



## **January – December 2023 Trustee Annual Report**

**Charity number: 101685**

The trustees of Dromore Youth for Christ are pleased to submit their report and accounts for the period of 1st January - 31st December 2023.

### **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

Dromore Youth for Christ otherwise known as 'The Base' is a youth organisation based in Dromore that works with children and young people aged 10-25years of age. DYFC seeks to demonstrate Gods love to young people, transforming their lives and inspiring them to follow Him.

We continue deliver high quality youth work programmes and activities tailored to meet the needs that young people are presenting. We work out of a youth centre running various programmes but also in local schools, the streets through detached outreach work and the wider community. We also find great support in working alongside local Churches in Dromore to ensure we have a joined-up approach to serving the Dromore community and encouraging young people to connect to their local Churches in the long-term.

Our vision is that young people from all backgrounds are part of a community of people who value them, respect them, empower, educate and support them in whatever life puts before them. Our hope is that they will encounter Jesus, grow to be like Him and become the best that they can be. The charity's beneficiaries are young people on the margins of Dromore's community, churches, volunteers, staff, parents, schools and partner organisations.

### **ACHIEVEMENTS, PERFORMANCE AND PUBLIC BENEFIT**

#### **Centre based**

In 2023, The Base had 112 registered young people aged 11-18 years. This is the main aspect of our work to create a safe, inclusive and enjoyable environment where young people can choose to socialise in drop-in programmes or participate in personal development programmes- all the work we do is voluntary with young people and we try to base our programmes and activities on the needs arising and expressed by the young people themselves. Programmes we run and the achievements we found were as follows;

#### **Junior drop-in**

Junior drop-in is a social space for young people aged 11-14 years to come together for 2hours a week to spend time socialising with peers and hopefully meet new friends. The centre has a wealth of resources they can choose to use along with various activities staff and volunteers will facilitate throughout the evening such as games, baking, art, music, sport or competitions.

Through the year we seen young people who started attending who struggled with social anxiety or isolation find new friends, others grew in self-confidence and worth. Young people who at the start of the year, wouldn't participate in activities because they felt too self-conscious, giving it a go by the end. We seen lots of conflict amongst friendship groups and changes in group dynamics and yet we were able to help them overcome conflict or manage relationships moving forward. We seen natural leaders rise up in the group and help leaders in facilitating activities and others try new activities for the first time and finding new hobbies and interests. It's been a very positive year for juniors and great knowing they have benefitted from all that has happened but also heard the word of God and how much He loves them. How they can be in relationship with them and prayed with them.

#### Senior drop-in

Senior drop-in is then the social space for those 14-18 years. This age group in 2023 has experienced a lot of change in recent years and it is reflected in this programme. Numbers have decreased, young people are less familiar with youth work activities and the purpose of what we do. So, there has been a lot of rebuilding foundations, establishing who we are and what we do. This although challenging at times, has also been really exciting to see young people respond well by the end of 2023. It will take time to rebuild this age group but we appreciate the journey they have been on and we as an organisation need to still actively try and be a consistent presence for them that when they want to engage- we are here. We have elected five of the core members of this age group to become junior leaders in the centre to work with the younger age group, which has been really exciting and lots of other senior young people wanting to progress a similar route. Building trust and rapport with the young people at drop-in has been vital and we are seeing the connections and relationships starting to strengthen.

#### Hype personal development group

We were really aware in 2022 that we had such an increase in young people wanting to sign up for mentoring due to various issues in their lives, but at the time we didn't have the resources to undertake such a service. We then decided to run a junior personal development group (11-14years) to provide support into a lot of the issues the young people voiced they were facing, particularly around mental health. A core group of fifteen young people regularly attending for six months and engaged in group work activities exploring various issues and concerns.

This was a really positive group who very quickly formed good friendships, trust amongst each other and allowed themselves to open up about some of the challenges they were facing. We explored coping mechanisms, emotions, self-esteem, conflict, resilience and many other topics through fun, interactive and creative activities both individually and in groups. A particular highlight was each week taking time to consider what does the bible say about the various topics we explored and reflecting on God's word together, praying to close the session. This programme was a real success with young people self-worth improving, young people becoming more confident in their identity, values, beliefs and finding their voice to express what they need or how they are feeling to ask for support.

### Senior girls' group

This programme was for the girls in the senior section aged 14-18 years who would like to come into the centre one afternoon a week to explore some of the issues they might be facing in their lives but also to grow the sense of community amongst the girls as there has been a lot of conflict amongst them over the years. A group of six responded and regularly attended for the first six months of 2023 which was a lovely time with them to help develop positive relationships, hear what their needs are and develop their support network. We spent a lot of the programme exploring friendships, friendship conflict, relationships, family dynamics and self-worth. Again, all done through creative and interactive activities, along with many good discussions and at times debates. The growth in this group was so significant and had a positive knock-on effect on senior drop-in as we seen more openness, willingness to chat to those beyond our normal friendship groups and seeking out support in the leaders.

### Mentoring

At the end of 2022, 27 young people signed up for mentoring from the centre. This although encouraging was a challenge as we didn't have the resources to fulfil the needs presented. In January-June 23, the Centre Coordinator mentored as many of the young people as possible. However, we were fortunate to seek out and be awarded funding that allowed us to train any of our volunteers over eighteen that wanted to become mentors, purchase resources and equipment and open the building additional hours to undertake mentoring more of the young people. We were able to offer young people six weeks initially, of one hour a week to have a listening ear (being very clear this isn't counselling). This was a real success that will continue into 2024 but we have really valued spending time supporting young people with various issues in their lives but also signposting those who we felt needed additional support to various services too such as CAHMS, counselling, GP's or specific organisations specialising in eating disorders, drug dependency etc.

