



## **Clonmore Youth Club** **Report of the Trustees** **for the year-end 31 March 2023**

*The trustees have pleasure in presenting their report together with the unaudited financial statements of the charity for the year ending 31 March 2023. The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in the notes to the accounts and comply with the Charity's governing document, the Charities Act (NI) 1964 and Charities (NI) Order 1987.*

### **Volunteers & Training**

CYC has welcomed over ten new volunteers, including Blue Crew members and Junior Volunteers. We extend our heartfelt appreciation to all our volunteers for their unwavering support during summer provision and weekly youth club activities. At CYC, we are blessed to have a team of dedicated volunteers who are the backbone of our organisation. Their tireless efforts and commitment to our cause enable us to provide exceptional support to our community regularly.

We take immense pride in our volunteers, who have undertaken several training courses in the last year, including First Aid, Child Protection, Defibrillation training, and OCN in Youth Work, to name a few. We have ensured that all members requiring Access NI have undergone checks, and we are thrilled to announce that we will provide additional training to our staff in the coming weeks. At CYC, we are committed to developing our volunteer team and providing training opportunities as needed. We cannot thank our volunteers enough for their exceptional contributions to our organisation. Their passion for our cause and dedication to our goals is truly inspiring.

We look forward to working alongside our volunteers to achieve our mission of supporting our community in every way possible.

### **Summer Provision**

#### **Wee Rascals**

In early July 2022, we organised the second edition of the Wee Rascal Summer Programme. This year, we ran the programme for three days in early July, catering to 20 children aged between reception and P1.

As part of the programme, we invited Barbara from Relax Kids NI, who led excellent mindfulness and art classes for the children. The classes were a great way to introduce young children to mindfulness and help them develop their creativity.

To conclude the programme, we took the children on a fun-filled trip to C and J's Animal Farm in Craigavon. The children enjoyed interacting with various animals and learning about

farm life. It was a fantastic opportunity for many local young people to have their first experience of such an event.

Additionally, the programme was an excellent chance for our young volunteers to utilise the skills they were learning as part of their volunteer programme. They got to work with children and learn how to organise and run an event. Overall, the programme was a resounding success, and we hope to continue organising such events.

### Senior Summer Scheme

In 2022, we made significant changes to our Senior summer program to better serve the needs and interests of the young people in our community. We recognised the high demand for our program and responded by providing weekly sessions throughout July and August instead of offering a single week of provision.

The changes we made were well-received by our community, with over 65 young people able to avail of services that suited their needs and interests. We organised eight senior sessions, including exciting activities and workshops. Our attendees had the opportunity to visit Croke Park and the Lakes Kilrea and participate in a stay-awake event in collaboration with the Scotch Street Youth and Community Centre. Additionally, we held several centre-based days that focused on various workshops such as Photography, Music Production, cooking, clay making, and sporting sessions.

We are delighted that our young people gave us excellent feedback, with 99% of attendees rating our program five out of five stars and a noted preference for the weekly provision going forward. The success of our program would not have been possible without the support of the Education Authority and ABC Council, who provided funding to help us subsidise the costs for local families. We hope to continue providing meaningful experiences for our community's young people in the future.

### Junior Summer Scheme

In the summer of 2022, we organised a junior summer program to provide young people aged 7-11 with an enjoyable and educational week of activities. Sixty-five young people attended the week-long program, which our Young Volunteers and iRural supported. The program was packed with various activities that catered to the interests and needs of the young participants.

Some of the activities we offered included African Drumming, clay-making, bubble ball, mug painting, STEM sessions, and week-long support provided by Healthy Kidz NI. These activities were designed to promote creativity, critical thinking, and teamwork among the young participants. The young people had the opportunity to learn new skills, make new friends, and have fun in a safe and supportive environment.

As a finale, we organised a trip to W5 in Belfast, a major highlight of the program. The young people had a blast exploring the interactive exhibits and learning about science and technology in a fun and engaging way.

This would not have been possible without our volunteers' hard work and dedication. We want to take this opportunity to express our heartfelt gratitude to all our volunteers for their

contribution and support. Due to COVID-19 in 2021, we operated as independent groups rather than one volunteer group. We are grateful to be back to normal and to have had the opportunity to work together as a team again.

