

CASE STUDY

Redbridge Action against Domestic Abuse

This local organisation is what was once referred to as a Women's Refuge. Their work has expanded beyond giving emergency sanctuary to those suffering domestic violence to include an outreach service and advice to those experiencing domestic abuse.

In 2007, the Community Foundation was approached to make a capital grant to create a play area at the housing centre which is home to a number of families and a drop in centre for visiting families. The refuge's outside space could not be used and the children had nowhere else to play.

Before arriving at the refuge, children have generally had to move several times leaving toys, pets, friends and family behind, and living in small cramped accommodation with no facilities for play. Their mothers' priority is to escape violence and find a place of safety for the family. In this atmosphere of fear, the children's developmental, educational and social needs can sometimes be of lesser immediate priority.

Children need a safe area to access planned or spontaneous play sessions, share their thoughts with others, play without fear of violence and enjoy the freedom of childhood. The new area will meet these needs not only while children are at the refuge but will also be an investment in their future lives. Outdoor play not only build children's their physical and social skills but also their confidence. and self esteem.

The Community Foundation offered the resource a grant to fund a safe, rubberised surface and equipment to allow the area to be used by children of all ages and the area was completed by the Spring.

The new space has transformed the lives of the families and children living at the Centre. As one mother wrote:

"Before our kids could hardly go out. Now it is fabulous! The children are safe and they have toys to play with. Us mothers have the chance to sit out and socialize as well as supervise and play with the kids. It is like having a whole other room in the summer. Living in the accommodation we have isn't easy and every extra bit of space and activity helps everyone. Thank you."