



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Rural Refugee Network Receives Grant for Youth Discovery Project

Petersfield, UK July 6, 2024. The Rural Refugee Network (RRN), a charity dedicated to supporting refugees and asylum seekers in Hampshire, is pleased to announce it has received a National Lottery award from The National Lottery Community Fund for their Youth Discovery Project.

The grant, generously provided by the National Lottery Community Fund, comes at a pivotal time for RRN as it seeks to expand its impact and engagement with unaccompanied asylum seeking youth in Portsmouth and Hampshire. With this crucial support, RRN will be able to accelerate its efforts and ensure the development of the Youth Discovery Project which works with some of the most vulnerable youth in our community.

Every year, countless children find themselves displaced and alone, seeking refuge from violence, persecution, and conflict in their home countries. Many of these children arrive in the UK with no family, limited resources, and profound trauma. The Youth Discovery Project has been supporting this cohort since launching in 2020 with grants from the South Downs National Park and Nordson Corporation.

The Lottery funding will enable RRN to expand its provision with a Drop-in centre covering ESOL, life skills and exciting activities whilst carrying on with monthly outings and an annual residential. We will be working together with community groups and stakeholders in the Portsmouth area.

We are eager to embark on this next phase of our journey and look forward to the positive impact it will have on the young people and our wider community. The organization extends its deepest thanks to National Lottery Foundation and the National Lottery players for their generosity and support.

Nadia Potts, CEO, RRN *"The initial grants from the South Downs National Park's Youth Action and Nordson has proven itself to be a valuable and successful resource with tangible and measurable results. This 3 years funding from the National Lottery will help to keep a vital project running and continue to make a real difference to the quality of these young people's lives. We greatly appreciate the confidence and belief shown in the expansion of our project by the National Lottery and the hard work in enabling this to happen from the RRN volunteers, trustees and the project stakeholders."*

Helen Bushell, Head of Regional Funding for London, the South East and East of England at The National Lottery Community Fund, said: *“Thanks to the hard work and dedication of staff and volunteers at Rural Refugee Network, and the money raised by National Lottery players, this funding will give an important boost to the wellbeing of young people who are seeking asylum or have refugee status.*

“We take an equity-based approach to our work, investing most in places, people and communities experiencing poverty, disadvantage and discrimination. I’m delighted that our funding is being used to deliver this vital support which will help young refugees and asylum seekers build new relationships and connect with nature.”

Emily Mott, Lead Youth Trustee, RRN *“We are excited to be sharing this good news with you today and incredibly grateful to the National Lottery for their generous support and belief in the Youth Discovery Project. We are honoured to be able to continue working with the young people and to provide even more robust and exciting programming—expanding our reach, deepening our impact and ensuring support for years to come. ”*

About Rural Refugee Network

RRN assists newly arrived refugees from countries, such as Afghanistan, Sudan, Ukraine and Syria to resettle in local communities in Hampshire. Our trained community volunteers support their transition to independence by building their knowledge and understanding of life in the UK. We offer ESOL classes, careers advice and training support, while also helping them develop a sense of belonging through nurturing social connections and community engagement. Through our South Downs Youth Discovery Project for young asylum seekers and refugees, who came to the UK alone and are in local authority care, we organise regular outings and activities in the countryside to enrich their understanding of nature, while helping them to build their confidence, have fun, practice English, meet friends and learn more about life in the UK.

For more information about Rural Refugee Network and its initiatives, please visit
www.ruralrefugeenetwork.org

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