

## ESSEX EXPERIENCE 2008

### VOLUNTEER EVALUATION

Returns 66% (23/35)

1. Which of the following attracted you to volunteer for the Essex Experience?



Other:

- Confidence
- Meeting new people
- Something new

2. How good was the content of the pre-course information?

Good 87%                      Adequate 13%

Did you find the pre-event briefing session held in June or July, in the company of other potential volunteers, to discuss the event useful?

Yes 100%                      Not sure 0%

Please state why:

- Just to give you a rough idea of what to expect.
- It made sure we knew what we were volunteering for.
- It was good to meet some of the other volunteers and to learn more about the week.
- Put me at ease as I thought my age may have been an issue.
- Good to meet others attending and get a good overview of what to expect.
- The video we were shown really brought home what we were letting ourselves in for and showed what everyone was getting out of it.
- Yes, I think it helped prepare for the course.
- Gave me a good idea of what to expect.
- It was a chance to know about what would be expected and ask questions.
- It made you aware what was involved and a chance to meet other volunteers.

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- It answered questions and help create relationship prior to the event.
- I had questions which were answered fully and got to meet organisers & other volunteers.
- It gave me more information about the week and also gave me the opportunity to meet other potential volunteers.
- It was good to hear about the event in person, having read about it.
- Good information about week and chance to meet other volunteers.
- It was a good way to meet some of the people that I would be working with and get some more information about the event and the plan for the week ahead.
- Gave an indication of other people attending the course and gave a taster of the course.
- Prior to the pre-event meeting I didn't know much about the Essex Experience and I found it a useful opportunity to learn more and ask questions.
- Gave us a chance to find out what exactly the course was about before we got there.

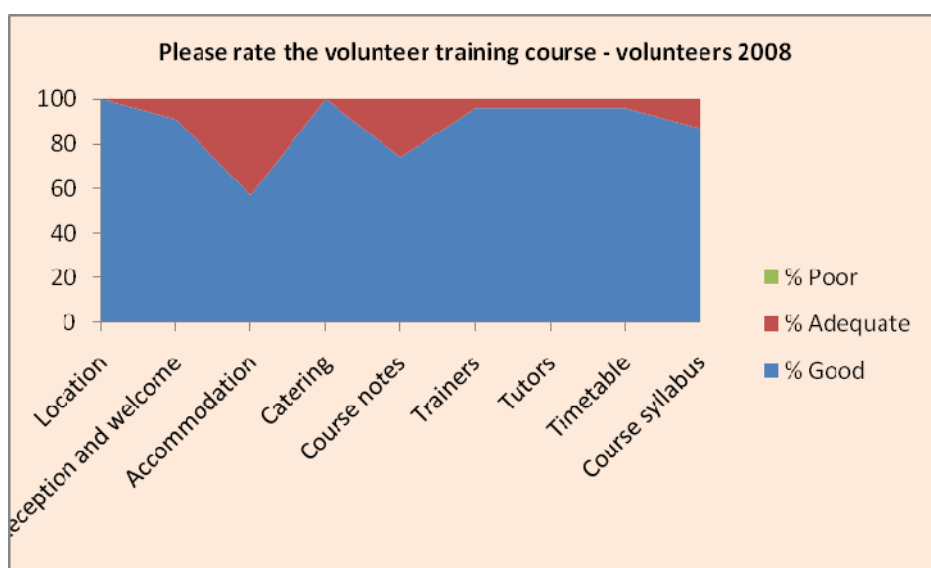
Did you receive all the information you required?

Yes 96%

What suggestions could you give to enhance the pre-course information?

- Ideally would have liked the kit list earlier.
- Felt all information was excellent. I was well briefed and didn't have any concerns.
- Get a previous volunteer to attend and talk about the experience.
- None – I thought it was all very well done.
- Have previous volunteers talk about their experiences.