### T:BUC community relations programme

This was a new venture for DYFC in the final term of 2023, for completion in 2024. T:BUC is an Education Authority funded programme encouraging young people to engage in community relations work. We had 22, 12-14-year-olds undertake this six-month programme exploring their identity, the values and beliefs of themselves and others, whilst appreciating difference doesn't have to cause conflict- rather we should celebrate diversity in our communities and cultures. We had a really strong start to this programme in 2023 with the young people really enjoying participating in a new deeper level of group work and they thrived. As part of the programme not only did they complete workshops around issues such as Northern Ireland's history, cultures within N.I, conflict, team work and effective communication but they got lots of fun trips and a residential in November to Ganaway Activity Centre which was a real highlight.

### School's work

Schools work is a vital extension to the work we do in the centre as it allows us a lot of initial contact with new young people but also to be a presence in such a significant part of the young peoples lives who are members in the centre to provide support. We work in two schools in Dromore, one primary and one post-primary;

JUMP is a Christian club within the school for children P4-7 on a Friday afternoon when school finishes. This is an amazing space for around 100-120 pupils to learn more about

God, hear stories, learn memory verses, worship together, alongside lots of fun and games. We have loved being a part of this and it has really helped spending time with P7's particularly as they start to transition into our centre-based programmes.

Lunchtime detached is one of the programmes we do in Dromore High school where once a week staff are a visible presence at lunchtimes in the school by walking around and chatting to young people in the school canteen, play grounds or youth wing etc. This is an opportunity to provide support to those we know already and check in how their day is going, but also to engage new young people by sharing opportunities of local youth provision and support. This has been great for building rapport with staff also and seeking out new opportunities to provide the school support moving forward.

Princes Trust was a programme we were invited to be a part of in Dromore High. Pupils in year 11 had an element of their course where they could learn about a local charity and invest sometime volunteering to help that charity out- so when we were asked to participate, we were very thankful. The pupils undertook various presentations from ourselves about the work we do, the background, history and day to day running. They then invest three weeks of their course to come to the centre and provide us with practical support and help around the centre undertaking jobs such as cleaning, sorting, art projects, making gifts for the young people or stock taking the tuck shop. This was a great experience and one we hope to repeat in the future.

#### Detached outreach

Training was undertaken by those in the volunteer team who were interested in trying this type of work where we walk around the streets of Dromore to engage young people where they are choosing to socialise. This could be the Square, outside shops, local parks etc but we would be trained and equipped as a team to effectively approach them and engage in conversation to provide support, signpost them to local youth provision and develop positive relationships. The first two terms of 2023 we were able to undertake some detached outreach sessions, before school promoting the new programmes we were starting, as well as evenings and particularly band parade nights- ensuring the personal safety of young people.

#### Volunteer & Training

The volunteer team of The Base has also experienced a lot of change. We have seen a lot of new faces join the team and unfortunately said goodbye to others, after years of faithful service. We are so thankful for the skilled, committed and hardworking volunteers we have that invest so much time and energy into helping us deliver all the programmes and activities we do. We have ensured that team meetings have been regular to take time to reflect, grow and develop our practice. As well as offered various training opportunities such as ensuring everyone is trained or refreshed in their Child Protection training, detached outreach training, mentoring training etc. We constantly want to strive to ensure our practice is at a high standard, everyone feels equipped and empowered to fulfil their roles and that a safe environment is created for all those who attend.

## **FINANCIAL REVIEW**

(Michael will insert a paragraph here based on the audited accounts for 2023 when provided)

## **TRUSTEE'S IN 2023**

Under the requirements of DYFC's constitution Trustee's are elected to serve only until the next Annual General Meeting at which they are then eligible for re-election with no maximum term time. The Trustee's within 2023 were as follows;

Rob Masters (Chair of board)  
Lynn Bradfield (Treasurer): Resigned December 2023  
Stephen Kelso (Secretary): Resigned December 2023  
Wendy Tate: Resigned March 2023  
Lynn McFarland: Resigned June 2023  
Bethany McClune  
John Wilkinson  
Michael Masters: Appointed 2023

## **GOVERNING DOCUMENT AND CONSTITUTION**

The charity is governed by trustee's who have written and regularly review the constitution of Dromore Youth For Christ to ensure it is relevant, up to date and cohered to, on an ongoing basis. The current constitution come into effect on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2014 and is due for full review in November 2024 by the Trustee's. The Board of Trustee's meet on a monthly basis and at least ten times a year at the premises to govern, review and develop good practice along with the Centre Coordinator.

Dromore YFC's Trustee's have complied with the duty to have due regard to the guidance issued by the Commission under section 4(b) of the Charities Act. Details of how the main activities within and through The Base, DYFC are outlined in 'Achievements, Performances and Public Benefit' above. The Trustees have given careful consideration that the work undertaken in 2023 that it all fulfils that of DYFC's aims, objectives and purpose outlined in our constitution.

**Proposed by:** John Wilkinson

**Seconded by:** Anna Kissick (Secretary)

Approved and adopted by a meeting of the Board of Trustees on 05/08/2024 and signed on their behalf:

\_\_\_ *R. Masters* \_\_\_\_\_

(Chairperson)