**Report on 26/072023 HAF SEND event @ EIS.**

The latest HAF (Holiday Activity and Food) camp for children with disabilities and special needs at the EIS in Sheffield led to a very special outcome for young Serina Hussain.

Inclusive HAF camps run by Sheffield City Trust and LINKS have been engaging youngsters in the city for several years thanks to local sports providers lending their expertise.

One of these is Martin Griffiths who supplied adapted bikes for youngsters with disabilities at the recent summer HAF. Young Serina, despite lacking confidence and independence, tasted success by riding around the EIS athletics track without stabilisers.

Prior to the event, Serina had not been on a bike in two years. Her mum Shamshad was totally amazed by the progress of her daughter. She said: “The confidence she has gained today by having one-to-one nurture and support has resulted in her being able to ride her bike.”

Serina’s mother explained that Serina had been reluctant to attend the camp at all due to her lack of confidence and self-esteem. “She's been worried about friendships and she's been worried about her specific profile of neurodiversity,” said Shamshad.

However, Serina was full of joy as she was collected. “It's been excellent - I want to come back every day!” she said.

Shamshad iterated the importance of one-to-one support for SEND children outside the household. She believes the camp has “brought her daughter back” to her.

Elsewhere at the HAF camp, four-year-old Grayson was taking part. Rema, his mother, explained that she is often sent a lot of holiday activity opportunities but says she rarely receives anything suitable for her child.

The HAF events are one of few chances Grayson has to push himself and take part in physical activity. Rema also expressed the importance of the events for parents. She explained that she “struggles to take her kids anywhere” due to their individual needs and that they are “not understood in your average play area.”

She said she quite often feels judged and that it is so valuable to “come somewhere where everyone is equal.”

The leaders of the event are aware of the community of support built between the parents of the attendees, proving that the impact of these events stretches way beyond the children themselves.

For the final day of the three day event, children could also take part in fencing. Nigel Leavesley, who was running the station, explained what it is about his sport that he feels is so valuable to SEND children. He said: “It's something they’ve likely never done before and when they try it and they can do it, that builds confidence and self-esteem.” Nigel also talked about the enjoyment he and the other volunteers get from attending the HAF events. He said “It's great to be a part of it. You obviously get to see the looks on kids' faces and it's great.”

Overall, the camp was successful. One volunteer said “There's (wasn't) a child standing still or without a smile on their face!”