

Table Tennis Keeps Family of 7 Active and Entertained During Coronavirus Pandemic

Theme: physical activity, families, lower socio-economic groups

Defining the Issue

The Coronavirus pandemic has had a significant impact on people's lives, including their physical activity behaviours. Before the pandemic, the Oye family would use local opportunities to be active, but struggled to find something suitable for the whole family. Working in partnership with Nottingham City Council, Table Tennis England has been able to provide an opportunity for the whole family to get active.

Background Information

The Oye family includes Mum Agnes, Dad and their five children; Emily aged 14, Elizabeth aged 12, Martha aged 7, Irene aged 5 and Christopher aged 1.

The family have had a difficult time during the pandemic, with their five children being at home to entertain and the families finances coming under strain due Dad's work being negatively impacted. Before the pandemic, the family of seven would get active with garden activities or walks around the local area. However, they found it difficult to find something suitable for the whole family, with children aged between 1 and 14. The older children would get most of their physical activity through Physical Education lessons at school, which haven't been available due to school closures.

The family have felt a big impact of not being able to go out to places during the lockdown, and even when activities have started to reopen the cost of taking a family of seven to take part can be expensive.

Table Tennis England have been working with a range of partners during the pandemic to provide opportunities for local individuals and families to keep active. Over 3,000 home table tennis kits have been distributed to those in need across the country since June, including through Ping partner Nottingham City Council.



The Project

- Table Tennis England provided Nottingham City Council with 100 table tennis bat and ball sets in June 2020. These packs were to be distributed by Nottingham City Council to those in need across Nottingham, including targeting demographic groups who's physical activity levels have been most impacted by the Coronavirus pandemic
- Nottingham City Council identified local partners who would be able to distribute the sets to vulnerable individuals and families who would benefit from receipt of a table tennis set
- One local partner was Clifton Community and Family Support Group, who work to support local families and the wider community with activities and projects that reduce isolation, increase self esteem and boost community spirit
- The Oye family received their table tennis kit through Clifton Community and Family Support Group, who have been supporting the family and knew they were desperate to find an activity suitable for the whole family to take part in at home

Key Learnings

1. Utilising local organisations helps to distribute sets to those most in need
2. Table tennis is a great way to engage the whole family in a fun activity
3. There is scope to link those in receipt of table tennis sets with other free opportunity to play locally

The Impact

Having a home table tennis kit has allowed the four sisters to take part in an activity together, something which 14 year old Emily has enjoyed having the opportunity to do

Emily is the only one in the house who had played table tennis before in PE. Mum Agnes has enjoyed playing table tennis with her children and has found it a great way to be active whilst engaging with her children

“Being at home and not being able to go anywhere has been difficult, but the girls have been using the kit on the kitchen table which has been a great use of space and a way to keep everyone active without having to make lots of changes” –Mum, Agnes

“The table tennis project has been fantastic in engaging with our partners during this trying time whilst they continue to support families and individuals in their communities. As the situation with COVID-19 continues to develop, we are looking for ways to engage individuals who are feeling more isolated than ever, and who may have concerns about returning to physical activity in the ‘new normal’. The table tennis sets have been a really important tool in this engagement as it gives us the opportunity to take activity to people’s doorsteps and allow them to engage in activity on their own terms in an environment they feel comfortable in.”

Claudia Russell – Get Out Get Active Project Officer, Nottingham City Council

Further Information

For more information on table tennis opportunities, visit www.pingengland.co.uk or contact ping@tabletennisengland.co.uk



Sport England
21 Bloomsbury Street
London WC1B 3HF

sportengland.org