

Omagh Youth & Community Trustees' Report

April 1st 2022 – March 31st 2023

The Station Centre is built on the site of Omagh Railway Station which served all of Omagh's citizens and was an important link to the outside world of opportunity and challenge. Symbolically, Omagh Youth and Community Trust sees all those who enter the building as being on a journey of personal development and realisation. They are not asked where they come from but the aspiration is that all those who seek help reach a destination of self-worth and self-realisation which will be positive for themselves and for society locally.

The activities of all groups (outlined in bold headings below) have availed of The Station Centre facilities this year and are in conformity with the stated aims of the constitution as italicized above and address the following themes- education, physical and mental health, community and social issues and sport which spans all ages from youth to mature adulthood.

The objectives and purposes of Omagh Youth and Community Trust are *to provide facilities for the benefit of the community of Omagh, regardless of religion, politics, age, sex, race or creed, for the purpose of advancing and improving intercommunity relations in social, personal, sporting, commercial, industrial and all other aspects of community development and to engage in cross-community projects to enhance and provide both educational and social understanding as between different groups identified under all of the above and to incorporate all such groups within the community.*

Omagh Boys & Girls Club

Omagh Youth and Community Trust at The Station Centre facilitates the work of Omagh Boys and Girls Club which is the only full time voluntary youth organisation in the Fermanagh Omagh District Council region. Affiliated to the Education Authority for purposes of bona fide registration as a voluntary youth organisation, Omagh Boys and Girls Club has been delivering youth programmes to young people for seventy years, having been founded in 1952.

Priority programme themes of work are prepared taking into account governance, research data and local authorised research into the needs of young people and the community social and economic profile. The four key primary areas identified for focus with young people are raising standards for all, closing the performance gap, developing the non-educational workforce and improving the non-formal learning environment.

The following range of activities delivered embraces these objectives – engagement with local stakeholders of young people, parents and the community; celebration events with young people; implementation of a quality assurance framework system to ensure effective delivery of this service; delivery of a summer programme, outreach sessions, generic youth activities through arts and crafts, dance, junior club, boxing, football, netball, karate, recruitment and training through accredited courses for volunteers, delivery of participative structures organising committee skills training for senior and junior members to undertake representation of members interests and gain experience in positions of responsibility by engaging in social action projects. The social action project of particular significance this year was the launch of the Mental Health Leaflet, which was twenty weeks in the making for the senior committee (aged 14-18 years old) in their researching, preparing and organising for a public launch with local stakeholders. This leaflet had practical tips, information, guidance and coping strategies for young people in dealing with mental health issues. The launch was attended by representatives from local schools, parents, local District Councillors, EA Youth Service personnel, youth clubs and young people. A note of commendation for this work was acknowledged at the meeting of Fermanagh Omagh District Council and communicated to the club from the Chief Executive.

Much of the work with young people is underpinned by the concept of CRED which is about promoting better relationships between people from different political, religious, and racial backgrounds, tackling sectarianism and racism and promoting cultural diversity and inclusion. Twenty young people (55% Catholic and 45% Protestant) registered for TBUC and have completed an OCN in Good Relations and Diversity Level 1. There was also a full programme of activities involving cultural awareness training and including trips out for fun and informative trips to murals and places of interest for both communities. Good Relations seeks to promote mutual understanding, positive cross-community relations and respect for cultural traditions. The Good Relations strategy in Northern Ireland is about instilling the values of fairness, equality and respect and improving the quality of life for everyone who lives here.

The EA Youth Service undertakes four moderation visits per annum to make an assessment on the standard of delivery of the different aspects of the themes of work and governance. The overall assessment recorded by the Education Authority Youth Officers of these visits were, 'outstanding' classification on three occasions and a 'good' classification in the other.

