

Notes on Inclusion and Groups Reflecting Their Community for Jo & Kit

- Why did you chose to set up this group?

I joined Ealing District after the closure of a group I was involved in in East Acton, a deprived area in Hammersmith, leaving there no groups in Hammersmith for the first time in many years. When Ealing started talking about setting up new groups in less 'middle class' areas they all started pointing the finger at me, I did live in Hammersmith after all. I was keen to help Woodcraft be relevant to a wider group of people, as was he District Leader, so we worked together on the project. We decided to start with two groups, a Woodchip and an Elphin.

- How did you make it assessable to those you wished to engage?

We chose an area that was another very deprived part of Hammersmith which had just lost it's youth club. We ran two Playouts, one in a big park in Hammersmith and one at the the local Playcentre. Straight away we had the firm interest of the parents of 16 children. The second Playout was advertised by leafleting 4 local primary schools after • gour• h Head (see below) had opened the door for us by contacting their Heads and telling them what we were doing and who we were. The schools were particularly pleased that we bundled the leaflets into packs of 30 to help their distribution to classes. When the Groups were filling up, we made it known that we wanted to leave space for more black families and parents responded by inviting friends who might be interested.

- What support did you get? What support didn't you get but wish you did?

We were given tremendous help at the beginning from a local Headmaster whose children went to Ealing Woodcraft. He introduced us to some local parents who he thought would be interested and helped negotiate a cheap deal for us to meet in a Community Centre. Ealing District "donated" two experienced Leaders to help the Groups start off, and three DF's have been helping run groups regularly. London Region helped by training up 5 new Leaders, 3 had been in Woodcraft years ago, and one was an Ealing parent who worked nearby. One was completely new to Woodcraft and had found out about us by contacting National Folk. London Region also gave us start up grants. Ealing also helped us with sharing camping equipment and will host the new groups on camps.

- What benefits has it brought to your group and district?

We have a new group of very enthusiastic parents who really value Woodcraft. This is in contrast with many Ealing parents who just drop there kids off as if it was a Youth Club. For example, many of our White City parents came to help at our tent repair day, which was good for the District's morale. The group is more working class and we have half a dozen Muslim children which broadens the experience for Ealing children.

- Do you have any recommendations for those groups who are looking to be more inclusive?

I think it's crucial to get the support right from the beginning from someone who is in involved in the area you have targetted. It could be as teacher, youth worker, community activisit or even a GP. We are about to get the local paper to write an article and take pictures. I suspect that when readers see the group is mixed, they are more likely to be interested in contacting us.

I also really recommend the Meeter and Greeter role. This allows space for new parents to sit and talk to someone about Woodcraft, have their questions answered and be made to feel welcome. Often, Group Leaders are just too busy to do this. The role also allows for follow up if people have stopped coming as a good relationship has been established very early. We have had a number of the less confident parents come back after such an intervention, they really appreciated being

contacted. We also run two socials a year which are popular with the parents and helps cement the groups. Sometimes their friends come and join Woodcraft as a result.