to meet and share with other parents.

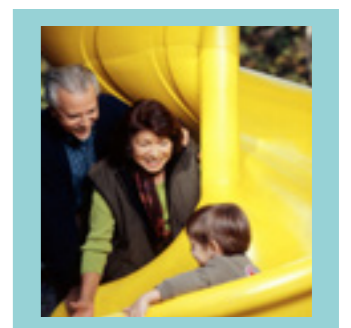
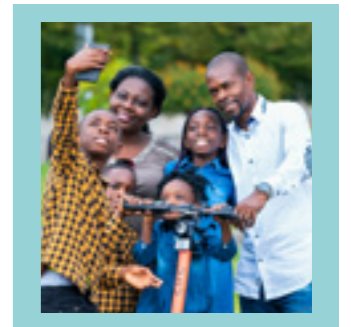
A parent who recently attended our Handling Anger in the Family course commented, "I was so close to not attending the first session because I wasn't sure if 'anger management' was what I was needed. It has been so wonderful to be with other (parents) who feel the same as me, have the same daily trials and have responded the same as me."

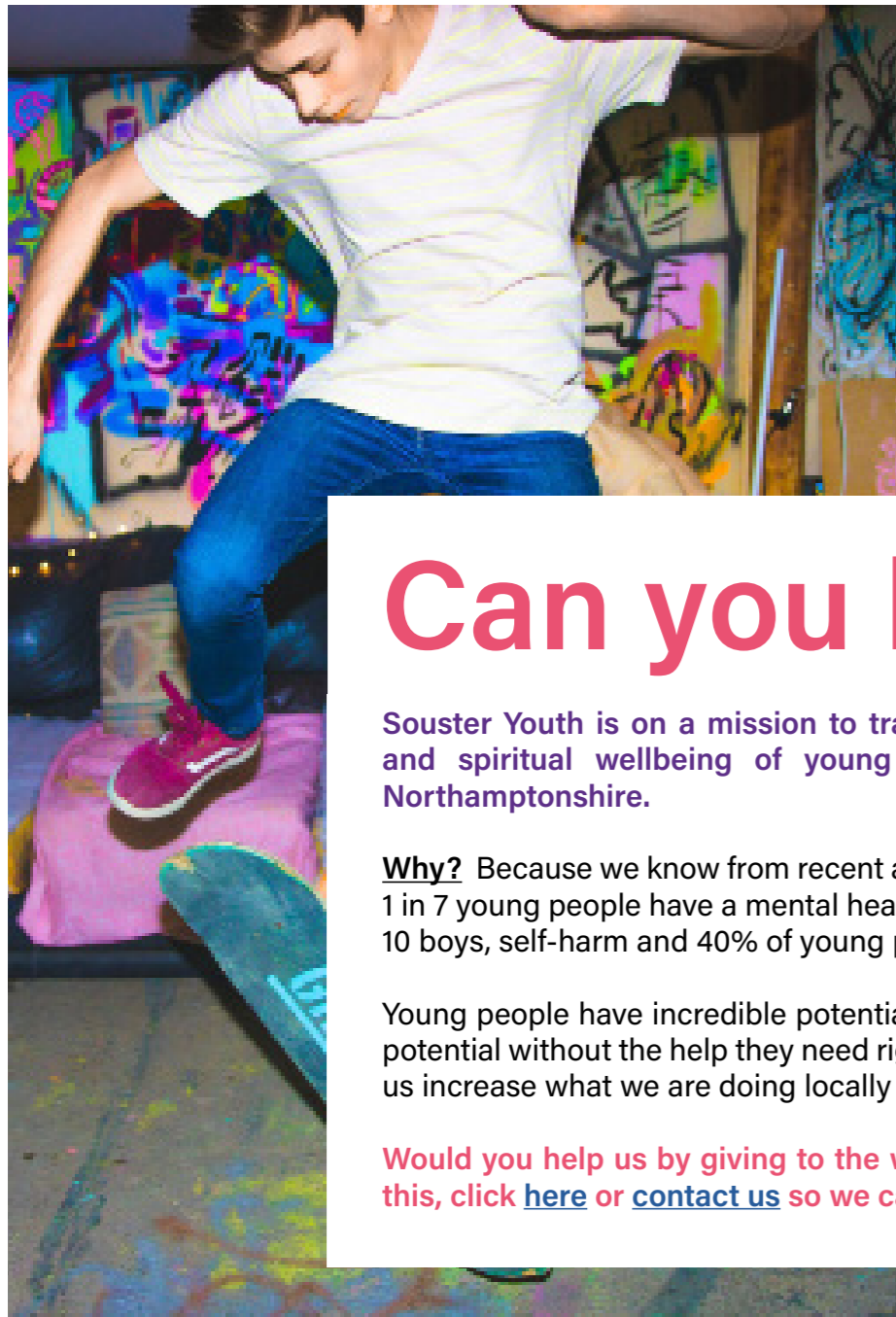
Fast-forward to January 2022 and more than 100 parents and carers from across the county of Northamptonshire and beyond have joined us at 11 online courses and events during our first year. We are also working in partnership with over 130 professionals from across the county to support and empower parents.

Looking forward to the coming year, we don't know what pressures lie ahead for families, but we are passionate about supporting them on their journey, whatever they are going through. We really do want every family to know there is hope for them.

If you would like to find out more about us and how you can get involved please visit our website hopeforfamilies.org.uk.

Louise Willis is first and foremost a wife and a mum and part of the family at Hope Church, Corby. She also has the immense privilege of being the Founder and Coordinator of Hope for Families.





Can you help us?

Souster Youth is on a mission to transform the social, emotional and spiritual wellbeing of young people aged 11-19 in east Northamptonshire.

Why? Because we know from recent academic studies that in the UK 1 in 7 young people have a mental health disorder; 1 in 5 girls, and 1 in 10 boys, self-harm and 40% of young people often feel lonely.

Young people have incredible potential, but many won't achieve that potential without the help they need right now. Your support can help us increase what we are doing locally for young people.

Would you help us by giving to the work of Souster Youth? To do this, click [here](#) or [contact us](#) so we can send you a giving form.

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