We are thrilled to have received fantastic feedback about the program from the young people and their parents. 96% of young people rated us five stars, a testament to the program's quality and our volunteers' hard work. We are proud to have provided a memorable and valuable experience for our program's young people.

#### Parent Quotes

"Fantastic all around. Please keep doing what you all do best and providing our community with such a fun place for our kids to go" My kids enjoyed everything; they enjoyed the fun of the week, loved all the activities and the care that was given to them by each and every one of the volunteers."

#### Young Volunteers

I would like to thank Anastazija, Ciaran, and Daniel from iRural and Education Authority for their support in our Young Volunteer's development program from June to August 2022. During the summer, fourteen young volunteers aged 13+ received youth leadership and sports training to assist them in volunteering during our summer scheme. Ten young people participated in a one-night residential stay in Gortin as part of the program.

I want to say a huge well done and thank you to our Young Leader members, namely Alanna May, Cadhla, Dáire, Eimear, James, Lorcan, Louis, Maighread, Mary, Petr, Rebecca, Hannah, Molly and Matthew, for all their hard work this summer, especially in their delivery of sessions during the Junior summer scheme.

### **Drop-In Sessions**

#### Junior Youth Club

Our Junior club is integral to the community, offering activities for children aged 7-11. The club has grown over the years, now with over 100 registered children and many young families who enjoy socialising there. Our dedicated volunteers have played a significant role in our success, helping our members develop social and team skills. Our primary focus is providing a safe and fun environment for children to play and make new friends. We offer opportunities for feedback on activities and workshops, and we involve our members in the weekly running of the club.

As part of our Good Vibes project, we partnered with Healthy Kidz and our local GAA to provide three weekly sports sessions for our members aged 3-11 and formed a partnership with Clonmore Robert Emmet's GAA. Our Junior club is responsible for organising and planning the delivery of our junior sessions, while Clonmore Robert Emmet's GAA focuses on the delivery of sessions for our Wee Rascals. Jack from Healthy Kidz is great with young people and can tailor sessions to meet the group's needs while ensuring they develop the fine motor skills necessary. Approximately 40 Junior members attended sessions weekly, and 25 Wee Rascal Members attended from September to March.

We offered our junior members various experiences throughout the year, including music, drama, cooking, STEM workshops, and sporting events/games. In December 2022, our junior members and their families attended our Cinderella Panto, a fantastic experience with over 120 attendees.

We thank our young volunteer group for their regular attendance and support during Junior sessions. Their efforts have been invaluable in helping new members integrate with existing members and providing additional support to those who need it. We are truly grateful for their contributions and appreciate the time and energy they have dedicated to our organisation.

### Senior Youth Club

The Senior Club caters to the needs of young people aged between 12 and 15. The club has over 40 registered members, out of which 30 participate in its activities regularly. In September 2022, 29 club senior members attended a three-day residential program at the Delamont Outdoor Education Centre. The residential program proved to be an essential team-building moment for them, with bouldering being the trip's highlight for many. We thank Aoife and Catriona for their invaluable assistance during the residential program.

The Senior Club provides its members with more freedom to plan their sessions, and they have chosen to focus more on team-building and relaxation during drop-ins. Many members were initially highly anxious about returning to school and exams. Therefore, we made sure to provide them with a safe and relaxed environment. The senior program aims to build confidence and essential skills for work, such as teamwork, life skills, and public speaking. We organise themed nights such as sports, movies, bushtucker trials and challenges, quiz nights, and regular trips to venues such as Prison Island, Belfast Giants, and Let's Go Hydro to support building confidence and socialisation skills. Throughout the year, we hold workshops on internet safety, drug awareness, and mental health for our senior members.

## Projects

### Lights Camera Action

Over eight weeks, a group of young people from the Lights Camera Action group worked tirelessly to create a showpiece that highlighted the incredible efforts of Dunlewey Addiction Services LTD. They aimed to showcase their work as part of their 35th-anniversary celebration at Belfast City Hall. The "It Starts with a Knock" project was a collaboration with Craic facilitators Aoibh and Sean. The young people involved in the project put in a lot of hard work and dedication to make it successful. They spent hours brainstorming, planning, and executing their ideas to create a video that would do justice to the fantastic work of Dunlewey Addiction Services LTD.

