Offer to Community Groups working with children with SEND (ages 6 - 25)

A Virtual Online Minecraft Youth Group for your service users, safeguarded, private to you, hosted, and free of charge.

Optional Common Rooms and Mini Games, also open to server members from other community and youth groups to allow new friendships to form.

Overview:

This is a six month project, developing a Minecraft Server to be a free Community Tech resource to community groups working with children with SEND. More in depth information on the project can be found on our website www.minemania.co/community-tech

What is Community Tech?

Community Tech refers to any hardware or software that delivers benefit to a community group, and which that community group has the authority to influence or control.

What is the project?

I currently run a safeguarded private server for my own group. It has had a tremendous impact on the kids and their families in a knock on effect, which I explain further down the page.

It takes time, money and technical know how to run it and keep it safe, which means that its something that isnt feasible for a lot of community groups to set up and maintain.

The project will expand my server to have the capacity for multiple groups to have their own private worlds for their children, with common rooms and mini games where children from different groups can meet in a safe, secure environment online.

I'm looking for Community Group leaders and families they work with, who are interested in minecraft and want to be a part of developing this resource, to

- work with me in the development phase - to be beta testers
- Children can take part in online social sessions in minecraft
- give me feedback, and help shape the final outcome tailored to the needs of the children.
- Parents/carers to take part in online or in person workshops to help parents install Minecraft, explain to parents how it is safeguarded, answer questions, and to show parents the basics of how it works and how to talk to children about it

- Group leaders to attend a workshop to learn the basics of how to facilitate an online or in person social session

Notes:

- The aim is that each Community Group will have their own private Minecraft World on the server, free of charge.
- Any families who cannot afford a games license will be given one free of charge to keep forever (they do need access to a laptop or PC however)
- There are no costs involved to groups or parents

What will the Community Group need to do?

- Conduct an informal survey of their members to see if there in a need/interest in this, determine who might need a game license and check they have a laptop/PC
- Meet with Rachel to view the existing server and see how it works, and how it is safeguarded
- Provide your logo to see if we can upload it into your world.
- If you have a venue, provide internal and external photos to see if we can recreate it in your minecraft world
- Provide contact information for parents who will take part - these will ONLY be used to send joining details, elicit project feedback, and requested their child's Minecraft user information
- Parents and group leaders to take part in 3 workshops/focus groups around set up, how to play, how it is safeguarded, how to facilitate a social session online
- Provide feedback on ease of access, use and design

Background to the Project

Why Are We Doing This?

I have seen the incredible impact that Minecraft has had on many of my group members. Increasing self confidence, building friendships between children and parents/carers, providing opportunities for real life meet-ups for online friendships, being part of a wider community, leadership opportunities and giving them a sense of joy and happiness and something that is so much looked forward to every week. I would love to be able to share this with other groups and make it painless, accessible and straightforward for them to get set up safely.

Setting Minecraft up and accessing a server can be complicated depending on how comfortable you are with computers, and its scary as a parent letting your sometimes vulnerable child play online with strangers. I hope to remove these barriers and worries and make it an easy, transparent process with tight safeguards in place, and help parents understand how it all works.

My Story

I have organised Minecraft Clubs for children with SEND for several years now with an external provider, I began when I needed a safe place for my own autistic child to play online, to be able to play with other children, and hopefully make some friendships with children who she had common ground with.

I have seen first hand, both for my own child and from what I have been told by other parents, the impact that this safe space to come together over their shared interest, has had on them.

Friendships have formed, between the kids, and between parents as well, and self confidence has grown in leaps and bounds. i have been told that it's a high point of their week, looked forward to all week, and the happiness the kids feel playing and has an effect on the happiness levels in the whole house.

It's impossible to describe how important Minecraft Club is to the children, its something very special.

When my external provider stopped providing our server environment, I had a week to come up with the bare minimum for the children to play on together at the next session, as the children need it and look forward to it, and I couldn't let them down.

I realised that I couldn't risk, or afford, to be hosted by another external provider and needed to manage the server within my own organisation, so we got a cloud hosted server up and running in time, thanks to the wonderful members of the group who worked together to make it all happen. Now we are able to develop this idea and make it accessible for other groups whose children would like their own private world and hopefully gain the same benefits.

I have found in my work that some barriers that prevent parents allowing children to join Minecraft Club are:

- Cost of the game
- Tech knowledge getting it set up
- Not wanting child to play online for safety reasons
- Fear of online bullying
- Not understanding how to play Minecraft or it's benefits, or how to help the child play if needed
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I hope to be able to remove these barriers and offer an easy route into the game, and provide community groups with a pain free, virtual youth group for their children.