3. Please rate the particulars of the training course?

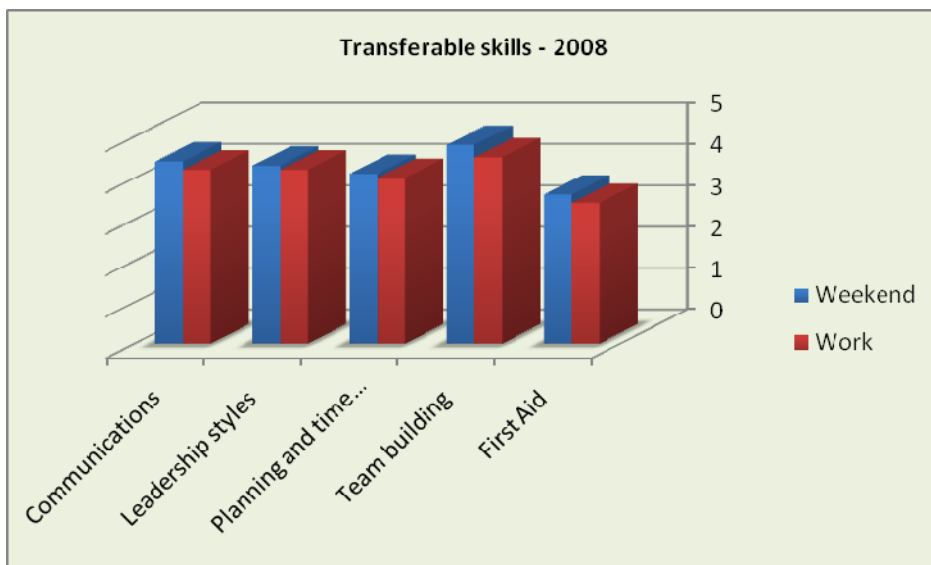
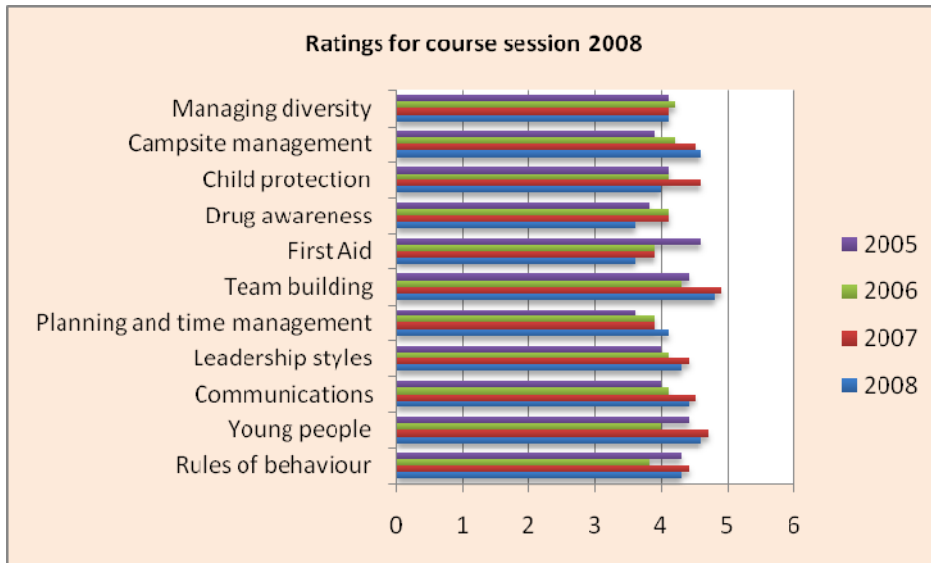


Improvements

- I rated the course folder low in the sense that in the whole time I was there, because the timetable was so full, there wasn't any time to read it. [Course Folder]
- Not enough hot water. [Accommodation]
- Not enough time on Thursday/Friday to set up camp. [Course Syllabus]
- The timetable could have allowed a little more time to get to some of the activities.

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4. Please rate the course sessions according to usefulness for the weekend and at work.



