



ALINA MACKENZIE

AGE: 17 years old FROM: England - North East

“I think every young person should be involved in social action. It helps to build character in a way that few other things can.”

I've witnessed first hand how mental health can affect a family, as my dad and brother both suffer from depression. That's why I was keen to raise money and awareness for uS, a local charity that empowers young people with mental health difficulties. uS provides free exercise classes for people aged 12-25 to improve their mental and physical health.

Once I turn 18, I hope to become more involved in the charity by becoming a chaperone who accompanies young people to classes. I also want to attend more marches to raise awareness of mental health problems, particularly how they affect men, as this is an issue that's often overlooked.

Recently, I also completed my National Citizen Service social action project where I helped out at the West End foodbank in Newcastle. We raised money by doing a sponsored walk and volunteered our time helping in the warehouse and serving food. We also spread the word about the foodbank's work by taking part in interviews on Look North and in

the Chronicle, as well as doing radio interviews for BBC Newcastle.

The West End foodbank serves more people than any other organisation in the North East, so I really felt as though I was helping a worthwhile cause by donating food, money and time.

Volunteering there has given me a much deeper understanding of my local community and its struggles. By providing even one hot meal, or one pack of basic food, the foodbank changes lives, and I'm proud to be a part of that.

Social action has given me the confidence to put myself forward for opportunities, such as volunteering to join Newcastle United's Youth Board. I'm more open to meeting new people and having new experiences. I'm fired up to put myself out there and make a difference in the world.



ORGANISATIONS I'VE WORKED WITH

WEST END FOODBANK, US, NEWCASTLE UNITED FOUNDATION

CHARACTER STRENGTHS

CONFIDENCE, OPEN MINDEDNESS, COOPERATION, COMMUNITY AWARENESS, HUMILITY OR MODESTY

