

Young carers are about to earn a well-earned break from everyday pressures with a trip on to the dance floor.

The 20-strong group, ranging in age from 11 to 17, will be getting expert tuition from Cheshire Dance, a charity based at Winsford Library.

The monthly dance sessions are funded by Cheshire Community Foundation which has awarded a £5,000 grant to Cheshire Dance.

In turn, Cheshire Dance has teamed up with Cheshire Young Carers to offer the opportunity to young carers from across Cheshire West and Chester.

Jane McLean, Dance Development Artist for Cheshire West and Chester, said: "We've already undertaken small projects with the carers and arranging transport can be a problem.

"However, this grant means carers will have six full day sessions over six months from April. They'll learn from experienced dance artists and create their own new dance work with our youth dance companies, culminating in a performance in front of family and friends.

"Young carers might live with a parent or sibling with a disability and/or illness such as mental health, substance misuse or physical illness. This can impact on a carer's development, health and well-being and dance can allow them to be active, creative and improve self-confidence.

"It gives them an opportunity to gain an arts qualification and encourages their development and hopefully leaves a legacy with further opportunities."

Cheshire Community Foundation has awarded almost £1.5m to more than 400 organisations in the three years since it was set up.

Chief Executive Helen O'Donnell said: "We're a charitable business working to change the face of philanthropy across Cheshire and Warrington. We're doing this by helping philanthropists invest strategically in the community where they live so their social investment has the most impact in areas of greatest need.

"By making giving easy, enjoyable and engaging we're inspiring these local people and businesses to engage with voluntary organisations which are addressing local need and solving local problems."

The Foundation, which has an endowment of £4m allowing it to award grants in perpetuity, helps not-for-profit organisations such as charities, community groups and social enterprises.

Grants are awarded quarterly with applications up to £1,000 assessed monthly.

* To find out more call Cheshire Community Foundation on 01606 330607 or email grants@cheshirecommunityfoundation.org.uk.

To contact Cheshire Dance go to www.cheshiredance.org and for more information about Cheshire Young Carers visit their website www.cheshireyoungcarers.org

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