

Active



COMMUNITIES NETWORK

Quarterly Newsletter



October 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 hope you enjoy our Newsletter and we look forward to sharing our stories and keeping you informed for the rest of 2017 on the achievements of young people and our continued opportunities.

Rio Ferdinand Launch

The RFF launched in Belfast May 2017 and city wide sports sessions commenced across Belfast opened to all young people aged 14-24 years old.

Rio Ferdinand Foundation (RFF) is a partner of Active Communities Network, Belfast. RFF engages young people in sports, arts and media activities across the communities in the UK.



RFF alongside ACN support young people through a variety of personal development programmes and provide pathways to gain achievements.

Rio Ferdinand himself made an appearance in Belfast in June this year. He met with various groups of young people and we launched the programme that night at the Ulster Museum during a Q&A event with Rio and ACN ambassadors, Tommy Bowe (Ulster Rugby) and Leah McCourt (MMA).



Rio Ferdinand pictured with the ACN youth committee in Belfast.

RFF offers a range of education and employment pathways for our young people. RFF launched their first boot camp in partnership with BT in early September offering experiential learning for young people to develop their skills in the fields of employment.





Esmee Fairbairn Together is Better

Connect cup

ACN ran a football tournament in July in partnership with the African Caribbean Sports Forum NI (ASFNI).

The tournament was engaging young people locally and globally through sport. We had young people from Belfast, Syria, Sudan, Egypt and Nigeria. The football tournament worked with over 80 young people to develop new experiences, cultures and increase equality and diversity within our communities.

Well done to:

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------|
| ACSFNI | 1st Place |
| North Belfast Boys | 2nd Place |
| East Belfast MFC | 3rd Place |





Qualifications Presentation

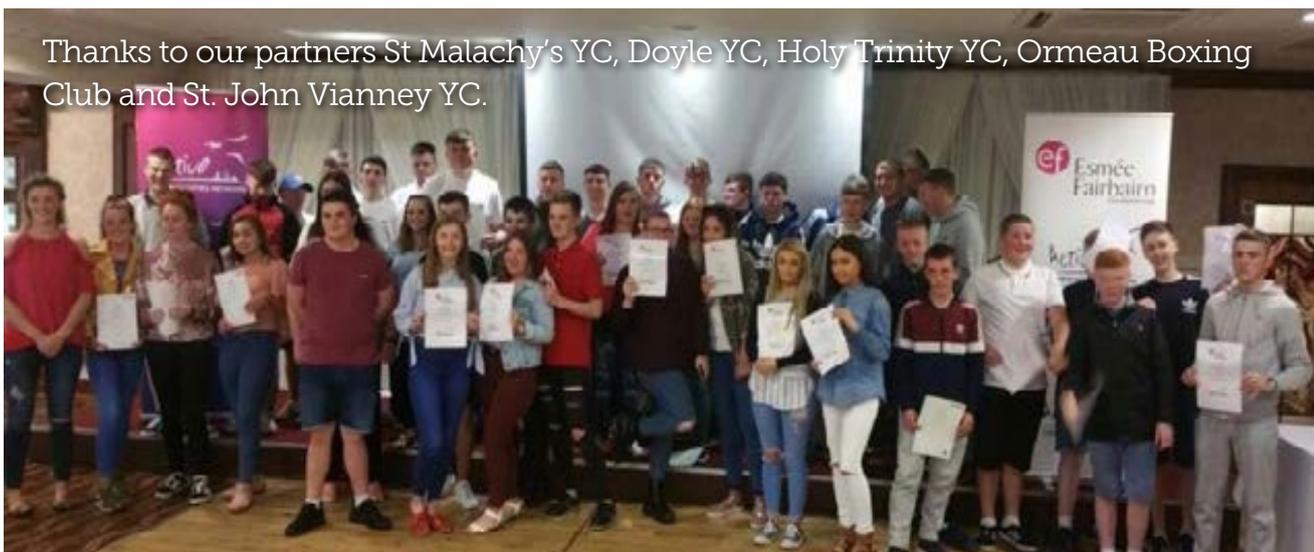
Active Communities Network understand the importance of building capacity for young people by encouraging personal and social development. As a leadership academy we deliver accreditations to empower leadership qualities and develop volunteers. In July we awarded 50 young people for gaining Level 1 and level 2 accreditations. This group in particular gained a Level 1 OCN in Peer Mentoring. The group awarded now act as mentors for young people coming through programmes with ACN. Positive leadership and role models is an important part of the ACN young person's journey.

Big well done to:

L-R – Padraig Cournane, Stephen Gilliland, Corái Fitzsimons, Barra Fryers, (Dan Barkley, ACN coordinator) and Aodhán Trainor.

