

“The Quadrangle Lockdown Academy”

My name is Matilda and I am 12 years old. I started senior school not long before lockdown. I was so happy with my new school; it was everything I hoped it would be. Lovely friends, nice teachers. It was great. Then Covid19 happened and school stopped and boredom kicked in.

I live in a small close called The Quadrangle in Liverpool. There are just 6 houses in our close and a communal outdoor area. There are a few children of all different ages who live here. Im the oldest; the youngest is just 6. At the start of lockdown we just were NOT getting on. Silly fights broke out and we were really annoying the hell out of each other.

In one of the houses lives the most lovely man called Gary and his wife Judith. They don't have children but always let us play outside their house. They even let us go in their garden and have put up a basketball net on the wall for us. But we were all fighting; not sharing, and basically being really irritable and grumpy.

One day, Gary said, as a joke, that he would make us an outdoor school to give us something to do, but for us it wasn't a joke. Actually, we LOVED the idea. So, on the following Monday we all excitedly put on our uniforms and went down to sit on tables outside Gary's house for the opening of the Quadrangle Academy. It was SO much fun. Gary and Judith had designed 2 hour's worth of outdoor lessons and games, treasure hunts, planting plants, learning about things like maps and oceans, and painting. We loved it so much he agreed to do this for us every Monday morning during lockdown in term time. Not only did we have such a laugh, and learnt new things, but it really brought our community together. All the children started to get on much better; the parents and grandparents started chatting more than they ever used to. The school was so much fun that another one of our neighbour's invited her grandson to come along who doesn't even live in our close, and she soon was recruited into the role of much needed TA (teaching assistant). One of my 'school' tasks was to write a newsletter and I took up the newsletter writing mantle every week including pictures of our school, quizzes and interviews with the neighbours.

Luckily the weather was amazing so we could do our social distancing with separate tables in the fresh air. Poor Gary said he couldn't believe how much we loved his 'school' and said his Sunday's were written off planning. At the end of 'term' we even had a graduation party, with trophies and certificates and one of the mums even read out her OFSTED report. We had a socially distant party and it everyone felt more like neighbours than ever before. Ive lived in my house for around 6 years, and we only ever used to say hello to each other at the most. Now we are constantly borrowing cooking ingredients, helping each other with shopping and gardening. Its like a family.

Ive written this article because really, I want to thank Gary, our amazing Quadrangle headmaster for being the coolest and kindest neighbour us kids could wish for. I know there isn't any big survival story here, or any triumph over adversity, but I wanted to tell you about how our normal lives became so much brighter with 'a little help from our friends'. (Oh come on...I'm from Liverpool – what did you expect!!).