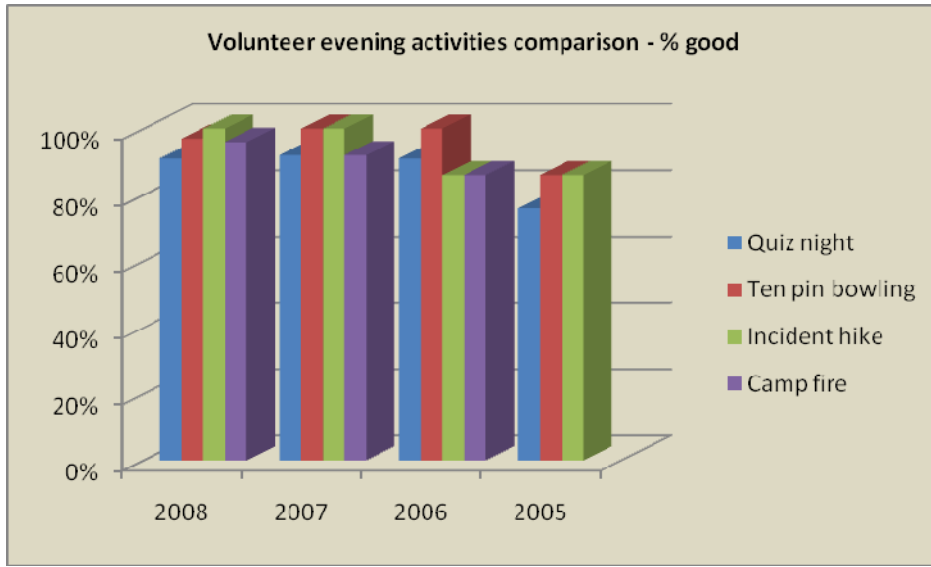
Was there anything else we did not cover that you needed to equip you for the weekend?

- Although nervous before “kids” came and a little overwhelmed when they did – I think we were prepared.
- Would have liked a bit more detail on the various symptoms the youngsters suffer from, i.e. ADHD e.t.c. how they present themselves and how to cope with them
- No x 2. Not that I can think of.
- Better First Aid and Drug Awareness.
- Nothing, all the content of the course ensured that I was well equipped for the weekend.
- More radios would have been useful – one for any one volunteer accompanying a group plus one at base.

Was there anything that was not needed for the weekend?

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- No x 3. No, I learnt a lot.
  - Not so much detail for First Aid as St John presented, say cover the initial 20 minutes of any problem – then St John arrive.
  - Yes, thankfully, an umbrella.
  - Learning how to stick plasters on in First Aid – felt it was self-explanatory.
  - No, every session will help me in the workplace.
5. Please rate the course evening activities.



6. Did the evening activities help promote team building between course members?

100 Yes %

Can you suggest other evening activities, which would encourage team building?

- On the Sunday night I think it would be good if all the volunteers could have the last night together.
- Treasure hunt.
- Current activities are excellent, so wouldn't change – very well thought out.
- No – all very good. Maybe get together with the other "six" earlier in the course.
- Maybe some sort of activity to see how well you personally know people in your team/camp.
- Yes, something like a hidden bounty and you have to find using maps and solving clues.

7. Do you think it is necessary for the training courses to be recognised by an external organisation?

79% Yes

21% No

0% Unsure

Why - yes?

- The course was very valuable to both the young people who attended and to my current work place. The course covered a vast array of different topics and I feel external organisations probably don't know enough about the course and what it entails.
- It's a valuable experience and provides the skills needed inside & outside the workplace.
- To add value and recognition for all participants.

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- Because without the 5 days you would never be able to do the weekend.
- Because it can be properly evaluated and changes made when necessary.
- I believe that Scouting in general is overlooked by the general public who think of it as a religious group and are unaware of the nature of Scouting and the good it does for young people. More industries need to become aware of the benefits, which in turn would help Scouting activities.
- It's nice to have something to show for all your hard work.
- It is an extremely effective and well thought out course, with the opportunity at the end to put skills learnt to practical use. I think the value of the course should be recognised externally.
- Yes, it would give organisations a better insight into what their staff are learning.
- Because it is so valuable. Everyone should have the opportunity to learn from everything offered by the course. You can never know too much & the Essex Experience training is so refined due to how long its been running.

Why –no?

- Don't understand the question.
- It could run successfully without recognition from an agency.
- No, because this course is big in its own right. It's well known and well respected.
- Maybe not necessary, but could enhance publicity.
- Sorry I'm not sure what you mean by the question. If it is an accredited organisation who is supplying volunteers then yes – to see what benefit the course will have to the external organisation. Personally I don't care if the course was recognised or not. I'm more interested in how good it is as opposed to who has approved/recognised it.

8. Do you think projects like the Essex Experience have a positive influence on the lives of the young people who attend?