The video resulted from their combined efforts and was a powerful and moving depiction of addiction's impact on individuals and their families. It highlighted the critical work of Dunlewey Addiction Services LTD in providing support, care, and guidance to those who are struggling with addiction. The young people who participated in the project should be incredibly proud of their achievements. Their hard work and dedication have given a voice to the promotion of Dunlewey Addiction Services and their vital work. The showpiece was a testament to the power of collective effort and the positive impact that young people can have

when they come together to create something meaningful. In conclusion, "It Starts with a Knock" was a phenomenal project demonstrating young people's hard work and experiences in the Lights Camera Action group. It showcased their creativity, talent, and dedication and proved that they have the power to make a difference in the world.

#### Confident Me

Confident Me was a 10-week drama and dance-based programme exploring young people's relationships with themselves and what confidence truly is to them. Sixteen young people aged 11 to 15 undertook the project utilising a blend of youth work. Mindfulness and traditional speech and drama lessons educate our members to look inward at their goals and to speak openly with others their age about the challenges they face each week. We created a set of affirmations for our members to share with their families while Aoibh and Sean worked alongside the young people to create a new poem and performance piece to illustrate the importance of self-care in mental health and the role that communities of friends, family and youth organisations can play in supporting young people.

#### Thrive Project

The Thrive Project was our second 10-week programme, which grew out of Confident Me. Although feedback from Confident Me was very positive, the young people wanted a bigger say in what they were doing each week. Thrive allowed us to refocus the program to allow greater conversations around positive/maladaptive coping strategies, how young people visualised stress and create a more inclusive and varied creative arts approach for our 17 participants. In addition to each session being led alongside the young people, we also provided hot dinners to reduce stress on our participants after school. Over the ten weeks, many different approaches were used, from laughter yoga, sewing/patchwork, graffiti, and weekly mindfulness/reflection time, to illustrate the abstract idea of stress and how our bodies deal with it. Feedback from our young people spoke of being able to share their personal stories without judgment and a better understanding of what stress is and how it impacts your body. One member spoke privately about how they were subconsciously using a poor coping strategy (biting their nails when they were nervous around exams), and we were then able to support them with alternative approaches (sour-tasting nail polish and journaling).

#### Wee Rascals Mindfulness Sessions

Our monthly Wee Rascals programme started in full in September 2022, after a series of individual workshops and summer work in July and August to help refine what the children and families needed from the sessions. We run 10-term time sessions and six summer sessions, working alongside Relax Kids NI to initially introduce the critical themes of mindfulness to our young people and then utilising arts and crafts, sensory play and yoga to offer a blend of approaches to help engage all our members. This has been particularly helpful as Wee Rascal members are 3 to 6 years old and often require multiple short, individualised tasks to prevent fatigue. The programme is essential for our younger members who could not fully vocalise their frustrations and worries and benefitted the most from the fun and engaging delivery methods. As few services are available for young people aged six and under in the area, Wee Rascals allows many young people to socialise with their peers

whilst improving their skills and supporting newer parents to create social networks to integrate into the wider community. In the second half of our grant, we focused on integrating more physical mindfulness methods with a visit from Fitness Freddie, showing us the Take 5 points through dance, and Matthew from AB Coaching, who focused on using sport to help us deal with big emotions.

### Let's Get Cooking

Our Cooking Programme had initially been less successful than we had hoped, but after a change in approach to include the whole family and some live demonstrations, we saw greater success. We undertook 15 weeks of direct classes and five special sessions, providing themed weeks such as Vegan, Mexican, BBQ and Christmas Dinner. This special programme allowed more grandparents to join and share their recipes and ideas while supporting their grandchild and making friends with other grandparents, which we have never done before.

Over the twenty weeks, we have provided 15 face-to-face sessions for 26 families, and we had 40 people attend our special sessions. All members could access Zoom Recordings and cook at home again or at a time that suits them best. Our Head Chef, Andrew, focused on creating a week of dinners utilising everyday household items and cheap meats. Throughout the programme, our young people have learned how to break down a whole chicken to make several meals, the importance of utilising food scraps to make broths and stocks to enhance flavour, and how to budget for a week's recipes.

