

## Holiday Fun in Lincolnshire - Summer 2022

### LN CrossFit Case Study

#### LN CrossFit and HAF

LN CrossFit located in Lincoln, joined the Holiday Activities and Food Programme as a third-party provider for Summer 2022, delivering a female only holiday club titled 'Strong Girl Summer Club'. Gym owner and head coach, Kristen's passion to ensure young people have access to physical activity in a safe environment where they feel comfortable and confident to engage in exercise has led to engagement with Lincolnshire schools to offer free strong girls weightlifting workshops to groups of female students. The most notable from a local secondary school where over 50 female students' participated in a workshop with Kristen and a team of female coaches. After hearing about the HAF programme from a Lincolnshire County Council Officer and CrossFit member, LN CrossFit worked through the commissioning process and were commissioned to deliver 16, four-hour sessions during the summer holidays with between 20-25 places available each day for females aged 11-16.

#### Activities

With sessions running from 11.30am-3.30pm the timings reduced barriers to attendance supporting HAF research which promotes careful session timings for young people to boost attendance. Each session follows the structure of arrival, snack (fruit and water), 60 minutes of physical activity in the form of weightlifting, lunch, and enrichment (with the choice to participate in a range of different activities). A wide range of physical activities is offered including weightlifting, football, dodgeball, yoga, and the use of gym equipment. Team building activities have taken place including creating egg parachutes, making friendship bracelets, pom-pom making and creating garments and staging fashion shows. Arts and crafts activities have allowed the young people to engage in individual activities and were found to be extremely calming and therapeutic, with many of the Strong Girl Club showcasing impressive artistic skills. Key life skills have been embedded into the programme from sessions on developing skills in first aid and CPR to gaining knowledge on how to change car oil and tyres. A pool party was added to the list of activities in response to some of the hottest days of the year and young people's birthdays were recognised and celebrated. Food and nutrition education has been embedded into the programme with the strong girls being led by a member of the LCC Food Education team in preparing and making a potato salad, using ingredients donated by Branston Potatoes and making wraps which were taken home to share with families for tea. With Kristen experience in delivering nutritional coaching to LN CrossFit members, conversations from positive food choices to the relationship between nutrition and exercise has also become a routine part of daily sessions.

#### Member support and donations

Kristen's extensive network of friends, colleagues and CrossFit members have gone above and beyond to provide donations of gym clothes, trainers, toiletries, sanitary products, books and activities to ensure that the Strong Girl Club have access to clothing and footwear to participate in the club with the addition of access key hygiene items. The girls can take 'an item they need' and 'an item they want' each day of their attendance at the club, generating responses of appreciation and gratitude from the young people. Through Kristen's network, approximately 40 gift boxes including vegan products were also shared with the young people, having been donated for free. The donations supplemented the existing activity packs provided to all clubs by Lincolnshire County Council which included a canvas bag, water bottle, colouring book, colouring pencils, dental packs, oral hygiene leaflets, secondary activity and signposting booklet and sanitary products.

Young LN CrossFit members, of the same age, have also offered their time to volunteer in support of the Strong Girl Club to provide peer support, technical advice on weightlifting, positive role modelling and to support the delivery of the HAF programme.

### **Work hard be nice**

LN CrossFit's mantra extends into their HAF programme with 'work hard be nice' underpinning the club's values. This was backed by a strong girl squad attendee as she spoke highly of the 'community' feel to the club and the 'support' on offer by the coaches, not just for exercise and nutrition but for 'life advice' too describing the club as an 'amazing family'. She spoke of never having seen female weightlifters and previously thinking that weightlifting was a male only sport. Kristen and coaches had proved to be female role models within the sport, showcasing what females are capable of in a male dominated sport. The safe and inclusive environment puts young people at ease as they are not judged on their body shape, lifting ability and the natural effects of exercise, e.g. perspiration. Instead, all members are recognised as an individual and treated respectfully with positivity and kindness being an integral part of the club.

