



## Snow-Camp Staff Testimonials

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**Name: Joanne Peik-Azadi**

**Role: Senior Youth Worker, Avenues Youth Group, Westminster**

Snow Camp was the best residential that I have ever been on with young people. I feel that everyone took so much from the experience and the learning was invaluable. The skiing and snowboarding surpassed my expectations as a positive activity for young people. The young people developed both emotionally and physically from the experience and it was an incredible opportunity to get young people out of city and into nature. Life-skills had a very positive impact on the young people, because it gave the space to reflect on the things which they had learnt. It also gave them the space to look at how those skills could be transferred into their everyday life.

I feel that the training weekend was very valuable and important to the smooth running of the residential. It gave all the workers the opportunity to get to know one another and feel comfortable. I was also very happy with the all the information offered and the kit day at St Johns. I think that life could be made easier if all information could be downloaded from the website rather than having it sent via e-mail i.e. risk assessment, room info etc. I feel that the management team were fantastic and I don't know how Dan and Liv managed to keep their cool. Please let me know when the next residential is on so I can start looking for the money now. I'm coming to the next one, so don't forget the 10 spaces for Avenues!

**Name: Donnie McClaren**

**Role: Senior Youth Worker, Haven Youth Project, Camden**

The trip in reflection was amazing- some great feedback from the young people who have asked to go next time for at least 3 weeks!... (we will see about that!) Beautiful scenery, treasured memories and great friendships made. The skiing and snowboarding activities were fantastic. The instructors were first class - had a good sense of humour and were up for a challenge. The young people's abilities developed quickly throughout the week. The ratio of young people to staff/instructor was well balanced ensured that the young people were receiving the right support and encouragement.

My initial fear was that the Life-Skills sessions would be difficult for our young people to engage in given the previous track record which we witnessed on the training days leading up to our departure. The first Life-Skills sessions started slowly- staff met and discussed how we could improve it- each taking on responsibilities. By Day 3 the young people were leading and researching how to approach the Life-Skills material. With a gentle 'prompt' from staff the young people delivered innovative, resourceful and creative ways to address the Life-Skills Course. Young people developed a voice to speak to speak openly to the group and reflect on their new experiences - a real success!

Preparation was good and ran smoothly and despite the large numbers we were informed well in advance - the young people were surprised at the quality of the kit.



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The Snow-Camp staff training weekend was invaluable to the staff that we got to know each other and discussed possible problems and how to respond to this. It provided a means to meet up and discuss the protocol and to make sure we kept consistent boundaries/ground rules. I felt supported by other workers and the management team to discuss discipline action, in particular when I had to take a young person home for misbehaving. This was done quickly and smoothly. Youth staff also helped with some of our young people who had emotional problems, the young people benefited from this.

The games facilities for the young people were good, large areas to socialise with staff and peers. Food was good as well - enough variety to suit everyone - and young people were able to try some French 'cuisine'!

Awards Ceremony went well, a good idea to finish off a fantastic week. Well organised, was great to see the young people mix so well and see friendships made. No trouble at all. A real sense of unity and togetherness from all the young people and staff despite being so tired!

Feel that some of the young people have made developments- they have talked about sticking in at school, getting a good job so they can come back out with friends, in that sense they have had a taste of finer things in life and have been inspired by it realising it is attainable.

Glad to see the project is developing, look forward to future participation in the Snow Camps. Great and unique opportunity for the inner city London Youth. Hope to see it develop further, why not Snow Camp Glasgow next, get the 'wegies' in the mix- I know a few!

**Name: Abby Kegg**

**Role: Youth Volunteer**

I really enjoyed working one-to-one with the young people and saw progression with them during the week which was exciting for both of us. I think that the majority of the young people left feeling that they had achieved something which was great. I think it became evident that the volunteers who were there to help in the lessons were pretty essential and that in future you might want one per group.

I was really impressed with our group in Life-Skills. Half of our sessions were run by the young people themselves with minimal input from us. This was really effective and I noticed how all the young people were respectful to those that led the sessions. I think that this should definitely be encouraged to empower the young people and help in building confidence. I think it was also really important to have a member of Snow-Camp Management Team as the lead in the life skills as they know the course and had experience of how it has worked in the past so was very effective.

The Staff Training weekend was great and gave me confidence going into the trip as I'd met all the staff. I think this was essential to the week. The weekend itself was just the right balance of team/info/fun stuff and the length was good so not much room for improvement there!

I think the staffing ratios were good and I was really impressed with the other staff in general, they definitely inspired me and gave me ideas of how to work with young people in the future. The management team seemed like it worked really well and also having the youth volunteers, Marcus and Chabris is a great idea and helps the week to stay youth focused and I think that you should maximise this role so that young people feel that they have more control over the week.



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I really noticed changes in behaviour and attitude as the week went on and quite a few of the young people came and thanked me for helping them on the last night which was brilliant and made the hard work worthwhile. I would be really interested to hear what the youth workers feel the impact has been since returning home.

The awards ceremony was great fun! I think that everybody enjoyed this and it was the best way to end the week being so positive. I think that the whole week seemed really well planned and it was obvious that you have done it before as it went smoothly. I was impressed.

**Name: Desrie Henry**

**Role: Senior Youth Practitioner, City of London Council**

The final Snow-Camp attendees meant that 110 young people from 10 different youth clubs/services across London along with 30 members of staff including volunteers would leave our inner-city lifestyles and homes in order to live together for 8 whole days in the beautiful serene environment of the French Alps. It may sound like a recipe for disaster, however, this was not the case and overall the reports from the staff, young people and their parents were generally all positive about the whole experience and would definitely recommend that every young person they know goes on Snow-Camp at least once! Personally and on behalf of Akpore my colleagues we both agreed that it has been one of the best ever residential that we have been involved in and what was so rewarding was to see the destinations that every single young person had travelled to during the 8 days.

