

Peace4Youth News- Issue 5 Autumn 2019



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Journeys Project

What a great end to the summer and Year 2 programmes!

In July, 6 of the Journeys projects involving all partners came together for the annual Journeys Summer Camp. The Camp was a great success with the young people building strong positive relationships and reconnecting with friends from the other projects through some challenging obstacle courses and team games. That evening each group presented their Journey Boards, reflecting on their time on the



programme, an impactful and emotional evening for everyone as the young people and staff teams acknowledged exactly how far they had come on the programme and the positive changes they've made in their lives including new friendships formed, overcoming personal barriers, feeling accepted and taking pride in themselves and their communities.

In August with programmes coming to a close our Gener8 young people showcased a mural in North Queen Street Steps/Westlink Walkway in the New Lodge. This idea was the result of multiple issues the group identified throughout the programme and focused on highlighting a positive message of hope and promoting support for anybody struggling with ill mental health and thoughts of suicide.

The mural idea was taken from various events the Gener8 group were involved in throughout the project including the walk from Darkness into Light and Cycle Against Suicide events both of which lead to the group facilitating a positive mental health session with Girls Model school 3rd year students. Alongside the positive message hashtag #itsoknottobeok the mural also included contact details for Lifeline in the design.

The young people also wanted to give something back to the local area they had spent the last 7 months training in as it had recently been covered in a negative light by the media due to a small anti-social element within the community. The group wanted to highlight the positive work and warm welcome they had received while working out of the Recy Centre over the last 7 months. Showing not just the wider community but local residents that there were positive elements and work being carried out by young people in the community.



Transform Portadown (Oasis) cohort:

Twenty participants from the Portadown Oasis cohort had a very busy summer engaging in project opportunities and volunteering in Summer Schemes with Oasis Youth Centre and Scotch Street Youth & Community Centre. Participants were able to further develop their skills and put their learning from the OCN into practice as they facilitated workshops in the summer schemes.

The cohort joined together with Transform Fermanagh and Derry/Londonderry on a visit to Derry/Londonderry, involving teambuilding activities before taking a walking tour around the city led by the Derry/Londonderry cohort. The group met the Mayor of Derry City & Strabane District Council, Councillor Michaela Boyle, who spoke to and encouraged the young people.

The cohort also attended the Transform Project Fun Day in August, in Portadown with the groups engaging in team challenges, soft arrow combat, dodgeball, tug of war, team puzzles and there was also a BBQ & Ice Cream Van for everyone involved.

The Portadown Goal Line cohort consists of a group of 16 young people, all with additional needs, the young people come from the Portadown, Craigavon and Lurgan areas. Over the summer months the young people took part in a number of different sessions, these sessions included: groupwork, personal enrichment activities, sports, life skills, first aid, mentoring and cooking. The young people thoroughly enjoyed and benefited from all of these sessions, they really enjoyed the cooking sessions because they got to taste everything after they had made it and because learning how to cook promoted independence for the young people.



Transform Portadown (Goal Line) cohort:

The young people also got the opportunity to volunteer over the summer with Goal Line Summer Scheme and with Scotch Street Youth & Community Centre Summer Scheme. While volunteering, the young people had the opportunity to assist with leading sessions, activities and games, building relationships with other volunteers and the young people taking part in the Summer Scheme. This increased young people's confidence and self esteem while also encouraging them to become active citizens within their communities.



The young people throughout the summer got the opportunity to take part in a number of day trips, some of these included: Air-tastic, Tayto Park, Dublin Zoo and the Ulster Museum. All of these days were great opportunities for the young people to build and develop friendships within the group while taking part in fun activities. During the Tayto park trip the young people really supported and encouraged each other to try new things.



Strive Donegal goes to Glasgow

A young person's reflection on a summer residential to Glasgow; Hello, I'm Kerrie and I am 16 years old. I go to Strive in Donegal ran by Include Youth. We're based in Lifford and Kilrea. Strive took young people to Glasgow over the summer and I was lucky enough to go. It was my first time ever on a plane and I was really scared at take off but when it happened it wasn't that bad. The group were great and kept telling me I'd be okay. We went to Glasgow to look at differences and we did this our partnership group Youth Initiatives which are based in All Saint's Roman Catholic School in Glasgow. The sessions we went through were really interesting and made me think about how different people are and why I shouldn't judge others. I loved playing the team building games. We got to go to M&Ds, its an amusement park and it was so much fun. I didn't go on all the rides as me and my mate were ready to throw up after the first one!!! We also got to go shopping but I didn't buy myself anything. I got a few things for my nana and granda. The trip showed me that even though we came to Glasgow to learn new things we can do this while having fun.



breakthrough

Getting to know you!

Exciting times happening in Breakthrough 2019!

Young people across communities come together for a joint residential.