Yes 100% (compared with 95%, 96% & 93% in 2007, 2006 & 2005 respectively)

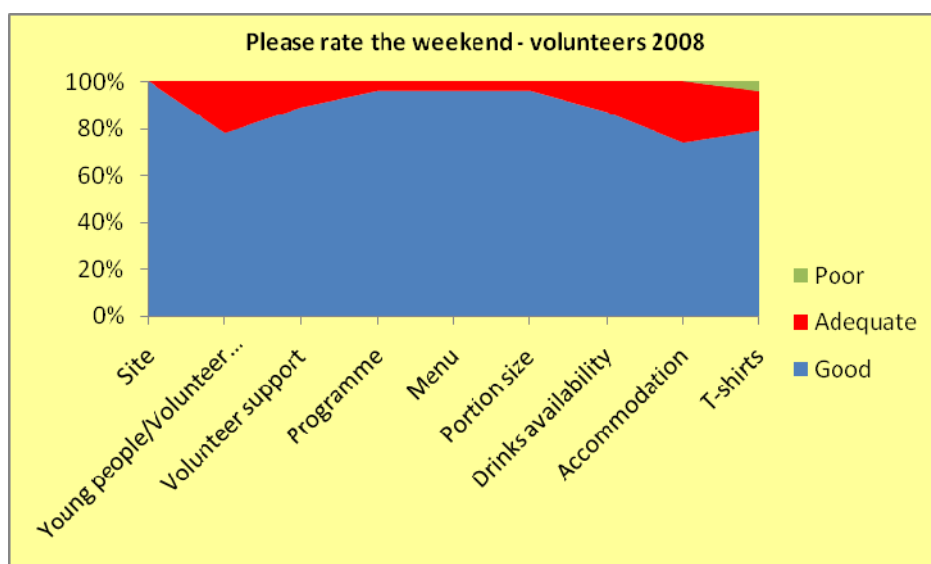
Why?

- I noticed a huge difference in the young people from only 3 days. The sense of achievement and confidence boost is invaluable.
- **Weekend away from home, socialising with others, physical exercise & team building.**
- It allows them to have opportunities not normally available to them.
- It shows them there's so much more than they thought possible.
- Chance to gain confidence with people and new experiences for them to have.
- Because it allows young people an opportunity to try things and meet new people and see adult in a different light, all or some of which might affect them in a positive way.
- Because they were shown that not all adults are there moan and complain about what they are doing. They had freedom to do as they wanted as long as they kept to the boundaries/rules they had set for themselves. That with a little encouragement they can do anything they want to.
- Learn new skills, more new friends, improves confidence, cross boundaries, opportunity for some that they may never have had.
- Helps to break down barriers and general preconceived ideas on both sides. It creates positive peer pressure away from the usual media led rubbish that tends to form young minds.
- I feel that all the young people who attended will always remember attending & each one will take something away – however small & many will benefit greatly.
- **So many of the children I met who turned up alone with no confidence, came out of their shells, relaxed, made new friends and gained confidence. It was amazing to watch.**
- **You can see the change in the young people as the weekend progresses. It really is amazing.**

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- It gives them a chance to try new things in a secure environment. The event builds confidence and develops people skills.
- Some never get the chance of this experience – to have good food, activities, etc, at no cost. Yes, it gives them a bit of freedom and builds their confidence doing activities they would never normally do.
- It encourages people to try things they may never have thought of doing before and giving them confidence.
- Although I find it hard to accept – some children are not used to the attention they get from volunteers or the encouragement to join in o the fantastic activities. It was an opportunity for the children to try new things they've never tried.
- All the young people I spoke to really enjoyed the weekend. I feel it gives them new opportunities that they might not otherwise get. Lots said it was great.
- Some of the children had never had a chance to do anything like it before and thoroughly enjoyed themselves trying new things. They also gained n confidence as they realised they could do things and could do them well.