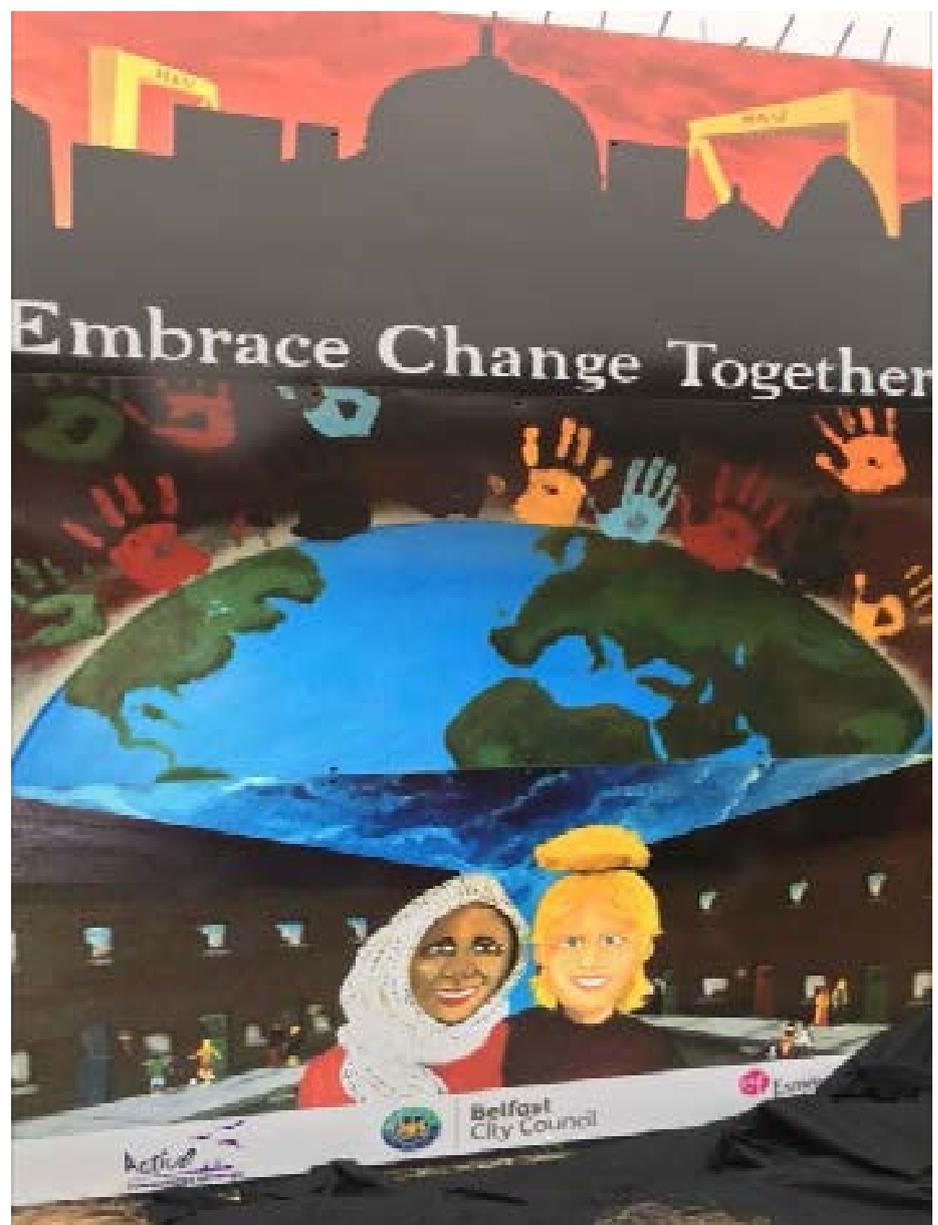


Thanks to our partners St Malachy's YC, Doyle YC, Holy Trinity YC, Ormeau Boxing Club and St. John Vianney YC.



The New Belfast Mural was created by a group of young people from different backgrounds, coming from countries like Syria, Iraq, Sudan, Somalia and also some of our own young people living in West Belfast. The group wanted to represent that Belfast is changing and that we should embrace the change and educate ourselves on a range of cultures so that we can be fortunate to learn about the wider world. The idea was that Belfast is no longer a city made of just two communities and hasn't been for a long time and this mural represents the new and emerging city we call home. The young people educated even the staff team at Active Communities Network on their home countries, cultures, celebrations, and religious aspects and through this we established great relationships and recognised true skills and leaders.

Come along and view the mural which is located at the International Wall in Northumberland Street facing ACN offices.



Inspirational Award to Cavan

Last year we organised a sponsored walk under the name of "Walk the Walls" to fundraise for Cavan O'Neill whose parents were trying to send him to USA for surgery that would enable him to walk. As a result of this we are delighted to say that Cavan has received his surgery and is making steady progress. ACN staff invited Cavan and his mum Emma to our offices where Amy Murphy presented Cavan with our Inspirational Award. Cavan's mum said, "It was very humbling for us to receive an award for Cavan for inspiring the first ever Walk the Walls event. The support and awareness this event gave to our fundraising campaign to help our son walk,

we can never put in words. The launch of Walk the Walls came at a time when we had hit a wall with Cavan's First Steps and the energy and positivity from all those involved encouraged us to go on and reach our target of £80,000.

This event has many admirable elements to it. It brings young people from across the community together using one of the most iconic political settings as a backdrop, it brings young people together through sport and activity all while supporting worthy local causes. We hope to be part of many years of Walk the Walls."