All the young people on our service got to experience a residential at White park Bay Youth Hostel in June of this year.

We were fortunate to have the whole facility to ourselves, the team of staff went up and set about making this an exciting and fun filled day and evening, with a campfire session to end the late night.



We had paddling pool rounders'!

Build the best sand castle!

A walk to the much talked about Ballintoy Bay- Game of Thrones-here we come!!

Campfire stories and sharing are most embarrassing moments...LOL

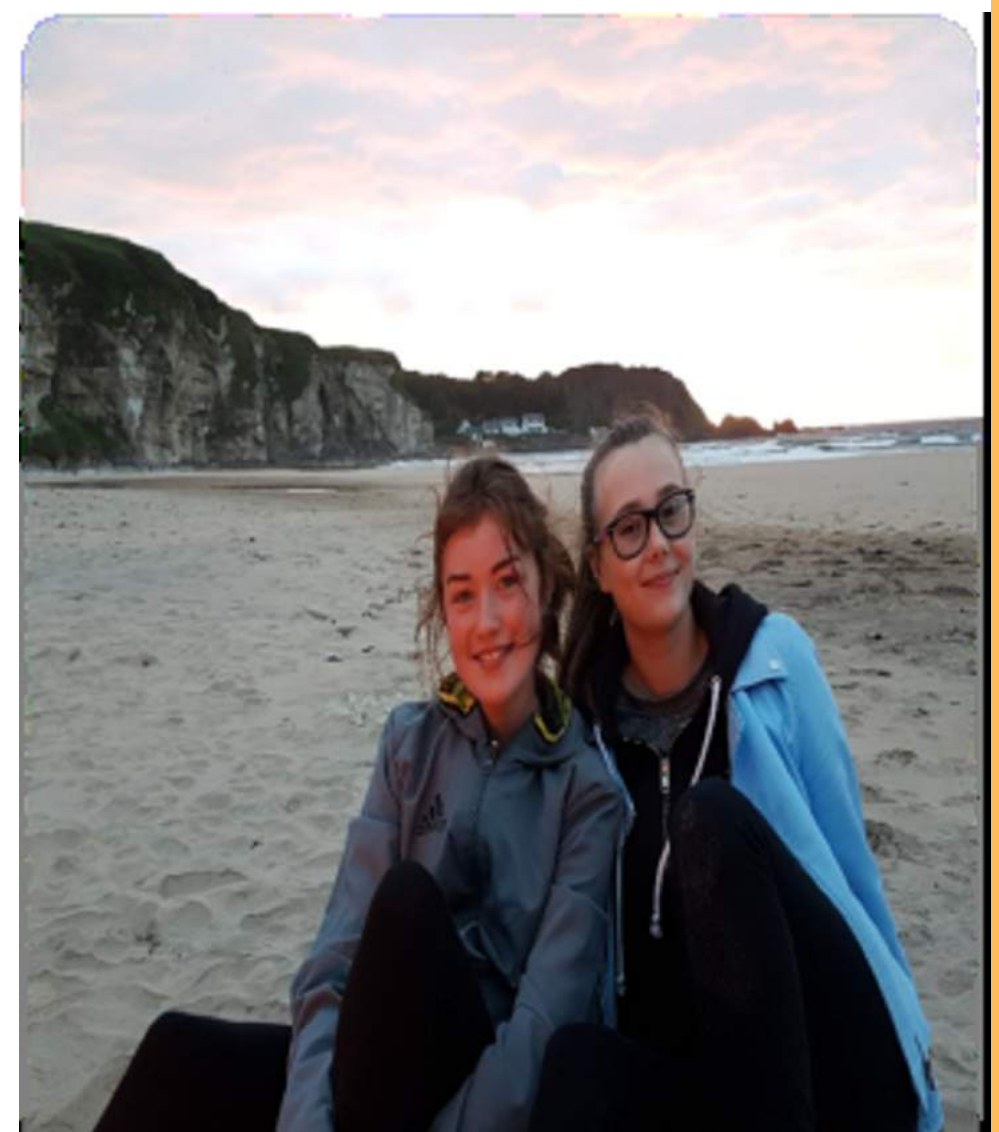
Midnight monopoly and charades for the more dramatic of us!

A feast of food and treats all throughout the day and night!

The experience went well we had time to chat, time to play, time to share and all this was to bring young people together, for them to feel a part of something bigger than themselves. Strong friendships were built, differences aired and moved past. The elements of our programme around good relations, personal development were explored through dynamic interaction, through game play and through sharing the same experience.

Our team went home tired but not weary, the young people went home sleep deprived but excited and enthused about what would come next for them as individuals but also as part of something bigger.

The year continued with strong friendships that would last beyond the end of this cohort!