9. Please rate the particulars of the Essex Experience weekend.

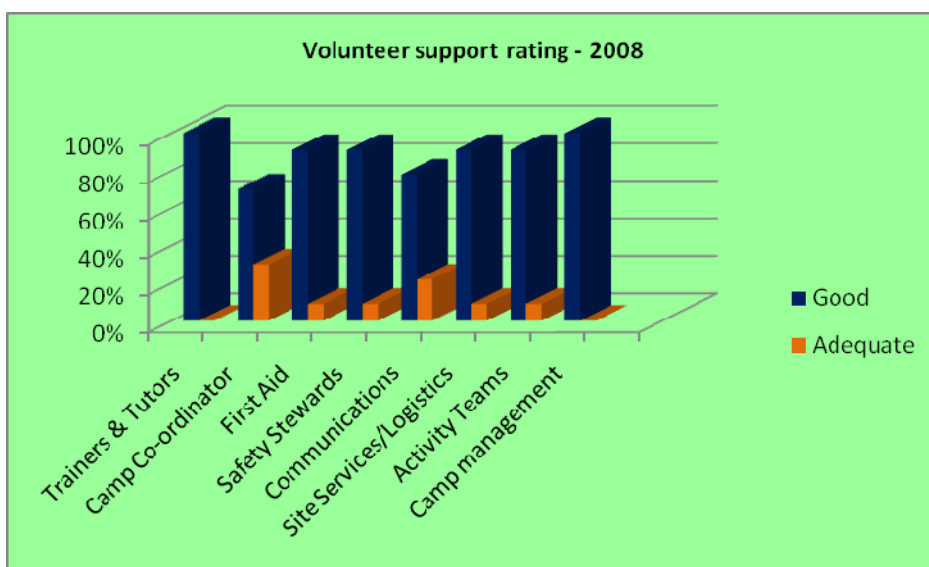


Improvements:

- Could have done with another t-shirt.
- Should be colour coded, e.g. green camp.
- Would suggest mixed squash and tap water available (but not necessarily poured out) at each activity, especially if the weather is hot as we were lucky to have.
- Our group had 3 females & 30 males so could've done with more female young people as the girls felt uncomfortable & issues arose. Having black T-shirts it was hard to distinguish volunteers from young people.
- T-shirts for volunteers should be different colour.
- Not a criticism but it might have been better if the young people had different coloured T-shirts to help distinguish them from volunteers more easily.
- Red team had 4 groups but the same amount of volunteers and we were stretched thin at times.

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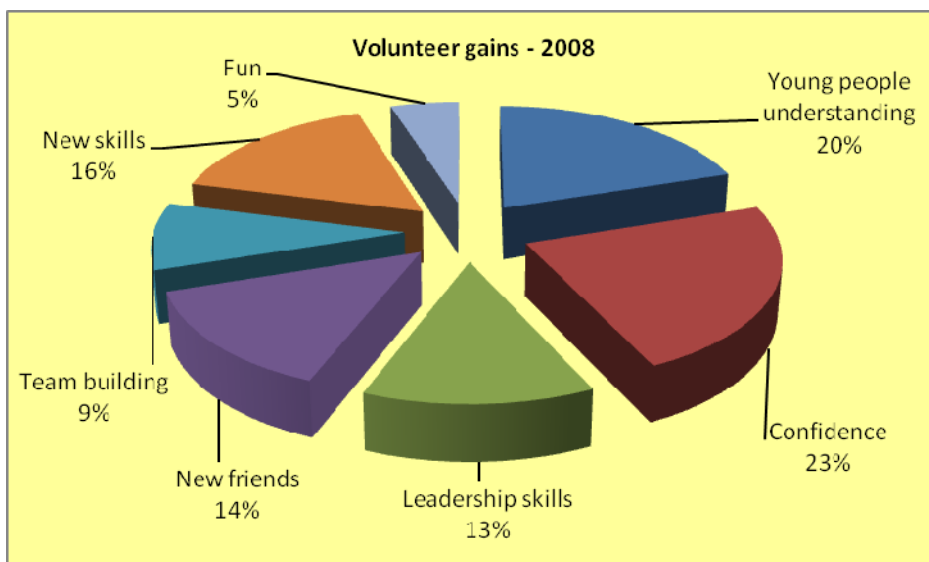
10. Please rate the support you received during the weekend?



Improvements:

- Often found the information point unmanned – could have tried to radio, but if a small matter didn't bother.
- Some of the activity team were very short tempered and did not have a lot of time for the young people.

11. What do you think you gained from the Essex Experience?



Comments:

- An insight into what some parents have to cope with. An increase in my tolerance levels.
- I gained fantastic communication skills. I learnt about myself and how to get on with people I don't know.
- Understanding of young people and their issues/behaviour. New friends.

