

‘Love your Lungs’

PATIENTS will be breathing easier thanks to the artistic endeavours of local primary school children.

BEFORE the social distancing lock down came into force, head boy Zac Wilson and head girl Ruby West of Gurney Pease Academy, paid a visit to the respiratory ward of Darlington Memorial Hospital to present vibrant artwork to nurses and patients.

The initiative was part of a programme called ‘Breathe and Breathing’ highlighting the importance of ‘loving your lungs’ run in partnership with Breathe Easy, a support group for people with respiratory disease.

Pupils at Gurney Pease Academy, part of the Education Village Academy Trust, learned about the importance of fresh air and lung health.

Breathe Easy is run entirely by volunteers who themselves have respiratory disease. Former chair Gaynor Williams explained that within the group there were people with COPD, popcorn lung, asthma, aspergillosis and numerous other diseases, who came together for support and friendship.

In normal situations, the group provides the opportunity for them and their families or carers to meet several times a week for choir practice, adapted gym-based and dance-based exercise classes, as well as social meetings once a month where members have lunch and listen to guest speakers. They also organise day trips.

Gaynor said: “The artwork the children have produced again is wonderful and their enthusiasm is remarkable. “It is so important to pass on messages about staying healthy and looking after your lungs. Working with Gurney Pease Academy will hopefully help to raise awareness, whether on a personal level associated with smoking or environmentally relating to pollution and air quality.”

Gurney Pease Academy higher level teaching assistant Linda Cernik added: “Pupils worked incredibly hard and produced some amazing work. The project has helped reinforce the importance of looking after your health and we are thrilled pupils’ artwork will bring a bit of cheer to patients and visitors.”

Zac and Ruby, who handed over the art to staff on Ward 44, said they had enjoyed the chance to be creative.

Ruby said: “My painting wasn’t chosen for the hospital walls but it is being displayed at school and we all really enjoyed being a part of this project.”

For further information or for anyone wanting to join the group, contact the British Lung Foundation helpline on 03000 030 555 and ask for Breathe Easy Darlington, or look for it on Facebook. Alternatively, email breatheeasydarlington@hotmail.com.

www.educationvillage.org.uk