What made the residential so pleasant and exciting was that Snow-Camp were very good in knowing what works from what doesn't work so well, when trying to plan and deliver such a residential. Everything, from staffing to accommodation, risk assessments, transfers and what to do in emergencies was carefully thought about and planned to minimise as many risk factors as possible.

What also complimented the project was the staff training residential that happened the weeks prior to the main residential. As this provided all the staff involved a chance to receive the much needed training, but most importantly form relationships and understanding of actual expectations of individuals as well as Snow-Camp themselves. This was professional development at its highest standards as it gave professionals in the field of youth work a chance to share ideas and understanding of young people from grassroots level. This was highly important as ultimately every single staff member would be involved in the welfare and care of all 110 young people.

The duration of the coach journey was hard for all, but we tried our best to make it a pleasant journey whilst trying to sleep.

The life-skills sessions were very intense whilst still being fun. They took the form of open discussions, animation, Q&A and debates, This was a young people led task with the staff supporting the sessions and managing the group dynamics. The impact on the young people was huge, we had blood, sweat, tears and laughter. The young people really opened up during these times and shared personal issues as well as wider community issues that really affect their everyday lives. The most fundamental learning that was developed in the sessions was the opportunity for every single person to self reflect as individuals and as young people as a group, enabling them to recognise individual as well as group strengths and weakness, having a understanding of one's self and the potential that lies within each individual, how such skills can be utilised to make positive difference in everyone's life!



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The skiing and snowboarding sessions were totally geared at beginners and it is at this stage where you learn a lot about techniques and safety in the mountains. Snowsports are a very thrilling experience, however they are extremely physically and mentally draining on the human body. This presented the young people with a very big challenge which was exhausting. However, they did not let this deter them and they all managed to give it 100% dedication that saw themselves develop their skills and actually managing to ski or snowboard down a mountain without falling over.

The achievements of the entire group was highly successful, the experiences of mountain sports, French culture, life-skills, cross-territorial engagement and living away from home for 8 days was amazing.

There were many learning curves involved in this residential and I just hope that they can all be applied and utilised to continue such positive project work throughout the City of London. I would totally recommend Snow-Camp to any young person in London and would encourage partnerships with Snow-Camp as it is such projects that totally dependant on breaking the cycle of territorial disputes and disengagements amongst young people especially within London and the wider society.

**Name; Mark Browne**

**Role: Director, Roupell Park Housing Programme, Lambeth Council**

To whom it may concern

This is our Third year that Roupell Park RMC housing provider on behalf of Lambeth council has sent our young people on events provided by Snow-Camp. We have no hesitation in recommending Snow-camp as the most innovative and rewarding experience any young person could participate in.

There success is clearly measurable by the feedback we receive and subsequent demand for further participation. Their governance is excellent with a very professional management board with both effective fiscal and legal procedures in line with the required legislation.

If you require any further endorsement of the quality of Snow-Camp feel free to call me on 07930401357 or E-mail at [mbrowne@lambeth.gov.uk](mailto:mbrowne@lambeth.gov.uk).

**Name: Tim Boxhall**

**Role: Community Development Manager, Lambeth Council**

I am very happy to confirm that Lambeth Council have been extremely impressed with the work of your organisation. I know that I have been aware of Snow-Camp since 2003 and seen the positive results that the trips with Lambeth kids have brought. I seem to remember we had a showing of one of the Snow-Camp videos on the big screen at the Clapham Picture house not so long ago.

Snow Camp has been a force for good and a best practice model for innovative and robust youth work with strong outcomes. I wish we could say that Lambeth incubated your project but I suspect your ambitions for a pan-London scheme were there from the start.

I have no hesitation in recommending your project to other Councils or external funders and am happy to speak to them in reference to this. My contact details are below.



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All the best and good luck with your latest ventures.

**Tim Boxall**  
**Community Development Manager**  
**Clapham & Stockwell Town Centre Office**  
**Regeneration and Housing**  
T: 020 7926 0765  
F: 020 7926 0776  
London Borough of Lambeth  
[tboxall@lambeth.gov.uk](mailto:tboxall@lambeth.gov.uk)  
website: <http://www.lambeth.gov.uk>

**Name: Peter McNally**  
**Role: Senior Operations Manger, Lambeth Children's Play**

I have known Snow-Camp for over three years now, firstly as a community lead youth initiative and as Snow-Camp UK.

Snow-Camp is a self started youth initiative and its main purpose is to give disadvantaged young people an opportunity of snowboarding and skiing in the French Alps and in the UK. Any type of snowsport is seen as an activity of the 'better off' young people in society. Snow-Camp addresses this and promotes these activities to young people that do not have access to snowsport in any shape or form.

The activities and sports that the young people have access to on Snow-Camp are extensive and include positive sessions to explore youth issues and themes at their base at the end of the day on the slopes.

There is no other organisation that does this kind of work in this particular way. I highly recommend them to any youth service considering attending.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for any further information on the telephone number below

**Peter M McNally**  
Senior Operations Manager Children's Play  
International House  
Canterbury Crescent  
Brixton  
London SW9 7QE  
Direct Line: 020 7926 9949  
E-Mail: [pmcnally@lambeth.gov.uk](mailto:pmcnally@lambeth.gov.uk)



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