



‘Changing Lives, One Soup at a Time’. Students give Edinburgh’s Homeless Hope of a Brighter Future

Across Europe, youth homelessness is on the rise. * As well as those sleeping rough, young people without permanent housing bed down on friends’ floors and armchairs, when the only alternative is living on the streets.

To help both rough sleepers and the “hidden homeless”, students at Edinburgh University in Scotland formed Slurp – an organisation backed by Ford that aims to get them back into paid employment and housing. Working alongside students, beneficiaries prepare home-made soup then sell it on campus, with profits paying for training opportunities and further education. They also receive an allowance, free lunch and a reference for prospective employers.

“After the breakdown of my family and mental health issues, I was homeless and living through hell,” said team member Chris Marshall, 20. “I existed on a few hours’ sleep every night and didn’t know when I’d eat next. Slurp’s support has given me the confidence to get back to my studies and a reason to get up every morning.”

Slurp was among the winners of the 2017 Ford College Community Challenge (Ford C3) and a runner up in Ford UK Innovation Challenge, educational programs from Ford Motor Company Fund that provide grants to student-lead projects focused on building sustainable communities. Part of their £10,000 grant was invested in cargo bikes, allowing the Slurp team to move their business to different locations across campus and drive sales of their healthy soups.

“If a young, homeless person feels they have no future, it’s great to know we can make a difference by teaching enterprise skills and allowing them to get back into a work routine,” said Camilla Nyttun, a Slurp team leader. “We’re changing lives, one soup at a time.”

Further winners of the Ford College Community Challenge include Townbee, an initiative helping refugees across Europe keep bees and sell honey; and “Café Ohne Worte” (Café Without Words), which employs, trains, and serves people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

“For many, the frightening prospect of living on the streets is real, said Debbie Chennells, manager, Ford Fund, Ford of Europe. “I’m proud to say that, thanks to the Slurp initiative and the fantastic work they do, disadvantaged young people like Chris now have a chance to carry on with studies, start work and find a place they can call home.”

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For more information on this story please contact Volker Eis

(veis@ford.com or +49-221#9019096)

* <http://www.feantsa.org/download/europe-and-homelessness-alarming-trends3178124453170261721.pdf>

About Ford Motor Company Fund

Over the past ten years, the Ford Fund, the non-profit branch of Ford Motor Company, has awarded more than \$3 million in Ford College Community Challenge grants to university student teams around the world including the U.K. and Germany, where the program is run in cooperation with the international non-profit organisation Enactus. <http://www.fordc3enactus.org/>