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- Confidence, friends for life & understanding of young people.
- Confidence, understanding and a new look at life.
- Patience & understanding.
- Confidence, leadership skills & friends.
- Sense of making a difference, gained friends and had a great time.
- Satisfaction of seeing young people enjoying the activities, away from the constraints of their normal lives. A sense of fun working with the “team”.
- I gained a lot of confidence in myself. I learnt my strengths & to recognise weaknesses in a group and find appropriate skills from someone to resolve issues.
- **I learnt not to pre-judge people by their appearance & background and to be more tolerant, more understanding. It has made me a better person. Thank you.**
- A reminder of the person I really am, confidence, new friends for life, a better understanding of young people, new emotions and new skills (first aid).
- **It has boosted my confidence so much. I knew very few people on the course and the role plays/team building exercises made me communicate more than ever before.**
- **I gained new skills, new friends and an experience of a life time. Also I feel like my confidence has grown from the role plays. I used to hate things like that.**
- I gained a better awareness of drugs, young people and a better way of dealing with them.
- **Confidence, a warm fuzzy feeling from doing something good & new friends.**
- The confidence to meet new people and get along with them. The great feeling we all had watching some children come out of their shells when they tried new activities.
- It improved my confidence and communication skills.
- An opportunity to do activities, supervise young people and encourage them to try activities that they didn't want to because they were scared & see the happiness on their faces when they achieved them.
- Seeing the young people enjoying themselves and having fun.
- Leadership skills and how to deal with different situations with a wide range of young people, many from different backgrounds.
- Too much to write on 3 lines! I learnt how important it is to work within a team and have definitely gained patience. I have a better idea of how it must be to have children – hard work!
- An incredible experience that has encouraged me to do more similar activities in the future. There are a lot of things I gained including leadership, communication, planning skills and much more.

### *As a consequence of the training, what are you doing now that you wouldn't have done before?*

- Over the last few years I have made a conscious decision to approach life with a “can do” attitude. The training helped me to do that.
- I have volunteered for more mentoring experience with the local university and charity work with the Prince's Trust.
- Mellow outlook on life – others are worse off than me – able to look on the bright side of life.
- Thinking about doing something similar on a regular basis.
- Speaking up and believing in one's self.
- Team work.
- **I treat young people (and older people) differently. I listen and understand more. I wish I had done this when I was younger.**
- **Applying to become a police officer and generally living life to the full for the moment, and appreciating individuals for who they are.**
- **I'm thinking about the way I communicate within the work place. Also I'm more confident about myself and I will speak out rather than hold back.**
- Travelling to OZ and New Zealand; taking time out of work to do this.
- I'm managing my time better.
- Not jumping in with both feet.
- Leading people in situations where there is no leader and some of those situations can be difficult or stressful situations.

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- **To be honest my life hasn't changed that much but I'm fortunate enough to have been part of the Essex Experience and have those memories to cherish. I did this to give my time – not to receive anything in return.**
- **Being a better person.**

### How do you think your employer/future employer has benefited from your involvement?

- **It has enhanced my “can do” attitude.**
- I'm now first aid trained. I have improved on my tutor skills for fellow members of staff.
- Better able to deal with young people. Not scared to try new things.
- By the experience and knowledge I've gained.
- I want to be an Officer in the RAF so leadership skills are important.
- I'm a bubblier person, have bettered myself by learning to communicate with a diverse group of people within the volunteers & young people.
- I'm seeking employment and your training has boosted my confidence.
- **I have more conviction in my decisions, the confidence to go further, a less stressed & more relaxed attitude and improved leadership skills.**
- **I'm so much more confident talking to people. Now I've settled back into the work routine again, I've noticed that I'm also much more organised as well.**
- **I have learned a lot of new skills and I think it has made a difference in the way I handle situations and customers.**
- Confidence (inner & outer) and a go-getter attitude.
- **I'm now aware of different leadership styles and can do my job better because I know where I “fit in”.**
- I'm more confident and assured in my role – better able to deal with difficult customers & situations.
- Team building skills.
- I have been given more confidence in taking a lead where necessary and in the police this has helped in different situations.
- I have had lots of stores to tell. My experience bodes well with how my employer likes to conduct its business – helping others in the community, making the most of challenging situations and embracing diversity.
- Employers can gain a lot by allowing staff to attend. From leadership skills, to disaster management, to coping under pressure. **Employees will come back more confident with improved skills; although they will not come back on Monday after the weekend.....and maybe not the Tuesday after either!**

### Will having been a volunteer in the Essex Experience make a difference in any aspect of your life or your treat and awareness of others?