### **Impact**

The strong girls and coaches reported increases in 'confidence', 'self-esteem', the confidence to be 'more vocal', 'improvement of mental health', 'reduction in anger', becoming 'calmer and happier', 'improved sleep' and 'appreciation of what the body is able to do' as well as 'increases in nutrition knowledge' and 'awareness of cultural identities'. Parents have reported the difference it has made to their families and their daughters, sharing so much gratitude and thanks to the coaches and offering small gifts of appreciation to them.

Having spoken to the young people and asking what they would be doing if they were not at the Strong Girl Club, many reported they would be 'sat at home, watching Netflix' emphasising the life experiences that HAF offers. When asked about their favourite activities, many girls reported weightlifting exercises, showing that they most enjoyed learning a new technical skill, despite many of the cohort disliking physical activity in school. Kristen reported engaging in conversations about sport and PE to understand barriers to participation. Having not enjoyed PE during her time at school, Kristen explained to the squad about the range of sports available and the importance of finding the right sport for yourself as an individual.

Socially, the impact is profound. The young people, having come from all areas of Lincoln and from different schools have generated meaningful friendships. Having visited the club on the penultimate day it was fantastic to observe the Strong Girl Club and coaches sitting around the dinner table, eating nutritious food, socialising, laughing, being part of an inclusive environment and simply enjoying their time on the programme.

### **Going the extra mile**

Strong Girl Club is making a real difference to the young people attending the club for many different reasons. One example is that of a young person who attended the club who suffers from non-epileptic seizures. After discussions between Kristen and parent it was agreed that it was safe for the young person to participate in the club. Despite having a seizure on her first day of attendance, the young person continued to attend the club; Kristen noting her bravery in continuing to show up and engage in sessions. Having had to give up Judo, severely reduce attendance in school and parent needing to stop working to care for her daughter, the HAF programme had made a real-life impact on the family. Kristen went above and beyond offering the young person a free year's membership to the gym to extend the opportunity to support the family and the young person reengaging in physical activity. Although causation and correlation cannot be determined, during the time on the programme it was also noted the young person was experiencing far less seizures (between 3-4 daily, to 1 every other day) supporting the benefits of physical activity on health.

## Future plans

Kristen has been spreading the word of HAF and presented at a CrossFit UK webinar to showcase HAF and the impact it has on young people and their families, encouraging CrossFit gyms around the country to engage with their local authority and to consider becoming third party providers. Kristen continues to develop a network of contacts with local schools enrichment/PE leads to offer free workshops in schools and to promote HAF, strengthening the signposting of eligible females to the Strong Girl Club.

LN CrossFit continue to work with Lincolnshire County Council in preparation of Winter 2022 delivery. As a result of the success of the programme and viewing the impact on young people and their families, Kristen is planning to deliver afterschool Strong Girl Clubs with her team of coaches and volunteers with the inclusion of food provision as a response to the food poverty that she has witnessed. Kristen and team are also building their networks and exploring opportunities to also deliver half term club holidays. Long term, Kristen is passionate about investing in young people to undertake coaching qualifications to become the next generation of coaches at LN CrossFit, who in turn will inspire more generations of females to engage in physical activity in a safe and welcoming environment.



**Strong Girl Squad**  
6 d · 🌐

**BEACH PARTY!**

It was HOT HOT HOT today, so we had a splash!

We started with a paddling pool, water balloons, and an EPIC water fight! 🌊💧

Then we played giant Jenga, swingball, and the girls showed us their version of the limbo. 🤸‍♀️

After lunch we made fresh fruit smoothies, and our friend Emily showed us how to make bug houses for the garden. 🐛🌿

Then more splashing and more games.

All in all, a pretty good day at the Strong Girl Squad!

# STRONG GIRL SUMMER

**Strong Girl Squad is at LN CrossFit in Lincoln.**  
3 Aug · Lincoln · 🌐

**STRONG GIRL SUMMER DAY 7**  
Are you ready for this?!

Today we had a FULL HOUSE, twenty girls came to play!

We started with a refresher on the barbell, so we could get the new girls caught up and reinforce good technique with our returning Strong Girls.

