



Active



COMMUNITIES NETWORK
Quarterly Newsletter



February 2017

Introduction

Active Communities Network (ACN) is a registered charity, utilising sports, cultural and educational activities to broaden horizons, raise aspirations and offer pathways to achievement for participants within local communities. Using the mediums of sport, physical activity, arts and cultural activity, our programmes deliver grass roots activities, and promote, personal, social and community development.

We would like to wish everyone a Happy New Year as we look ahead to another busy and positive year ahead. The end of 2016 and beginning of 2017 has witnessed further developments and positive experiences for young people. We look forward to sharing our stories and keeping you informed throughout the year ahead of more big projects that are on the horizon!

We hope you enjoy reading the first Newsletter of 2017

Belfast Team





Sports engagement sessions are regularly running throughout Belfast, Portadown, Omagh and Coleraine. Young people are volunteering and gaining experience of working in communities and developing employability skills. A group of young people now tie in with Action Ability Belfast to promote inclusion through encouraging young people to be buddies for young people with disabilities and learning difficulties. The young people are facilitating a programme on a weekly basis and demonstrating leadership qualities to complete training and have a better insight on the buddy system.



Young people who have come through the programme are now driving the sports element within local youth clubs. Megan McGregor (one of our volunteers) facilitates sports engagement to females one night a week in Clonard youth club with the aim of developing the group into a girl's football team.

Within North Belfast, a group of young people are involved in attending classes based on studying for their theory test. The young people are taking lessons weekly and receiving support on driving and preparing for their driving test.

Within West Belfast 5 Young people who also have come through early intervention programmes are now completing accreditations in Mentoring to provide support for young people coming through ACN programmes. The young people will help support staff and act as mentors for other young people.

In Bushmills we have been working with Dervock Young People for over 8 months and they have just set themselves up as their own Constituted youth group after delivering them training on capacity building, running meetings, Governance, applying for funding and First aid.

Ballybogey youth have been involved in a programme that has seen them engaging with statutory agencies over issues with their bonfire and they will also be setting up their own youth group in the next month.

Bushmills young people have just finished their OCN Level 1 in Good Relations & Diversity, they are fundraising for a defibrillator cabinet for the village and have an ongoing homeless appeal set up.



Esmée Fairbairn aims to broaden horizons and raise aspirations of young people across Belfast.



Esmée Fairbairn FOUNDATION

The programme hopes to develop young people's skills, improve attitudes and improve their ability to grasp opportunities the project will provide. The programme

aims to promote, facilitate and support youth and social action projects across the city with the goal of young people reclaiming their community regardless of the denomination.

Our programme is being facilitated city wide within Belfast and is designed to empower young people with the skills to deliver sports sessions to their peers within different communities. They not only achieve accreditation for this but also get experience on how to deliver. So far it has been a really satisfying experience from a facilitator's point of view watching the young people working as part of a team to deliver this and seeing each of them grow in confidence in their own ways.

Esmée Fairbairn programme aims to develop young people through widening their knowledge of community, society and global equalities. The young people will achieve an award in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and they will take part in a World Café where they get to hear first-hand experiences of people who have come from different backgrounds and get to ask them questions to enhance their knowledge base of that particular culture. The idea behind this is that the more cultures the young people become more aware of the more educated they are around certain situations.

As part of the experience the young people will get the opportunity to visit London to enhance and build on the learning they have been doing throughout the programme. The legacy we hope to leave behind is that the young people who complete the programme will go on as peer mentors for other programmes that we run so they have role models to look up to within their own communities.

ACN hope to launch a citywide event at the end of February.

For more information contact:

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The young people on the youth committee availed of opportunities working alongside the West Belfast Community Festival – Feile an Phobail since August of last year. They have been busy working on social action projects and hands on work within the communities we live and work in.

One of the social action projects that the committee completed involved being participants on a 6 week cooking programme. This stemmed from a consultation they facilitated during the summer months. With the ACN youth committee being made up of young people from North and West Belfast they noticed that diversity within their communities was becoming more and more apparent and the ignorance was very high amongst some people. Based on this they wanted to help integrate the children and young people into community services and raise a greater awareness around certain cultures in order to help educate themselves.

The Youth Committee contacted Whiterock Children's Centre to invite families from an ethnic minority background to an evening where they would put the skills they had learned in the 6 week cooking programme to test and cook a traditional meal for the families. The event was named *"Together is Better"*.

'Together is Better' is an intercultural programme which consists of welcoming other cultures and minorities to enjoy a meal prepped and prepared by young people to help the families understand Irish culture and foods. The youth committee grew vegetables and herbs up at the allotments and then prepared and cooked a meal using their own ingredients.

The feedback from the committee and the participants was very positive and along with the fact that it has equipped the young people with skills such as, teamwork, communication and organisational skills, it has also given them a drive to do more of this type of work because they recognise the sense of achievement and belonging it gives people.

ACN has been working closely with employers to encourage employment opportunities for young people by providing assistance with CV writing, interview skills and supporting the young people to the interview process and gaining feedback from employers.

11 young people from West & North Belfast have successfully gained part time employment.





ACN recently hosted 5 young people from Bangladesh, Netherlands, Poland and the UK as part of the British Council's Active Citizens Programme. The group experienced some of the history within Belfast and the importance of community approaches. The group also got a great flavour of the engagement and model we use to empower young people at Active Communities Network.

This visit looked at how we are all globally and locally connected due to history, our



approaches and politics. This was a great experience for the young people that we work with to gain a better understanding of other cultures and beliefs. To complete the programme 3 young people from Belfast will get the opportunity and experience of being hosted by a community organisation in the UK during February mid-term. They will get a great insight into the community work and approaches applied by organisations within the UK and bring back their experiences and knowledge.

Special thanks to the Lord Mayor, Brian Kingston, Hammer Youth Club, ACN Youth Committee, Glor na Mona and Crann go Beatha (Tree of Life Centre) for hosting the Active Citizens during their visits.



EVENT INFORMATION

2nd February

7.00pm – 9.00pm

World Café in Wholly Ground Café, Northumberland Street.

Young people will take part in a World Café where they get to hear first-hand experiences of people who have come from different backgrounds and get to ask questions to enhance their knowledge base of that particular culture. All Welcome!!

17th February

10 year Awards Ceremony, London.

On 17th February 2017 ACN will host an awards ceremony to celebrate the achievements of young people, volunteers and staff members over the past 10 years. The awards will focus on those who have gone above and beyond their remit in volunteering, education and full time roles and made a real difference to the communities and people around them. The afternoon will see up to 400 people gather at London's York Hall from ACN's four offices in London, Belfast, Manchester and Havant and will also welcome funders and partners who have worked with us over the past ten years. We would like to congratulate our Sports Leaders who are engaged on our Good Relations Programme from across Belfast. They will also be represented at our 10 year celebration event.



ACN Youth Awards 2017

DATE: 17TH FEBRUARY 2017
VENUE: YORK HALL, 5 OLD FORD RD, LONDON E2 9PJ

#ACNis10

We look forward to the event which will launch a year of localized celebrations to mark a decade of Active Communities Network.

8th March

International Women's Day,

contact Rachelle at rachelle@activecommunities.org.uk for more information



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