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Gortahork Youthreach Participate in Activat8 Project



YOUTH FUTURE! EDUCATION, TRAINING, EMPLOYMENT AND PROGRESSION CHALLENGES, EXPERIENCES, REASONS AND SOLUTIONS.... 28/03 YARD, FALC.



Youthreach Gortahork and The Yard Youth project recently undertook some action research exploring the reality of life for young people who have left school and are trying to do something with their lives. This project involved the Yard team workers organising meetings for young people in Youthreach and at the Yard to help them explore their story of school, exams, unemployment and their future. The project, Activat8, which was part-funded by the Community Foundation, Ireland, wanted to document and present the experiences and demands of young people in the 16-25 year old age range.

The Yard team helped the group look back over their lives since primary school and look at what dreams they and their friends had and what has happened to change these dreams over time. Over a series of weekly workshops, Youthreach learners worked with the project to explore this topic and offered their stories and opinions on how things could be improved for their generation. The contribution of the young people was written down, photographed and filmed and was presented in various ways at the community seminar in the Yard on March 28th. The aim of the seminar was to listen to the issues, feelings and frustrations of the



young people; this was particularly evident at the seminar where Youthreach students spoke-up, debated and argued with political representatives, youth organisations and community activists. There has been great talk about the Youth Guarantee that the government and the EU have said will address the situation. The seminar explored this and attempted to develop some real and practicable solutions that can be developed and applied at local level. What we learned from the process is that we can't waste time, we utterly reject the idea that this is a lost generation - but there's no time to lose getting them engaged and active!

Suggestions were then made to community, youth, education and training bodies and the state about what needs to be done to give our young people hope for the future. "We are specially indebted to the young people and staff of Youthreach Gortahork who have worked tirelessly over a period of four months and given freely of their time and stories" noted Paul Kernan, Yard Co-ordinator.



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Welcome... to the second edition of our 2014 newsletter and the last one before the summer holidays at the end of July. The last few months have been as busy as ever for the Youthreach programme in Co Donegal: further Peace III funding has been received for the Restorative Practices project which centre learners, staff and parents continue to work on, while health promotion has been the focus of some centres during the month of April. We've continued to build our Twitter account as well—you can follow us @DonegalYR. The next edition of the newsletter will be available in the autumn.



Dr Sandra Buchanan, Youthreach County Coordinator

Restorative Practices Receives Further Peace III Funding

Donegal ETB has received further substantial funding from the Peace III Phase II Extension programme to continue to lead out on a major Restorative Practices project which ran in the county from May 2011-May 2013 (also funded by Peace III). The six Youthreach centres, along with twelve out of the county's twenty-seven post-primary schools (nine of which are Donegal ETB schools), Donegal Youth Service and Foróige will continue to work towards embedding restorative practice in their organisations from March-June 2014. (Pictured left are learners from Lifford Youthreach centre working with Restorative Practices Trainer Margaret McGarrigle.)



The first phase of the project (2011-2013) saw around 3,250 learners, staff, parents and volunteers undertake restorative practices training across the county. In addition sixteen staff, six of whom where Youthreach staff from three centres, also completed a Post-Graduate Certificate in Restorative Practice through the University of Ulster. The University of Ulster's Restorative Practices Team (Dr Derick Wilson, Tim Chapman and Hugh Campbell) were also commissioned to conduct the project's research element which sought to ascertain the level of development and delivery of restorative practices in participating organisations as a means of resolving conflict situations and restoring relationships. It also looked at developing a whole system approach to embedding restorative practice in schools, centres and youth work projects and designed a method of measuring and evaluating progress throughout the lifetime of the project. The research report (*Developing a Whole System Approach to Embedding Restorative Practices in Youthreach, Youth Work and Schools in Co Donegal*) can be found in the Restorative Practices section of www.donegaletb.ie which also contains many other useful resources for this work.



