The City of London Growing Localities Awards 2013/14

A. About the Awards

Lemos&Crane working with City Bridge Trust presents the Growing Localities Awards 2013/14. A total of £2,500 prize money is being offered to projects using nature to enhance and improve local communities and the lives of vulnerable or socially excluded people, generating positive outcomes such as health and well-being, new skills and knowledge, new relationships, and a sense of purpose and belonging.

There will be 6 award categories from which a winner and three runners up will be selected:

The 6 award categories are:

- **GARDENING AND GROWING FOOD** – for communal eating and small-scale enterprise
- **LOOKING AFTER ANIMALS** – bees, chickens, pigs, etc for the experience of care but also to farm
- **NATURE-THEMED ARTS AND CRAFTS** – woodcraft, photography, film-making, writing, etc
- **EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES ABOUT WILDLIFE AND NATURE** – including trips and excursions to teach people about flora and fauna
- **RECLAIMING AND DEVELOPING WASTELAND** – projects initiated and led by residents and tenants
- **“GREEN” EXERCISE** – groups for walking, cycling, running, etc with a nature theme

Entries are invited from non-profit organisations in London such as:

- Community-based and voluntary organisations
- Faith groups
- Health organisations
- Homeless agencies
- Hospices
- Prisons
- Resident committees
- Schools
- Social housing providers
- Social care providers
- Supported housing providers (providing mental health services, substance misuse, learning disabilities, etc)
B. Timetable

- Deadline for entries – Friday 24th January, 2014
- Shortlist announced – Friday 21st February, 2014
- Winners announced – April 2014

C. Rules and procedures

1. Entries must be completed using this entry form and submitted electronically here
2. Receipt of all entries submitted online will be automatically acknowledged.
3. Entrants may be asked to provide further information.
4. The judges' decision is final. Awards will be made at the judges' discretion and no correspondence will be entered into concerning any decision. Not all the awards advertised may be awarded if the judges consider the criteria have not been met. Additional commendations may be made at the judges' discretion.
5. The content of any entry may be used for informing other practitioners and also for publicity purposes unless the entrant withholds their consent to this in writing.
6. Entrants are deemed to have accepted these rules and procedures and to have agreed to be bound by them when entering this competition.

D. Your Entry

Please do not exceed 1500 words in total.

1. Name of the project you are entering for The City of London Growing Localities Awards 2013/2014

Bede Learning Disabilities Nature project

2. Award category you are entering

Educational Activities About Wildlife and Nature

3. Describe your project in one sentence

A project to develop adults with learning disabilities’ awareness, knowledge and understanding of the natural environment and ecological issues, through workshops, discussions, practical activities
and excursions.

4. Specify the setting(s) where your project is delivered (eg homeless agency, housing organisation etc )?

Bede Centre for Adults with Learning Disabilities, Aspinden Road Nature Reserve, other local venues.

5. What are the project’s objectives?

To enable adults with learning disabilities to become more aware of their environment and to be able to question and discover things for themselves. To enable them to learn to look, discover and appreciate the natural and ecological aspects of their local area and further afield. To enable them to made a physical and practical impact to enhance and protect the natural environment. To enable them to find ways to communicate what they have learnt and discovered.

6. What are the project’s activities?

Practical conservation work in Aspinden Road nature reserve eg clearing thistles and bindweed, keeping the path clear, filling bird feeders

Discussions and workshops around different topics related to animals and the environment eg learning about a specific animal, insect or bird; or how we relate to animals( ie as farm animals, pets or working animals)

Writing, listening to and discussing poetry on a natural topic

Making and putting up displays for the around a specific topic that has been researched or discussed.

Practical workshops: eg making insect habitats, bird boxes or fat balls.

Research projects: joining in online research projects eg Feral Pigeon and Worm Project; or devising
locally related research

Nature observation: spotting and logging local birds, animals, insects and plants.

Art projects using natural materials or with a natural theme.

Visiting nature reserves, parks, woods to investigate different habitats.

7. What has been the impact / achievement of the project?

Since the Nature Project started, the service users have become much more aware of their environment. On non-nature group excursions this has become obvious when service users point out things to the staff eg ‘there’s a coot’ or ‘there’s a grey squirrel’; or they might ask what sort of goose that is or what that plant is called. Also, more discussions are initiated by the service users themselves, they may relate to how they saw a fox on the pavement, or a blackbird eating berries; or that they put some nuts out for the birds at home. Also there are more philosophical discussions, for example about liking or being scared of pigeons and why that is; whether ‘weeds’ are useful or not; or practical questions such as are foxes dangerous; what do animals do in the snow.

This new curiosity and awareness of the environment has been sparked by the nature project’s activities; and with this has come a wish to preserve and protect the local environment and a realisation that they can be a part of and do things that will make a difference to the world around them: something very special and empowering for people with learning disabilities.
8. How is your project evaluated?

The project is evaluated through discussions with and observations of the service users themselves to assess learning, understanding and enjoyment of the activities; and through the results of practical activities and workshops. Photographic records are kept of activities and research results are filed. Staff and team meetings regularly evaluate the project through discussion and reports.

9. How would you spend the prize money to develop the project?

While the nature project has been a great success, to further the work already done we need to provide someone with more knowledge to lead the group. So would use the money to fund this. A more in-depth knowledge would extend the variety and quality of the work and provide a more comprehensive leadership, (up to now the group has been led by myself, enthusiastic; but with very patchy knowledge and experience).

The Aspinden Nature Reserve (an empty bombsite in a nearby residential street) is managed and maintained by Bede House Association; but there is no one with the knowledge here to lead more than very basic tasks. A more experienced leader could help the group to look after the site in accordance with the area and in a way which would help to conserve the more important or threatened species. We are also keen to involve local people with this project.

We are keen to extend the open nature and variety of the project, in order to respond to user led requests, questions and interests so would choose someone in accordance with this.

The new project worker would work alongside existing staff so that knowledge can be preserved and used on an ongoing basis with the group.
E. Submitting your entry

Please return this entry form by **Friday 24th January 2014** by uploading it on [this page](#).

If you have problems uploading your entry or would like to add documents, photos, videos or other media that are relevant to your entry, please email them to awards@lemosandcrane.co.uk quoting ‘The City of London Growing Localities 2013/2014 entry’ and your organisation name in the subject heading.

Thank you for your entry.