



ST JOHN BOSCO YOUTH
CENTRE



Working With The Local Community for Over 50
years



HISTORY



St John Bosco Youth Centre has been in its present premises since October 1973, which makes our building 50 years old this year, however we have been providing youth services to the young people of Newry, Mourne and Down from the Early 1940s.

The building was funded and built by the people of Newry Parish and in years gone by there would have been a chaplain etc, however in recent years, we have moved away from the title, St John Bosco Youth Centre and used Bosco Youth Centre to ensure that young people from all communities feel welcome.

The Bosco began as a boxing club for boys only, girls were only allowed on the premises if they were catering and taking part in “Guest Teas” which were fundraisers for the youth centre. When the new premises were built, the centre became more open to all young people, however the boys and girls were never allowed to mix and there were only single sex nights.

ETHOS

The ethos of Bosco Youth Centre is to make all young people feel included and involved. We carry an open door policy which encourages the participation of young people regardless of colour, creed, ability or sexual orientation.



INTERGENERATIONAL PROGRAMME

During our family programmes we really enjoyed watching the interaction between the young people and some of the adults involved. We discussed with the young people the idea of running a programme with senior citizens and young people and researched the funding for the programme. We were thrilled when Radius Housing along with Arbour Housing agreed to fund the programme.

The programme consisted of:

- Teambuilding games
- Cookery
- Trips to Panto and History of the Troubles According to My Da
- Well-being
- Fitness
- African Drumming
 - Art
- Residential to Belfast

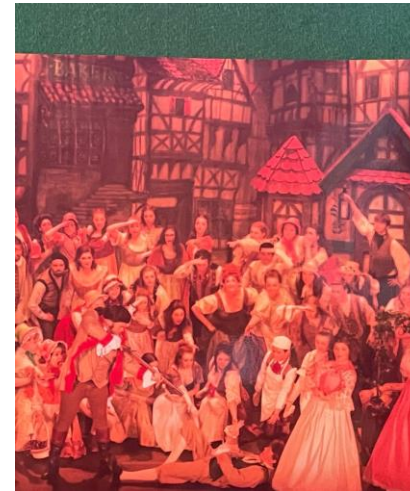


BOSCO DRAMA GROUP

Bosco Drama Group is an integral part of Bosco Youth Centre. The Drama Group is 25 years formed this November and we are planning great celebrations for the event. As mentioned in our ethos at the start of our presentation, Bosco is open to all young people regardless of colour, creed or sexuality. Our show this year was “Everyone is Talking About Jamie” and this embraces everything that Bosco is about. Jamie is a young man who is gay and wishes to become a Drag Queen and wear a dress to his school prom night. His best friend, Pritti, is a young woman who is Muslim. Both young people have experienced discrimination and the musical explored all the issues and how they were resolved.

Over the past 25 years we have supported many young LGBTQ+ members who during their formative years turn to musical theatre to express themselves and we pride ourselves as a safe space for young people during this time.

Our shows have been nominated for AIMS All Ireland Musical Awards and we have been placed every time. We are very proud of our Drama Group, we have seen over 4,000 young people registered over the 25 years (many of whom have gone on to Professional Musical or Teaching Careers) and played to audiences of over 25,000 people. Many of our members do not have the financial means to attend music, dance and drama lessons and Bosco Drama Group offers these at a minimal cost.





PERIOD POVERTY PROGRAMME

Many young women in Northern Ireland are living in Period Poverty due to lack of finance, accessibility to products and lack of knowledge of their own bodies.

Bosco Youth Centre is committed to ensure our young women are educated in relation to their own bodies and ensuring they have access to menstrual products.

The young women were all provided with period products including period pants and reusable pads. This was a fantastic opportunity for our young women.





DISABILITY BUDDYING PROGRAMME

Bosco Youth Centre has always had an open door policy for young people with disabilities who do not require one to one personal assistance. For many years we have had young people with additional needs such as ADHD, ASD, Down Syndrome etc.

Also until Covid hit, our full-time worker ran a day time life skills programme for young people with both physical and learning needs.

In April 2023 our young people participated in a Disability Buddying Programme which included an OCN in Disability Awareness, Makaton training and then a fun-filled programme for young people with and without additional needs including a residential to Todds Leap



SUMMER DIVERSIONARY PROGRAMMES



Annually we run a very popular Summer Scheme which in previous years would have seen almost 200 children daily. Sadly however due to budget cuts etc we have had to reduce the numbers of young people we can take to ensure sufficient staff/child ratio.