The beneficial outcomes of these youth work programmes for young people have been particularly effective in the aftermath of the Covid 19 pandemic and with the cost of living crisis. Having the opportunity also to participate in the wide variety of sports options (through the participation theme activities) was so vital for young people's mental and physical well-being. There is a mountain of evidence showing the benefits that sport and physical activity can have for young people's physical and mental health. Children and young people who are active for the recommended sixty minutes or more per day are less likely to be overweight in childhood and suffer from long term health conditions in adulthood. Research by Sports England shows that the more active a young person is, the happier they are and less likely to experience loneliness. They are also more likely to show character traits of resilience. Research by the Youth Sport Trust found that two thirds of school children said being active helped them learn, while three quarters of teachers said it improved pupils' academic progress.

Other outcomes identified for young people have been a development of their thinking, life and work skills. A safe space in our youth club environment is provided for their active involvement in activities, where they feel valued and their achievements are recognized. There is an enhancement in their personal capabilities, particularly greater awareness and development of leadership skills, confidence and self-esteem and a development of positive inter-peer relationships. This personal, social and educational development has resulted in young people taking responsibility, becoming engaged in active citizenship projects which promote volunteerism, inter-community and inter-generational relations and greater understanding of others' lives whilst their awareness of threats to them through drugs and alcohol awareness courses has informed them of risk-taking behaviour. With such adult guidance and leadership these young people are on a continuing journey through participation in the range of programmes available to acquire the key transferable skills, so essential in the adolescent transition to adulthood and the world of work e.g. problem solving, creativity, using one's own initiative, taking responsibility, perseverance, working as part of team, showing empathy and communication with others. These authenticated skills are recorded by young people and are used as evidence of their achievements when making application for part time and for full-time posts in addition to using as testimonials for university applications.

Rainbow Community Playgroup

Rainbow Community Playgroup facilities enable the playschool education of children from 2 ½ - 4 years of age. These children are given a stimulating environment to develop their learning and social skills. This provides important preparation to help the children adapt to the demands of starting school at five. It also benefits the parents by way of easing the pressure of trying to cope with the

world of paid work or unpaid work at home. This social and educational environment benefits the children by way of coming together from their different religious and ethnic backgrounds to share a common goal of learning. Research shows that when different groups come together to share a common goal, prejudice is reduced. This is a very important building block for creating a fair and just society. The Rainbow Playgroup was founded by Omagh Boys & Girls Club in 1985 and has grown in strength over those years.

Omagh Gateway Club

This club is organised entirely by volunteers who co-ordinate a weekly programme of activities throughout the year for adults with learning and physical disabilities. Omagh Gateway Club promotes the social inclusion of people with a learning disability in their local area, ensure they have equality of opportunity in accessing social and leisure opportunities in the right environment with the right support. The Gateway Club aims to increase public awareness and understanding of the abilities of people with a learning disability, their problems and needs and those of their family, dependents and carers in order to assist their integration into society.

Five Star Learning Disability Group

5 Star Group is a safe social outlet for over 25's with a learning disability from Omagh and the surrounding area.

Sperrin Arts Society

A local group of artists of mature age meet monthly to give expression to their love for painting and which is positive for their wellbeing.

Youth Action Northern Ireland

Youth Action Northern Ireland is a leading youth work charity. Youth Action NI has successfully strived for 75 years to make a significant difference to the lives of young people and their communities by providing unique, life changing opportunities. They inspire young people to find their true potential and excel in areas such as political activism, performing arts, youth work, education, business, technology and international affairs. Youth Action NI is highly respected and endorsed by Government departments, political and civic leaders, education establishments, corporate business, local communities, the arts industry and mental health organisations

Young Enterprise through Loreto

Young Enterprise Northern Ireland recognises that the world in which our young people will live and work is ever-changing and they continually develop their programme offering to ensure that young people who attend from Loreto acquire the skills they will need to become enterprising, creative and commercially aware. These skills are the very foundations of our future economy, and the Northern Ireland Executive has acknowledged the value of enterprise education as part of its economic strategy through the implementation of the revised curriculum.

Adult Learning Disability group

Co-ordinated through the Western Health and Social Care Trust the ALD group ran a successful summer scheme for adults with learning disabilities where activities included a music matters group session, exercise / dance classes, a drum workshop and a variety of stimulating activities on a weekly basis.