This summer the Peace Bytes programme has continued to grow as it entered a second year. Run by The Bytes Project out of centres in Belfast and Derry/Londonderry, Peace Bytes runs cross-community activities, offers OCN qualifications and provides peer support and one-to-one mentoring to young people

Recently, Peace Bytes has been involved in a number of groups of young people over the summer holidays. As well as regular group work and meetings, Bytes has also partnered with the Derry/Londonderry PCSP to deliver the 'Mind Hack' mental health resilience programme. Trips to We Are Vertigo, Edge Watersports and Maydown Polcie Station provided a wide range of activities, both recreational and educational, away from a more formal learning environment. A group of young people from Tullyally also travelled to Belfast to take part in a cross-community football tournament, alongside Peace Bytes groups from Belfast itself, the first of a planned series.

In the coming months, a new cohort of young people will be joining Peace Bytes. Weekly sessions towards OCN qualifications, cross-community and good relations activities and external trips will form the core of their engagement with Peace Bytes. Each group will also finish their programme by designing and carrying out their own community social action project. Previous projects have included helping to clear and restore a local park, volunteering in a care home and building a sensory break out room within a group's school.



It All Begins with One Word...

Third Space, delivered by Extern NI and the Verbal Arts Centre, aims to positively transform the lives of 800 young people aged between 14-24 in the Greater Belfast, North-West (Derry/Londonderry) and South-West (Fermanagh/Donegal/Cavan) regions. Below, The Verbal's Belfast Arts Coordinator Colin Dardis explains about the importance of storytelling in aiding personal development.

At Verbal, we believe that every story matters. Our vision is to help other people tell their story, working with individuals and communities, continuously developing and revising creative, language-based storytelling programmes.

Working alongside our young people in Third Space, we've been engaging in activities that help shape the tools and platform required for them to share their stories. Our shared reading and digital storytelling program has a very simple starting point: one word.

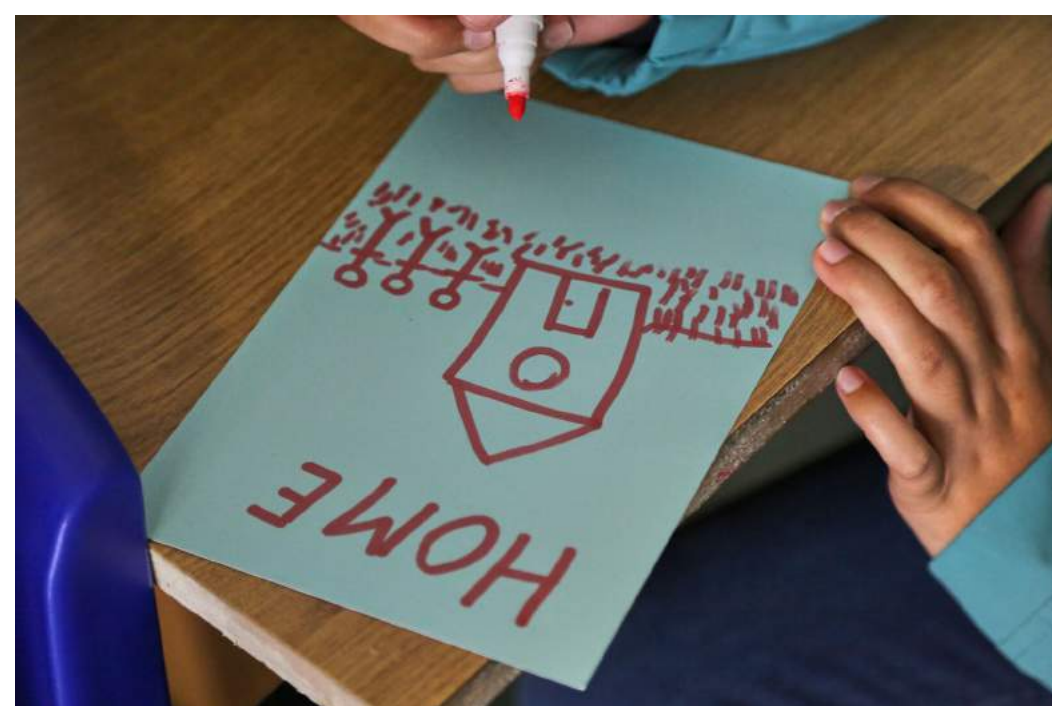
The seed of every story begins with just one word, and from that, a panorama of experience and anecdote can germinate. We ask our young people to choose a word, something they know a bit about. It could be a hobby, their favourite sport or food, an after-schools activity, or a future vocation.



We ask each person to write that word down on a sheet, and think about how they are going to display that word. It would be in big, bold letters to show how important it is to them, or a script that suggests movement for a psychical activity. They could draw a simple picture to accompany the word, or embellish it with colour and patterns.