Active Communities Network youth committee has recruited new young people since our last newsletter with a lot of our other young people moving into employment whilst some were retained and stayed on the programme. The committee is made up of 15 young people from across North and West Belfast which is two of the most socially deprived areas in the North of Ireland. This year we also have representation from ethnic minority communities which gives us a more inclusive group and promotes the value of diversity.

The aim of the committee is to promote social change within their communities. Previous to being on the committee these young people have come through the journey with ACN through personal and social development groups, accreditations and leadership programmes which builds their capacity and empowers them to become young leaders within their communities as well as make more informed choices to benefit a more holistic approach from Active Communities Network working in these communities. In the upcoming month's committee members will meet with funders and take part in running their own social action events and they will also lead on projects like our Big Lottery funded GOALS project.

Committee members will be out over the next few weeks to oversee what Active Communities Network does and meet all the staff and this will give them a better understanding on what we do to help with discussions around future work and social action projects.



Crumlin Road Gaol Programme

Just before the summer months Active Communities Network in North Belfast facilitated a programme focusing around prevention and early intervention work with young males aged between 15-17 years old. The programme had over 20 young people all coming from New Lodge and Ardoyne and was in partnership with New Lodge Youth Centre and Ardoyne Youth Club.

The programme was hard hitting and provided young people with a stark outlook on what life would be like if they got involved in anti-social behaviour that could lead to them getting a criminal record or serving time in jail.

It also provided learning about choices and consequences over 8 weeks whilst looking at crime prevention, mental health and the ex-prisoners views on the criminal justice system. As part of this the group met at Crumlin Road Gaol to hear from an ex-prisoner before getting to visit Hydebank Young Offenders Centre to experience a day in the life so different from their own and meet with inmates.

This programme was a huge success. See below for what some of the young people who took part thought of it.



*Class programme
would do it all over
again*

*Getting to
experience an hour in the
cell was like a lifetime and
I never want to do
it again*

*I loved the whole
programme it was really
interesting especially hearing
from people my age inside
and what they thought
of it.'*



Employability Programme



Belfast
City Council

Active Communities network have been piloting an employability programme from March this year.

To date 160 young people have been involved in employability workshops facilitated by employers such as Feile an Phobail ,GLL and Axiom.

Out of 160 young people ,16 young people have gained employment through a placement opportunity in retail, Bar work , health care, security, construction and the fitness industry. 42 young people have completed accredited courses to enable them excess into employment such as:

Fitness Instruction L2

Personal training L3

Digital Media L1

Music Production L1

SIA

CSR

Nails L1

Make up L1

Barbering L1

Grassroot coaching L1

“ My job has changed the way I look at life. Basically I go out and want to help people because I have more respect and understanding of others. I feel more like an adult now as I’m able to go out and treat myself. ”

Alicia Laverty, aged 19 from West Belfast gained full-time employment in Connected Health

“ The Make-up course was really amazing!!! Really enjoyed myself, worked on basic stuff tonight. It’s a really good course and opportunity ”

Young person on the make-up course

“ My course is good, I’m really enjoying it. Thanks very much again, very grateful ”

Young person on personal training course

“ Through Active Communities Network I have had many of opportunities but the course that I have just signed up for is the most exciting. I have went in and out of jobs for the past 3 years and never really enjoyed any. Five Guys is something that is getting me a few quid whilst doing a course in something I love. Like all I want to do is do music and this is the start of that journey hopefully. ”

Mitchell McCandless age 22, North Belfast Gained part time employment in Five Guys and embarked on an OCN Level 2 in Music Production



"Generating Opportunities and Learning through Sport"

Active Communities Network have secured 4 years funding through the Big Lottery Programme empowering young people.

The programme will be facilitated within West and North Belfast with a drive from our youth committee. Sessions have kicked off in Poleglass, Twinbrook, Shankill and Ligoniel. The programme offers opportunities in sport, accreditations, volunteering and employability placements with the view of increasing young people's aspirations and enhance their future employment opportunities.

15 young people across West and North Belfast have completed their SIA training courses and have gained their badges ready for employment. A further 10 young people have just completed a Level 2 sports leaders and are running a Sports tournament on 2nd November in Girdwood community hub to demonstrate their coaching abilities and put their skills into action.

A number of young people are receiving mentoring to enhance confidence and self-esteem to help develop and gain an understanding off new opportunities and pathways that lead to positive experiences.



Upcoming Events

If anyone is interested in gaining more information on the programmes, please contact Rachelle McCurry, Programme Manager at rachelle@activecommunities.org.uk or 02890 245969

27th October

Resilience ,Cohesion & Stability:

A Blueprint for international development

Venue: **TBC**

Contact: Mark@activecommunities.org.uk

2nd November

Halloween Football Tournament

1pm – 4pm in Girdwood Community Hub

Contact: fionnuala@activecommunities.org.uk

Employability workshops for young people 16+

Contact: vicky@activecommunities.org.uk

Volunteering opportunities

Contact: sam@activecommunities.org.uk



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