Little Mess Tyrone

The Little Sensory Co is an exciting, multi-sensory experience for children, comprising of Little Glow, Little Massage, Little Yoga, Little Mess and Little Nature. Owner and Director Roxanne is a mum of two who aims to provide the very best sensory experiences for little ones.

Messy Play - There's nothing better than watching young ones having gloriously splatty, squelchy, squishy, messy fun. That's just one of the many reasons why parents find Little Mess events so much fun. Parents have shared that they love to watch their little ones crawl off into a new adventure, even if they are often a little shy elsewhere. It's all about exploring the touch and feel of their world and enjoying such sensory experiences in a secure and welcoming local environment.

Local Schools - Loreto Grammar School / Cumann na Bunscoil / CBS / St Conor's PS / Holy Family PS

These local schools use the facilities for indoor sports activities and interschools tournaments for soccer, gaelic football, hurling, netball and badminton. The spacious social area and dance/arts room accommodates the more reflective pastoral programmes and young enterprise seminars for the post primary schools. The Station Centre venue is an ideal central location to host events which involves other schools travelling from beyond the Omagh area and particularly for local schools having easy access to such a suitable premises in the town. All these activities are beneficial for young people's physical and emotional wellbeing and educational development.

Slimming World

The general public appreciate the easy town access to this facility which informs them of the benefits of dieting, healthy eating and exercise.

Slimming World is the most advanced slimming organisation in the UK. It was founded by Margaret Miles-Bramwell in 1969 and who remains the driving force behind the company to this day. With the experience of a lifetime's weight problem, it is her enthusiasm and unique vision that has made the company so successful.

There are now over 16,000 groups held weekly on a nationwide basis via a network of more than 4,500 Slimming World trained consultants. They welcome 900,000 members to their groups weekly.

Unislim

The Unislim story began 47 years ago in a small parish hall room back in 1972 to today having over 300 classes, in towns in every corner of the country. Making things happen is what they do. At Unislim, members find the helping hand they need. The motivation and support from our amazing leaders.

Food is just one piece of the puzzle. Taking care of nutrition, mind and fitness are the pillars of everything Unislim does. Nutritious food feeds the brain and revitalises the body. They all work in tandem. They all work for you.

Zumba

Zumba is a fitness programme that involves cardio and Latin-inspired dance. It was founded by Colombian dancer and choreographer Beto Pérez in 2001, and by 2012, it called itself the largest international branded fitness programme in the world. Local people attend the Zumba class on a Tuesday night here using the social area which enhances the atmospheric and energetic spirit of Zumba.

ARC HEALTHY LIVING CENTRE

The award winning ARC Healthy Living Centre, Irvinestown aims to improve the well-being of local people by bringing together a partnership of community health activities and services.

ARC has been nationally recognised as benefitting people and planet.

Consistently since 2009 ARC has been successful in satisfying key criteria to be awarded the Social Enterprise Mark, which identifies them as a trading centre for social and environmental purposes.

ARC provides shared space, basing a range of health and well-being services within the Centre. The ARC actively promotes community participation and volunteering – services are run for local people, by local people.

The Marmot Review into health inequalities, published in February 2010, draws further attention to the evidence that most people are not living as long as the best off in society, and spend longer in ill health, premature illness and death affects everyone below the top. One of the reports key contentions is that positive health outcomes are significantly more influenced by social determinants than clinical determinants; indeed, that our health is 70% driven by social determinants and only 30% by clinical factors.

Cedar Foundation – Parent Support Group

Parent Support Group – Cedar delivers a range of services that enable people with disabilities to get the most out of life and to be fully included in their communities. These services are centred around the individual needs of each person and are delivered throughout Northern Ireland. The vision is an inclusive society for all. Their mission is to support individuals and families with disability, autism and brain injury to live the life they choose.

Youth Justice

The Youth Justice Services directorate delivers a cohesive and integrated approach for young people, their families, communities and victims via five area teams spread across the province, and each team provides a full range of Agency services within their region.

