Friends of Montgomery Street Park – Mural Painting Project and Park Improvement Day

This project was supported by the CSGN Community Projects Fund 2013-14. The Fund is focused on projects undertaken for the benefit of, and/or involving children and young people under 16 years of age and is intended to support small-scale, community led projects that deliver green network improvements on the ground; increase community use of the green network and/or increase community involvement in the maintenance and enhancement of the green network locally.

| Where: Montgomery Street Park, top of Leith Walk, Edinburgh |
| What: The Friends of Montgomery Street Park were awarded £1,500 to employ graffiti artists to work with local primary school children to design and paint a mural on an electrical substation in the park. Montgomery Street Park is a local neighbourhood park in Leith. It is approximately 12000m2 - ¾ of the park is grass (former bowling greens) and the park has a play area and a tarmac area with goals. The park also has two electrical substations and the small brick buildings have traditionally attracted graffiti. One of the substations was decorated by a mural some years ago and since then it has not had any graffiti. |
| Why: The Friends group wanted to create the mural to stop the substation being covered in graffiti, but also used the project as an opportunity to create community links to the park. |
| Who: Children, families and staff from Leith Walk Primary School, local volunteers, graffiti artists and the Friends of Montgomery Street Park. |

1. **What are you most proud of?**

The mural has not been touched since it was created which is very encouraging. The side of the substation that has no mural has got graffiti, but the new side is respected. It has been great to be able to involve children who use the park in creating art work – they planned the murals theme during a planning meeting at school and also did the actual painting. We have had many positive comments from other people using the park since.

It was a really lovely day and we believe that all the young people involved will feel more of a sense of ownership of the park and will therefore help take care of it in the future.

2. **What was hard?**

Not really anything as we had tried it before. We used our previous experience and worked with a slightly younger age group (Primary 3 and up) – the previous mural was created by teenagers. We also combined the mural painting day with a general “Park improvement day” with other activities and attractions such as a bouncy castle.

3. **What happened that you didn't anticipate?**

We actually finished painting the mural quicker than we had expected. There was a good turn out despite the weather being quite cold. The parents of the children painting were very involved and enthusiastic.
4. **What would you do differently?**

It all worked well! The weather was our main challenge and may have stopped some people taking part on the day. Nevertheless the children involved were absolutely committed and many members of the community did come out later in the afternoon to enjoy the football and bouncy castle.

5. **What advice would you give others?**

A Friends of Park Group cannot do this sort of projects on its own. It’s important to work with other local groups such as youth groups, Scouts, Guides or the local Primary School.

This was the second time we did a mural and it was much easier to plan and manage because the local Primary School was involved. The Head Teacher was also able to attend on the day and assisted with supervising and motivating the children.

The two professional graffiti artists worked very well with the children allowing them to do the painting. The work demands a certain level of concentration and commitment over several hours, so the age group of Primary 3 and up was well-suited for this.

Combining the painting of the mural with some planting activities and a park clean up worked well and gave children and volunteers not involved in the painting something important to do.

6. **More information**


ZAP graffiti artists [http://zapgraffiti.co.uk/welcome/4529474569](http://zapgraffiti.co.uk/welcome/4529474569)

*This case study was prepared by greenspace scotland in conversation with Friends of Montgomery Street Park for the Central Scotland Green Network Trust*