From that, we get each person to display their word to the group, and ask them why they chose that word. A word like 'bricklaying' could lead to a story about why someone signed up to a masonry course, and the difficult of laying corners in a wall. 'Dancing' could tell of someone's passion for Irish dancing, and the awards they've won in various competitions. 'Pizza' would lead to a debate about the best toppings, and the best place for takeout food in their town.

From just one word, we gain insight into their lives and backgrounds, which wouldn't have normally come out willingly from a standard conversation. We're encouraging people to share, and we're showing interest in what they are sharing.



Impact evaluation update: Optimism towards Good Relations

In terms of the societal impact of the Peace4Youth programme, it is hoped that by 2023 there will be an increase in the percentage of young people who think that good relations will be better in five years' time and an increase in the percentage who think relations are better now than they were five years ago, as measured by the Northern Ireland Young Life and Times survey (YLT). Responses to both questions amongst the YLT sample became increasingly pessimistic from 2016-2018. The QUB Peace4Youth impact evaluation team therefore thought it would be useful to run an analysis of the Phase 1 data to see how the young people who took part in the evaluation responded to the two YLT questions over the timeframe of their participation.

Table 1 shows the overall frequencies of answers to the two questions, both for YLT and Peace4Youth participants in 2018 (although YLT also included response options of 'I don't know/other', which are not in the Peace4Youth dataset). Whilst participants in the Peace4Youth programme showed a high level of optimism at Time 1 about current relations, there was little change in opinion by Time 3. Peace4Youth participants at Time 1 were also hopeful that relations would be better in five years' time, and by Time 3, the figures appear to show a growth in optimism.

Thinking about relations between Protestants and Catholics, do you think... They are better now than they were five years ago?					
	YLT 2018	Peace4Youth Time 1 (n=981)*		Peace4Youth Time 3 (n=535)*	
	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Better	42	629	64.1	348	65.0
Worse	7	74	7.5	34	6.4
About the same	42	278	28.3	153	28.6

Thinking about relations between Protestants and Catholics, do you think... They will be better in five years' time?					
	YLT 2018	Peace4Youth Time 1 (n=843)*		Peace4Youth Time 3 (n=482)*	
	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Better	31	448	53.1	301	62.4
Worse	18	114	13.5	36	7.5
About the same	36	281	33.3	145	30.1

*Missing/blank responses removed

However, when looking at the matched sample of young people who completed all three evaluation surveys, there was no statistically significant difference in in the number of young people who thought relations were getting better, getting worse, or staying the same between the time-points. In other words, among the Peace4Youth Phase 1 sample, there is no evidence to suggest significant changes in young people’s optimism about community relations in NI.

It should be remembered that the Peace4Youth evaluation results from Phase 1 showed that young people taking part in the programme reported greater belief in their own ability to affect change and had higher levels of civic participation between the first and follow-up surveys they completed, but that their feelings of agency to change things in their community hadn’t progressed. One interpretation of the findings above is, therefore, that while young people might feel more empowered and able to change their immediate circumstances around them, they feel disconnected and alienated from broader structures in society. We welcome additional interpretations that others may have.

YouthPact Publications:

Distilling the Essence of Youth Work

The Distilling the Essence of Peace4Youth event was held on Friday 17 May 2019 in the Duncairn Centre in Belfast. The purpose of the event was to share best practice within the Peace4Youth programmes, that was captured in a qualitative piece of research to understand core elements of practice and experience in the Peace4Youth programme.

Participants took part in micro sessions highlighting aspects of practice that contribute to bringing about change for young people across the Peace4Youth programme. Eliz McArdle and Leighann McConville described the research process and worked through the major themes that emerged from the interviews with youth workers and young people.

The event was accompanied by a report 'Distilling the Essence of Peace4Youth Practice'. It is a record of the practice as delivered, experienced and described by workers and young people towards the end of Phase One of the Peace4Youth Programme. This is divided into two parts:

Part one outlines the concepts and thematic areas which have been delivered within the Peace4Youth programme.

Part two explores the skills and processes of the workers, in bringing concepts and themes to life for young participants.



Welcome Chris!

YouthPact would like to introduce and welcome our new team member Chris Deconink! Chris joined our team in July and will be responsible for Entry Level trainings.

For the past seven years, Chris was the former Co-ordinator of the Pieces Project Youth Engagement Service within Extern and as well as possessing a Post Graduate Diploma in Youth and Community Work from the University of Ulster, Chris also has acquired 19 years relevant Youth and Community Work Experience in a host of organisations including, Forum for Action in Substance Abuse and Suicide Awareness {FASA}, East Belfast Community Development Agency {EBCDA}, Dyslexia, Dyspraxia and Autism Therapy {DDAT}, East Belfast Sure Start, Start 360 and Loughshore Educational Resource Centre.

Chris is also a T4T trainer in Safetalk and Assist and is Vice Chairperson in a voluntary capacity with East Belfast Survivors of Suicide Family Support Group.



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