Women's Aid

Women's Aid is the lead voluntary organisation in Northern Ireland addressing domestic abuse and providing services for women and children. The Women's Aid movement in Northern Ireland began in 1975 and is made up of eight local Women's Aid groups and Women's Aid Federation. Each Women's Aid group offers a range of specialist services to women, children and young people who have experienced domestic abuse. They are all members of Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland. Women's Aid exists to challenge attitudes, structures and systems which perpetuate domestic abuse. They seek through their work to enable women, children and young people to live free from violence and abuse.

Three Rivers Community Choir

This cross-community choir of adults from the local area meet weekly to practice for performances they give throughout the year for charitable purposes. This is a popular musical experience for participants enabling them to socialise and share their love of song to entertain whilst raising funds to help benefit others.

This new Community Choir is the brainchild of Brendan McCarthy who had the vision is to create a Cross Community Choir from individuals from Omagh.

Ladies Probus'

This is an association of retired business people in localised clubs throughout the world. The word PROBUS is an abbreviation of the words PROfessional and BUSiness. However, membership is not restricted to these groups and any person who has had a measure of responsibility in any field may join. The basic purpose of a Probus Club is to provide regular gatherings of people, who, in retirement, appreciate and value opportunities to meet others in similar circumstances and of similar interest.

Core NI

This organisation promotes healthy active lifestyles and sporting performance for people of all ages and abilities offering a number of fantastic programmes to encourage as many people as possible to become more active, have fun and ultimately develop life-changing habits to improve health and well-being. Positive experiences of fun physical activity and overall well-being help guide children towards lifelong healthy active lifestyles. Core NI believes each child should progress at their own ability and, therefore, everyone is able to participate in a CORE Kid's class. During each class they also include kids' yoga, guided meditation and gratitude practices. Research shows that children can gain enormous benefits from practising yoga and meditation from an early age such as improved flexibility, increased body awareness, enhanced core strength, improved concentration, better coordination, calmness and relaxation.

Indoor Soccer Groups

Adult men, 18-60, participate in weekly soccer keep fit activity. These men do not participate in local IFA affiliated teams. They are casual users for regular weekly exercise which is positive for their physical and emotional well-being.

Omagh Thunder Basketball Club

Omagh Thunder is the only basketball club in the Omagh region to provide this opportunity to play basketball and it is transparently cross-community and its membership reflects many newcomers from the different ethnic communities. The Station Centre is the home of basketball in Omagh. This has been their most successful season with promotion gained to the premier league of Basketball NI and winning the NI Basketball Plate final against North Star Warriors.

Tyrone GAA/ Tyrone Hurling/ Tyrone Boxing

These local sporting organisations use the facilities of The Station Centre to hold training sessions in the winter months.

Omagh Ladies Netball

This local ladies netball club use the Sports Hall facilities to practice and hold games.

Basketball Filipino Community

The Station Centre has become home to a vibrant Filipino community in Omagh for their social and recreational activity of basketball with up to 30 strong in attendance every Saturday and where they enjoy their passion for Basketball.

Breastfeeding Group

Co-ordinated by the Western Health & Social Care Trust - this weekly group meet up on a Tuesday morning where trust staff facilitate support for young mothers in the Social Area every Tuesday 10.00am-11.30am.

West Tyrone Feis

This was their first year back after the Covid pandemic. The Station Centre was full of colour from art work entries representing all the local schools. The centre was a hub for all these creative pieces over the period of a month which were to be judged with entrants returning to pick up their pieces of work.

Colmcille Club

When their usual accommodation was unavailable for this local pensioners club of 30 members which meets every two weeks, they approached us to see if The Station Centre would host their programme. They thoroughly enjoyed the spacious facilities for a month until their premises were ready for their return.

Christmas Party Senior Citizens

The young people from Omagh Boys & Girls Club delivered a unique experience for fifty local senior citizens through their "Heat and Eat Project" whereby they decided, in view of the costs of living crisis and being the first time for senior citizens to venture out publicly after the covid pandemic, to raise funds to buy warm throw blankets for these pensioners and then provide them with a hot meal, the food being prepared by the Sacred Heart School canteen. Then the young people organised young musicians from all the local secondary schools to attend and so the entire experience was a tremendous inter-generational occasion which was very much appreciated by the pensioners.