

# **HEART OF LOVE CIC**

## **2022/2023**

### **Trustees' Annual Report: 01/05/2022 to 30/04/2023**

#### **Introduction**

Heart of Love has been in existence since 2019 and was founded in the United Kingdom. However, the board of trustees came together and decided to change the name in 2022 from "U can do it foundation" to "Heart of Love" for the development of christianity.

The core mission of Heart of Love is to directly support the families and caregivers to respond to issues of overburden, isolation, boredom, and lack of engagement of their children with learning difficulties. Also, to allow caregivers to take a break from caregiving and take care of their own health and other non-related responsibilities.

Heart of Love has been active with respite care services in Southwark London and Milton Keynes. The general focus of the respite care sessions organised by Heart of Love have always been children with: autism, learning difficulties and disabilities, and their caregivers.

#### **The situation**

Concerns brought to Heart of Love through networking were raised on restrictions on the children's health seeking behaviours since the pandemic in the UK. Over the past years our activities offered to our service users where successful .

Most disabled people need help when it is time for shopping but with the current pandemic of covid-19 their families were not willing to go shopping with them and were frightened that they were at high risk of catching the virus. Our service users and their families were more demanding than ever. Due to the covid-19 crisis we had numerous phone calls from parents seeking for help. Large proportions of our service users and their families were from ethnic minorities with little or no support from friends and extended families who had caught covid-19 or were in isolation.

The aftermath of Covid -19, impacted negatively on our service users. Most families where now comfortable staying indoors due to the new routine that they have developed with their children and were struggling to find a new way to adapt to the aftermath of Covid-19. Many of our service users have grown up and past the ages that Heart of Love offers services.

### **Project Preparation**

Surveys were sent to 110 parents of our service users in our community to enable us to know their struggles and needs. After collecting the parents' feedback, we identified a hundred (100) surveys, a large proportion of children in our local community some of whom are autistic and have learning difficulties. The parents of these children expressed interest and desire to see more community support in the neighbourhood specifically tailored to support children with disabilities and their families who are no longer living with them. Unfortunately we could not be of help because this is not part of Heart of Love's objectives.

### **Activities**

The following activities took place during the project period;

#### **1. Counselling sessions and emotional support**

A counselling and emotional support session was given to our service users. These sessions took place in the second week of every month. Each session lasted for three (3) hours. Parents and caregivers were taken through counselling sessions to relieve them from depression, mental health and the fear the pandemic possesses. This was done both in groups and online through zoom.

#### **2. Free support doing their shopping**

Heart of Love was able to do their food shopping for those who needed the support and who were unable to go outdoors.

#### **3. Trips to the park**

This was done in small groups. We organised these trips once every first Saturday of the month. This was for children living with autism, learning difficulties and disabilities in

our community. They played and had fun and at the end they enjoyed every moment spent.

### **Evaluation**

The project was a very successful one. Parents and caregivers who took part in the Counseling and emotional support confessed that it has really helped them to overcome the depression and fears they were harbouring and wished the sessions continued for a longer period.

Offering to help to do their shopping was also helpful and most of the service users benefited from the project. It was evident on their faces with the smiles whilst our volunteers delivered the food .

The few children that are in our age range also had fun during the trip to the park. They played and had fun with their colleagues while our volunteers looked on with smiles all over their faces.

With all this success the project has achieved, we, at Heart of Love and our service users felt we could have done more by extending the project period but with the financial constraint of our foundation, we had to end it.

### **Recommendation**

The respite care organised by Heart of Love has had a fruitful impact on the children living with autism and their parents and caregivers who partook in it over the years. The importance and usefulness of this project was demonstrated by the service users.

It is recommended that these activities should take place every year for a longer period. However, we were unable to receive funds but we're hoping to apply and contact proposed donors.

### **Donors /Funds**

None

£0

### **Changes**

We have added one new board of trustee and we hope to resume back to our normal respite care session.

The Board

Miss Susan Rogers

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