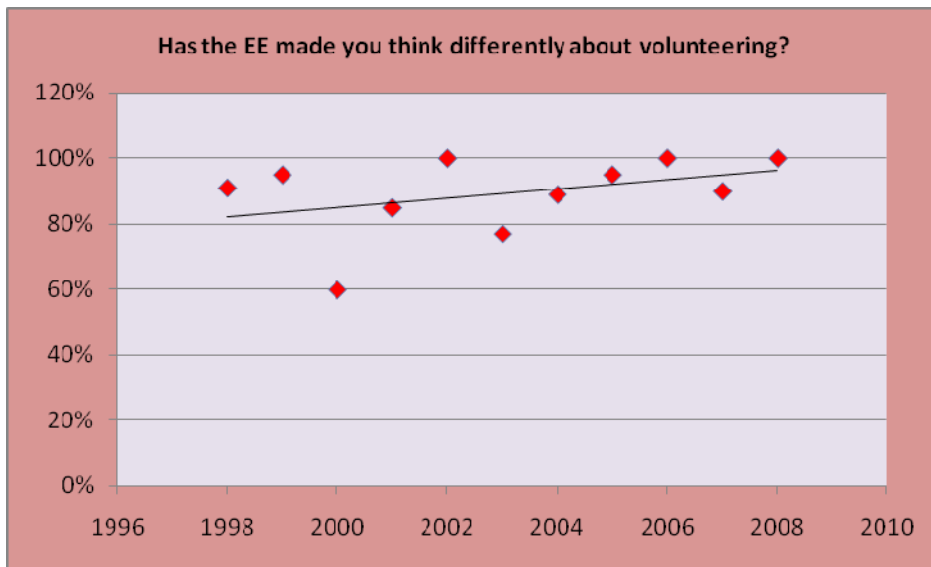
- Just makes me stop & think before making assumptions about people.
- **Yes, it has already. I feel like a different person. I'm aware of the problems that people face in life and how young people are feeling.**
- I feel I have changed a great deal. So many aspects of my life will be affected, but I know I'm comfortable with many different people – from people with disabilities to people from different countries and people with completely different backgrounds.
- Yes, soon at work I will be tutoring other members of staff to progress their careers. The lesson on communication will help identify ways for them to improve as the course has changed the way I deal with the public at work for the better.
- **It has made me agree that giving your time to people can make a difference.**
- I really enjoyed it. I think the main thing I learned was to voice my opinion & not to be scared to.
- **Definitely- those with mental/physical disabilities.**
- At my advanced stage of life not a great extent. However, I was more tolerant than I ever thought I could be.
- Yes, I'm more aware of young people and their needs. I have learnt how to approach young people and communicate to them on a more appropriate level.