The Inside Story at Lifford Youthreach

Learners at Lifford Youthreach recently produced, edited and directed a promotional video about their centre and programme. This was a collaboration with Concensus through the Belfast Unemployed Resource Centre and funded through the Peace III programme. The learners really enjoyed putting it together and hope it will give other young people a good insight into what they do at the programme. The video can be viewed at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bBKm-wp_FxU

Ballyshannon Visit the Library

Ballyshannon Youthreach went to visit Bundoran Library on 1st May to see what services are available. On the day, learners were lucky enough to see an exhibition of "100 years of Democracy" put together by Bundoran Town Council. As part of the exhibition, a time capsule is being buried, to be excavated in 25 years! Youthreach learners got to give their opinions of what they would like to see put in the capsule and write down their opinion on what they thought Bundoran and the surrounding areas would be like in 25 years. There were a lot of suggestions, including flying cars! Thanks to Jill in the library for a great trip!



Pictured left-right: Cody, Ciara, Christy, Matty, Anna, Hannah, Tommy, Aoibheann, Georgina, Jimmy, Odin, Pernille, Gillian and Bernie.



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Letterkenny Win ETB Award for Health Promotion Month!

Letterkenny Youthreach won an ETB award on Monday 19 May under the Good Practice in Health category for their Health Promotion month in April! Whilst Letterkenny Youthreach promotes health and well-being generally across the mix of activities offered during the programme, this year they decided to have a focused period on the centre calendar where health promotion in its widest understanding was the focus of the timetable. Based on guidelines from the National Youth Council of Ireland, they focused their attentions on the five key areas of youth health and well-being; mental and emotional health, physical health, social health, sexual health and spiritual health. With these principles as their guidelines they addressed diet, physical health, sexual health, substance misuse, mind-fullness and stress reduction and developing a peer leadership programme in the centre. The main aim of the month, which took place in April, was to create a spotlight in the centre on issues surrounding health and health promotion in the hope of affecting positive changes amongst staff and learners in some of the areas mentioned above.



Girls Keep Active in Buncrana

Pictured below are some of the girls from Buncrana Youthreach hula hopping, swing balling and skipping as part of the Girls Active programme which is funded by the HSE.



Young Driver's Cross Border Event



Learners from the Ballyshannon and Lifford Youthreach centres attended the annual Young Driver's Cross Border Event in Bready, Co Tyrone on 7 May. This was organised by Donegal County Council's Road Safety Officer and the Northern Ireland Road Safety Council. It forms part of the Road Safety education programme provided by Youthreach centres.

Right: Prizewinners Darren Gallen and Joshua Cranford from Lifford Youthreach.

Above Services in action.



Annual County Blitz



The annual Youthreach County Blitz took place on 17 April. This consists of football, pool and bowling competitions followed by lunch. Congratulations to all the winners!

New Youthreach Teaching Resources

Two new education resources specifically designed for Youthreach were recently launched: www.eatright.eu and www.yo-yos.ie. *Eatright* is the first all-island food skills website designed for trainers and teachers working with early school leavers. This innovative resource was developed by Safefood in the Republic of Ireland and the Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland with input from trainers, teachers, project workers and early school leavers. *Yo-Yos* has been developed by MABS (Money Advice and Budgeting Service) in partnership with Donegal ETB's Basic Education Service. It was piloted in Lifford Youthreach and recently launched at the 2014 NAYC conference in Cork.

Youthreach Learners Attend Microsoft Roadshow

Learners from Youthreach attended the Youth 2 Work Microsoft Roadshow on Tuesday, 13 May from 10.00am-3.00pm in the Millpark Hotel, Donegal Town. This was for learners interested in working in IT in the future. There were a number of speakers talking about CVs, LinkedIn, interview skills etc. The keynote speaker was ex-world champion boxer Bernard Dunne, who has retrained to work in IT. Microsoft staff also spoke to people individually about their jobs, what it entails etc. Many thanks to the organisers for bringing this to the county!