

Case Study

livewire 

livewire. It's all about having good times with friends

Description of the Activity – what/where/when/who

At Sportspace Hemel Hempstead, in Park Road, Hemel Hempstead, Sportspace ran a Livewire Skateboarding Course. The course was delivered by skateboarding coaches from Wildchild Activities (one of the UK's leading skateboarding schools). The course was aimed at all children from 8 years+, who wanted to learn how to skateboard and find out how to do new, cool skills and tricks. The children are also taught how to fall off the skateboards safely – which is always a relief for the parents! All the equipment (skateboard and safety equipment) are provided by Wildchild.

The sessions ran on Monday afternoons from 5.30pm to 6.30pm for 8 weeks which started on Monday 19th April. The session was attended by 18 boys and girls between the ages of 8 and 11.

Comments from Session Organiser

Hayley Batchelor, Research and Marketing Manager at Sportspace Hemel Hempstead, who organised the course said that “the course has been a huge success at Sportspace Hemel Hempstead and we have had lots of positive feedback from the children on the course, and their parents. It is nice to give children the opportunity to try an activity that is a little different to the standard sports that we offer as part of the sports course programme at the facility. The course has proved so popular that we have managed to obtain funding for a second course in the autumn school term so we can offer the course to other children looking to try this new and exciting activity”.

Comments from Session Coach

Lynda Regan, owner of Wildchild Activities says:

"Skateboarding is physically demanding and teaches children agility and skills. Children may want to try something new, but can see skateparks as an intimidating place...Seeing the progression from someone who comes along not being able to stand on a board, but who can do an ollie (basic jump) or kickflip is amazing. We want them to be confident they are in control of the board rather than the board being in control of them".

“We believe that this programme gives children the chance to try something completely different and encourages semi-sporty children or those who want to try something different to the more traditional sports, to embrace a healthy and active lifestyle. You have to work really hard in a skateboarding lesson so as well as having fun it's a great way to get active”.

Comments from Participants

Mrs Grottick, parent of Kieran aged 9, was pleased that the Livewire skateboarding course came about. “Kieran had wanted to do skateboarding for ages but I didn't know enough about it to teach him myself. Then we noticed the (Livewire) course advertised and we signed Kieran up for it. It has been brilliant – he's learnt new skills and his confidence on the board has grown each week. It is really good exercise for Kieran, and each week he comes back soaked with sweat! He has thoroughly enjoyed this course and has signed up for the next course (the Autumn term of the Livewire course)”.

Comments from Participants

Ben Hubbard, 9, thought the course was “really good fun because we learnt lots...and whenever we struggled the coaches were really nice and helped us out”. “The teachers gave good advice and it was nice that they helped those that weren't so good to get better...it was really good exercise too”. Ben's twin sister Jessica, 9, was not keen on doing skateboarding but once she had tried it out she was won over. She “couldn't stand on the board at first and now I can do starts, stops, balancing and moves. The activities we did each week were good fun”. Jessica said “I was not the only girl to do skateboarding there were about 4 other girls there and I made friends with everybody on the course – I enjoyed it so much that I am coming on the next course too!”.

Strengths/Weakness of Project

Strengths:

- It has given Sportspace the opportunity to offer a new activity (that is different to the usual standard sports it offers).
- The Wildchild coaching staff have been excellent with the children and taught them a lot of safety tips as well as skills and tricks
- It has been great to see beginners progress through the weeks to experienced and skilled skateboarders
- There are lots of skate parks in the Dacorum area and this course has given the children the confidence to go to these facilities so they can continue being active doing skateboarding and getting better at their skills.

Weaknesses:

- Sportspace could not continue the courses at the special Livewire price (at £2.75 per week) without the funding from Livewire so the future of the course is in jeopardy because customers would not be able to afford the course at full cost (approx £6.50 per week).