However we ensure that every summer, our young people have plenty of opportunities to go on trips, have fun in the centre and participate in training opportunities.

We also work closely with the PSNI and PCSP during the summer to provide diversionary programmes on 12th July and 8th August which are times of high tensions in Northern Ireland. We like to ensure that the PSNI Neighbourhood teams are familiar to our young people and the PSNI have reported that the familiarity has had positive impacts in the local communities.



IPB PRIDE OF PLACE AWARD



Newry, Mourne and Down District Council nominated Bosco youth Centre as their nomination for the All Ireland Community Based Youth Lead Initiative Award in 2023. Dearbhla Caitriona, Paula and Bernadette were thrilled to attend the gala banquet in November 2023 and we were even more thrilled to win the All Ireland Award!!!!!!

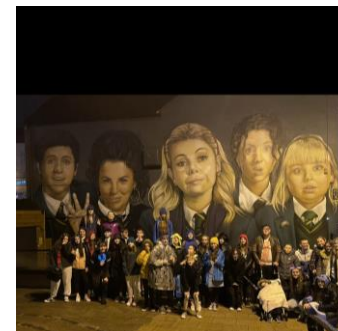


HALLOWEEN EVENTS

Another time of the year that is very important to Bosco is Halloween and we really enjoy creating opportunities for the young people to experience things differently. We generally try to attract funding in order for us to take the young people on a residential experience.

In the past few years we have taken the young people to Alton Towers, Derry and Downhill Beach.

Halloween is a time of year where young people can be attracted to anti-social behaviour and we enjoy creating alternative ways of celebrating.



FAMILY PROGRAMMES

In Bosco we love to work with our families as we feel it is so important to our young people to have a relationship with their parents or guardians.

We consult with our young parents and families on the topics that they wish to discuss. Generally this is a topic which parents might find difficult or embarrassing to talk about such as puberty, relationships, sexual health or drug/alcohol abuse.

We run these programmes in a fun and interactive way, include team games, trips to bowling alley, meals out and if funding permits, a parent and child residential.

These programmes give our parents an opportunity to take a bit of time out, generally with only one of their children and dedicate this time to that child.

YOUNG MUMS PROGRAMME

Through consultation with our local community we realised that our young mums, some of whom were past members of the youth centre were feeling quite isolated from their friendship groups after having their baby. They reported to us that they no longer felt that they had the same things in common with their friends, hadn't the same amount of spare cash and were unable to attend school or work and felt that they were missing out socially.

We set up a group for our young mums who were rather camera shy, where they were able to take their babies with them (or leave them at home) to participate in sessions once a week in the morning times.

The young women told us that they wanted fitness classes, cooking on a budget, skin care, sexual health advice and a night away.

We had such a fun programme which ended with a residential experience in the Carrickdale hotel, with time in the hot tub and a lovely meal.

SENIOR MEMBER TRAINING



Our senior members are a vital part of our youth centre and much of our work with younger members could not happen without the support of our senior members.

The senior members are trained annually in first aid and child protection issues. The current senior members have done their OCN in Youth Leadership, Disability Awareness and Stereotyping and Discrimination and are currently undertaking their OCN Level 2 in Anti-Racism.

It is the role of senior members to consult with younger members and feed back to the staff and Management on a termly basis.



OCN LEVEL 2 in RELATIONSHIPS & SEXUAL HEALTH

Bosco Youth Centre currently has 27 young people registered and participating in an OCN Level 2 in Relationships and Sexual Health training.

We have had workshops with Aodhan from Common Youth, a residential in TiChulainn where we spent time on the Dating Detox programme delivered by Bosco Staff and we are continuing to work on our OCN booklets.

RESIDENTIALS & TRIPS AWAY



Residential and trips away are one of the favourite things that our young people like to be involved in and act as a great reward for participating in a programme or assisting the staff. We have been lucky in past few years to have had a number of opportunities to go to:

- London
- Lourdes
- Derry
- Belfast
- Westport
- Greenhill YMCA
- Ti Chulainn





CHALLENGES WE FACE

- Ever changing needs of our young people and families
 - Poverty and cost of living crisis
 - Educational under attainment
- Lack of employment opportunities for our young people
 - Funding cuts
- Boiler system costing £21,000 needing replaced
- Fire doors and windows needing replaced