### Case Study A

Child A, aged 14, has attended the youth club since our formation in 2017. Initially, she was extremely quiet and preferred participating in solo activities rather than mixing with her peer group. In the last year, we have seen her extremely fortunate to work and grow into a fantastic young volunteer, as she has begun to take on more leadership roles and take an active role in supporting younger members getting involved in club activities. Child A has often found it hard to fit in amongst the rest of the girls due to her more artistic outlook than the sport, which is extremely popular in the area. Although attending the local primary school, she is currently the only member of her secondary school at the club, which can be additionally isolating. The change in A has been a slow process, and in the past six months, she has come into her own. She has a strong family relationship and has a great circle of friends at the club now. She has particularly benefitted from our targeted programming this year, from Drama to Art Therapy and learning more about how to live safely; she has grown from the typical teen “don’t know/ don’t care” attitude into actively engaging in programmes and expressing herself more in all facets of the club. She has recently started volunteering as part of our Blue Crew and has quickly taken to the role. Along with the volunteering, the club’s projects and the drop-in have helped her establish a small but tight-knit friend base that she can rely on both in and out of the youth club. This group is a regular attendee at our weekly drop-in sessions and is currently working with our Leader in Charge to find more volunteering opportunities for the summer.

Club Sponsors, funders and gestures of good will

Clonmore Youth Club would like to thank the following funders, businesses, and people for their support over the last year to the running of the club, events and fundraising.



- Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Council
- BBC Children in Need
- Boys and Girls Clubs NI
- BT Telecommunity Fund
- D-Signs + Displays
- Dunlewey Addiction Services
- Education Authority
- Henry Murray & Co
- Irwin's Bakery
- John Foye
- Keenaghan Mushrooms
- Lisa Mackle
- Making Moves NI (Aoibh Johnson and Sean O'Neill)
- McKinney Motors
- Paul Coary
- Saltmarine
- The Community Foundation NI
- Youth Link NI

Apologies to anyone we have missed

#### Closing Comments

In conclusion, the Clonmore Youth Club's annual report for the year has been a testament to the dedication, passion, and hard work of our volunteers, staff, and members. As we reflect on the past year, it's evident that our community-driven initiatives and programmes have made a significant impact on the lives of young people in Clonmore and beyond.

Our volunteers are the lifeblood of our organisation, and we extend our deepest gratitude to each and every one of them for their unwavering commitment and tireless efforts. Their dedication to training and development not only enhances their own skills but also enriches the experiences we offer to our members. We are proud to have a team of volunteers who are dedicated to our cause and who continually strive to make a positive difference in the lives of others.

Throughout the summer provision, including the Wee Rascals, Senior Summer Scheme, and Junior Summer Scheme, we witnessed firsthand the transformative power of structured, engaging activities. These programmes not only provided fun and educational experiences but also fostered personal growth, confidence, and social connections among our young participants. We are grateful for the support of our funders, partners, and the broader community, whose contributions make these initiatives possible.

Our drop-in sessions, including the Junior Youth Club and Senior Youth Club, continue to be vital hubs for socialisation, skill-building, and personal development. Through a diverse range of activities, workshops, and projects, we strive to create inclusive environments where young people feel valued, supported, and empowered to express themselves.

The success stories shared in our report, such as the Lights Camera Action project, Confident Me programme, and Thrive Project, highlight the transformative impact of youth-led initiatives and creative expression. These endeavours not only empower young people to explore their talents and interests but also promote resilience, well-being, and positive social change within our community.

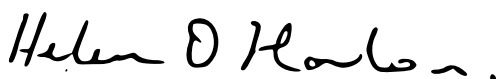
As we look ahead to the future, we remain committed to our mission of supporting and empowering young people to reach their full potential. We recognise the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead and are dedicated to continuing our work in collaboration with our volunteers, partners, and stakeholders.

In closing, we express our sincere gratitude to everyone who has contributed to the success of Clonmore Youth Club over the past year. Your support, dedication, and enthusiasm inspire us to continue striving for excellence in everything we do. Together, we can create a brighter future for the young people of Clonmore and beyond.

Signed:

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Conor Forker Current'.

Conor Forker Current  
Chairperson

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Helen O'Hanlon'.

Helen O'Hanlon  
Chairperson for the 2022-  
23 period