Then after lunch...WE HAD A FASHION SHOW! The girls were given paper, pens, ribbon, scissors, glue, pom-poms, yarn, and their own LIMITLESS creativity to create a look, and then we went down the runway!

We wrapped up the day by singing Happy Birthday to our beautiful Cecile, and enjoying a little treat with her.

The energy today was something your coaches will never forget.

**Strong Girl Squad is at LN CrossFit in Lincoln.**  
2 Aug · Lincoln · 🌐

**STRONG GIRL SUMMER DAY 6!**

Today we played around with some gymnastics, learning how to hang and do Toes To Rings! Then we did some rowing and a really sweaty partner workout.

After lunch Ali taught the girls how to make potato salad, with good safe knife skills. Then we had a taste test and Coach K picked her favourite (spoiler alert: they were all delicious!)

The organisers of Strong Girl Summer want to thank Branston Potatoes for generously donating two massive boxes of beautiful local spuds to our club, we're proud to teach the girls how to prepare healthy meals with delicious local produce.

**Branston Potatoes** ❤️🍟

@lincolnshirecc  
@lncrossfit  
@lncsfm



**Strong Girl Squad is at LN CrossFit in Lincoln.**  
1 Aug · Lincoln · 🌐

**STRONG GIRL SUMMER DAY 5!**

Today we learned all about different kinds of SQUATS - body weight, barbell, kettlebell, and medicine ball. The girls are ready to squat the Earth! 🌍💪

Then Alison taught them CPR using some resus-Annie dolls - this is a skill ALL strong girls need to know! At the same time, another group was working on some First Aid scenarios online, learning what to do in the event of an emergency.

Strong Girls are ready for anything!

@lincolnshirecc  
@lncsfm  
@lncrossfit

#stronggirlsummer  
#thisgirlcan  
#stronggirlssquad



**Strong Girl Squad is at LN CrossFit in Lincoln.**  
22 Jul · Lincoln · 🌐

Raising money for Strong Girl Squad!

Our founder and Head Coach Kristen is running 50km tomorrow to raise money for the SGS PROJECT!

Even her shoes say SG!

**Strong Girl Squad is at LN CrossFit in Lincoln.**  
27 Jul · Lincoln · 🌐

We're going to be on the radio! Lovely Laurie from BBC Radio Lincolnshire came to Strong Girl Summer today to chat to the girls and see what all the fuss is about!

Tune in tonight from 6:03pm!

[https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/live:bbc\\_radio\\_lincolnshire](https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/live:bbc_radio_lincolnshire)

@bbcradiolincs  
@lincolnshirecc

#haf2022  
#stronggirlsummer  
#stronggirlssquad  
@lncrossfit



**Strong Girl Squad**  
13 Jul · 🌐

The Strong Girl Squad grows!

Hannah Marie is an educator in Buntingford, Herts. She heard about the Strong Girl Squad, and was determined to bring barbells to the girls at her school. She reached out to us to find out how she could get involved.

They had their first workshop yesterday. ❤️

Want to know how you could bring a Strong Girl Squad to your area? Message us and let's have a chat.

**Hannah Marie**  
12 Jul · 🌐

Had the best time introducing #StrongGirlSquad to my school today (RBA). We taught 40+ girls how to deadlift, look and feel strong... See more



**Strong Girl Squad**  
9 Aug · 🌐

**STRONG GIRL SQUAD DAY 10**

We were inspired by Commonwealth Champion Emily Campbell today, and learned the Clean and Jerk!

We showed the girls the video of Emily winning the gold medal in Birmingham. What a powerful role model for young women. 🏆

We also had £75 worth of fresh produce donated by Morrisons, and so the girls made healthy wraps to take home. Some of them got to try new flavours like hummus and bell peppers. 🥗🌶️

Finally our dear friend Gary from GMP Motorsport brought one of his race cars down, and showed the girls how to look under the bonnet, check the oil, and even how to change a tyre. This is stuff that girls need to know! 🚗🔧

It takes a village to raise a Strong Girl. Thank you to our supporters, volunteers, helpers and well wishers.

We all had a great day.