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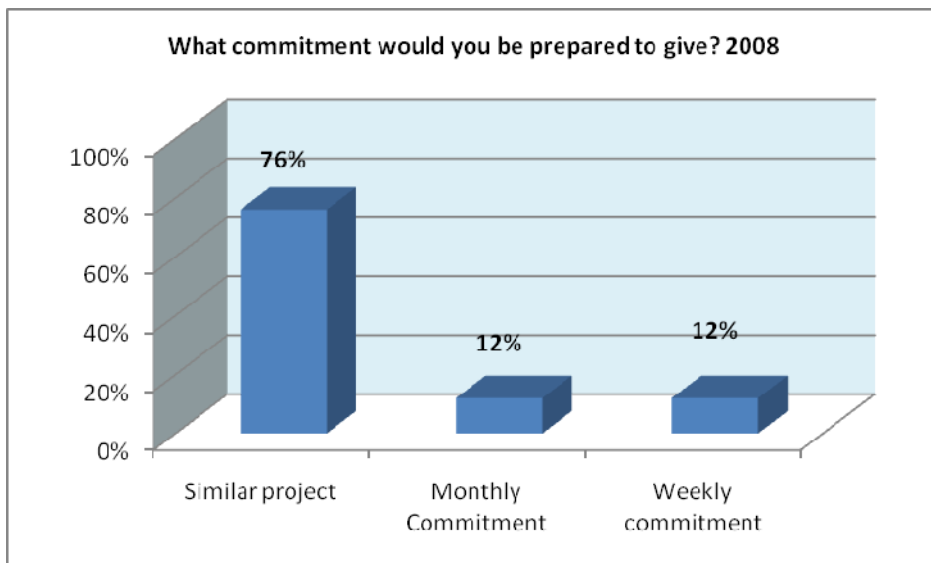
- **Yes, I'm now aware of how difficult it can be for some children who may be underprivileged to do some of the activities I enjoyed as a child so I can be more understanding.**
- Yes, it has made me realise even more than before not to jump to conclusions about why someone behaves the way they do.
- **Made me more aware of how lucky I am to have healthy children and a good upbringing.**
- **Yes – the phrase “you can’t judge a book by its cover” is not just a sentence to me now. The truth and meaning of this runs much deeper. I’m more aware of how easy it is to be judgemental and the Essex Experience has made me realise this.**
- It has given me a much greater understanding of young people and the conditions that can affect them. It was also interesting to see the young people interact together.

12. Has the project made you think more about volunteering?

Yes 100%



What commitment would you be prepared to give?



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Are you planning any voluntary work as a result of attending the Essex Experience?

Yes 82%

Which organisations

- Prince's Trust
- The Essex Experience
- Scouts x2
- Guides
- APU
- Night Stop
- Camp America
- Mentor
- PCT
- EABC
- Special Constable

13. Would you recommend the Essex Experience to friends?

Yes 100%

Would you come back in another role?

Yes 100%

Would you come back as part of the Challenge Weekend Team?

Yes 100% %

14. Have you looked at the Essex Experience photos on the Essex Scouts web-site?

Yes 87%

15. Do you have any other comments or suggestions for improving future Essex Experiences, not covered in the questions above?

- Staying Sunday night for a well deserved get together.
- More radios
- Each camp given t-shirts to separate & identify young people and volunteers.
- **The only thing to say is THANK YOU for a great opportunity, a once in a life time event.**
- We were pushed for time with doing the themes for the campsite when a lot of time was spent moving tents. They could be set up prior to our attendance.
- **Overall an excellent week resulting in life changing decisions. Very well organised at a fantastic site. For that one week I felt like I was living in a bubble of a perfect world, no conflict, no judgement, no prejudice and lots of fun and laughter.** Would be nice for volunteers, tutors, training staff, e.t.c to camp on Sunday night to reflect and come together as a group again as it's a very sudden anticlimax leaving straight after the young people.
- **It was one of the most amazing weeks. I will never forget taking part in the Essex Experience. I met so many great people whilst on the course. We all seemed to share the same fears and excitement about how the weekend would go with the young people and as it turned out we had nothing to worry about. The young people were great, it's amazing how quickly you could build relationships with them and I was really sad when we had to say goodbye to them on Sunday afternoon. I wish I could find a role where I could live and work**

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### **in a field full of tents and young people and go climbing every day. CAN I COME BACK NEXT YEAR PLEASE?**

- I have no suggestions for improvement. I had such a good time and I'm very thankful to all that were involved with the Essex Experience 2008 for making it such good fun and an experience of a life time. I would also like to say a huge thank you for giving me the opportunity to take part. I'm going to spread the word internally & externally.
- Clip board & pen on a chain would be helpful.
- Recycling facilities.
- Third radio, so 1 at camp & 2 with leaders.
- Include wellington boots + warm coat on kit list.
- Was not aware there were extra sleeping bags as our young people were cold.
- More time for "quick shower" for those that need it after canoeing.
- Just keep going as you are – you are doing everything right. The way you run the course will evolve over time, but I cannot fault it. I think you should ask for comments for anything ticked as "adequate" in the form. I would be surprised if you get any "poor's". Thanks for giving me the opportunity to take part – I would highly recommend it!
- For me being chosen as a Deputy Leader I would have liked time to prepare more as the role was totally unexpected, but now I've done it – I'm glad!