

# Tom and Growing Enterprise

Individual case study



Three word project summary...

**WORK SKILLS**  
**LEARNING**  
**FUN**

However, after a few weeks of seed sowing, potting on, and learning about different plants and vegetables, Tom realised he had a keen interest in organic growing. So much so, he asked to join the group that came the following term.

His teachers noticed a change in his behaviour and attitude. They decided to keep him in the group, providing he caught up with school work missed while he was in the garden, which he was happy to do. Tom was often put with younger students, and he grew into a valuable role model for the less experienced students, who often exhibited challenging behaviour.

He helped by working with them and coaching them, sharing his knowledge with his peers, who found it easier to listen to him than to their regular teaching staff.

A good parsnip harvest.

## The Project...

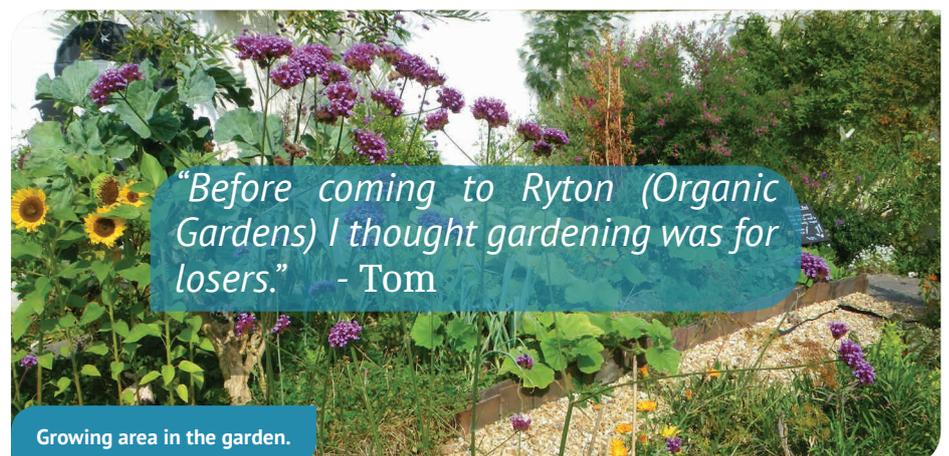
The Growing Enterprise Project provides social and therapeutic horticulture to a wide range of students from local special schools and colleges. Students help to maintain a dedicated area of the charity's display gardens at Ryton Organic Gardens in Coventry. Here, they grow or make items which they sell to practise enterprise skills.

Students experience a variety of benefits from their involvement in the project and in the gardens, from learning gardening techniques and getting to grips with sales pitches, to socialising with classmates and the wider general public in a new setting.

One of the students, Tom, has enjoyed the project greatly, and has gone on to do some paid work with Newman

Landscapes Company, who are contracted to maintain the wider gardens.

Tom initially wanted to join his peers as a way to get out of school for an afternoon. He didn't really have much interest in what the project was about and struggled at first with focussing on the lessons and activities. As a result of this, Tom was very confrontational and difficult to engage.



*"Before coming to Ryton (Organic Gardens) I thought gardening was for losers." - Tom*

Growing area in the garden.



Working for Newman Landscapes Co.

## About Tom



Tom has Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Having either left or been excluded from 11 different schools before the age of 14, he struggled at school with concentration and motivation to learn, often being in trouble for aggressive and inappropriate behaviour.



## Helping the Project...

During the summer holidays, Tom used his initiative and did some car washing to fundraise. In the first session of the new term, he donated the sum he had raised to the project.

It was agreed that the money should be spent on seeds for the following growing year and Tom had an enormous sense of pride knowing that his hard work had paid for all of the new plants grown from seed in the garden.

## Beyond the Project...

Tom asked if he could complete his Year 10 work experience with the gardens team (initially one day a week for five weeks). He impressed the team so much that this was extended until the end of the school year and he was taken on as a student gardener for part of the summer holidays.

He acknowledges that he wouldn't have ever considered a career in gardening and landscaping before taking part in the Growing Enterprise Project, but has now started an apprenticeship with Newman Landscapes Company, while also studying at College from September 2015.

Some of the enterprise has rubbed off, too, as Tom is thinking of setting up his own garden maintenance business with a specially adapted trailer on his bike to get his tools to clients. During the 18 months that Tom has been involved with the Growing Enterprise Project he has grown into a mature, responsible and trustworthy young man, who has real direction and motivation for his chosen career.



Preparing beds at an early stage of the project.

*"I used to have a really negative attitude towards school and life in general."* -Tom



Showing off a good harvest!