



# Annual Report 2020-2021

1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021

## **Foreword by Sue Adams, Chair**

### **Introduction**

Welcome to our review of 2020/21. The following is a snapshot of the work Gateshead Youth Council has been involved in this past year but doesn't truly show the skills and experiences we have had, so, at the end of this report, we have written a little about the skills we develop and the added value of being a member of GYC. This is basically the 'So what?' question. Why is GYC important and relevant to Young People in Gateshead today?

Of course 2020/21 has been a unique experience, Covid-19 changed many of our plans, changed how we work and made us think of new ways to deliver our projects. We have laughed, cried and set the world to rights this year! We marvelled at the resilience at the young people around us (on zoom obviously) and wondered what on earth was going to happen next. We shopped for neighbours, friends and made sure that we checked on those people who we isolating or isolated.

### **April-September 2020**

And in March - the world changed.

Lockdown began, schools closed - we closed because we had to. We did however make sure that we tried to stay accessible. GYC tried to put a positive post on Facebook and any other media outlet we felt could and would be accessed. Let's face it - everyone needed a bit of positivity. GYC ticked over - as did the rest of the world- to try and do what we could - safely. The trustees had zoom meetings to continue with the day to day running as and when necessary. Valerie zoomed and zoomed with GYA being that very important contact and continuity for the Young People who were really facing the unknown, as we all were. Support was given for missed Proms, GCSEs never taken - huge parts of life and expectations suddenly denied. We delivered our IMPACT course to two cohorts of young people, online and while this was challenging, it showed what young people can still achieve sat at home in front of the laptop!

Look how much you've  
already managed to  
adapt to. Look how  
resilient you've already  
been. There's no "right"  
way to respond to this  
because it's never, ever  
happened before. Give  
yourself some credit. ☆  
There's no one in the  
whole world who has  
this figured out yet.  
So it's absolutely okay  
if you don't either ♡  
mellow doodles

It's the  
unexpected  
that changes  
our lives.

**Tiny Happy Things:**

- Sunshine through the window
- Singing along with the radio
- The first sip of coffee
- Talking to animals
- Starting a book and realizing you love it
- Fluffy blankets just out of the dryer
- A text from a friend
- New pens
- When someone loves the same nerdy thing as you
- Late night snacks
- Split second gratitude



- Nanea Hoffman

**October** is often an odd month for us; the current years GYC is over and the new year hasn't quite started. We like to stay busy at GYC, so October 2020 was filled with planning the next year remotely. We didn't do the usual training weekend for GYA so they had to re-write the training plan, devise the exercises and deliver some of the sessions, which were delivered over Zoom across the whole year. Each GYA year is a complete group of equal members. Schools elect or nominate young people to join GYA or young people can come along as independent delegates, we don't mind, as long as people come along. This year though, our usual recruitment couldn't take place so we decided to hammer the publicity on social media and in school, and hope that people joined.... which they did.



**November** sees our regular commitment to Remembrance Day and Sophie and Freya, our joint chairs of GYA read 'In Flanders Fields' at Gateshead Civic Centre and were filmed, which was then edited into Gateshead's online Remembrance film. We then went to the Cenotaph to lay wreaths from Gateshead Youth Assembly and Gateshead Youth Council. Whether you agree with war or not, we believe that commemoration and thanks should be given to those who died to allow us those choices.



**December** saw us raise funds and donate Christmas food, selection boxes etc to Peace of Mind, a group who support asylum seeking families, we feel very strongly that we should support people in need, and we have over the past few years developed strong links and great friendships with Peace of Mind and the families they support. We have supported Peace of Mind at Christmas, Easter and both Eids for a number of years. If you would like to know more about Peace of Mind and their work, let us know and we will make connections.



**January 2021** is when we started to think this lockdown malarkey wasn't going to go away anytime soon so we started to ramp up the personal development sessions online. All of our members were sent workbooks and session guides for the IMPACT course we were able to deliver due to funding given by Tyne and Wear **Community Foundation** and asked to complete them while on zoom with us, or in their own time if that suited them better.

- I - Improve mental health and well being
- M - Motivate young people to develop work and life skills
- P - Progress - and recognise that progress
- A - Aspire, to develop ambitious aspirations through social action and citizenship
- C - Change, your mind-set (mental health) and your world view
- T - Thrive, in terms of self-confidence and develop resilience

We also welcomed former GYC Chair Lucy Adams to deliver a workshop on Holocaust Memorial Day, we have done this for a few years now, and while it is interesting and valuable, it never gets any less harrowing - which is the point!



**February and March** saw GYA create and start publishing their Happiness Bulletins which we shared on our GYC Facebook page - just to keep in touch. This idea was shamelessly copied from an idea from Newcastle Sixth Form students who started to write a regular newsletter to cheer up their tutors during lockdown but with the world being the way it was - we didn't think they'd mind. We thought it was a



cracking idea so pinched it! GYA ended up publishing 16 editions from February until June. GYA received great feedback too, loads of people really liked receiving it and one friend of GYC even sent it over to her Aunt in Australia, who printed it out and read it every week to her friends at church! If you know of a more distant Happiness Bulletin reader - please let us know!

16th February 2021



## HAPPINESS BULLETIN

By the members of Gateshead Youth Assembly

### In this issue:

- Book, film and TV recommendations
- Poetry corner
- Fun Fact
- Riddle of the Week
- Serious Fact
- Weekly wellbeing challenge
- Inspirational Quote
- Easy recipe
- Daff jokes

### Welcome to our Happiness Bulletin

We are a little late to the Covid wellbeing party but, since our new 2020-2021 GYA started in November 2020, we have been getting used to a new way of working and, like everyone, we have found that things just take a little longer to get sorted when we can't meet face to face. We decided to produce these bulletins every week, just to try and make you smile. We hope you find something in it that helps lift your spirits, even just a little bit.

### Weekly Wellbeing Challenge

Week 1: Switch off from all technology for a few hours (longer if possible) to take time to focus on yourself without any distractions. - Etta

### Serious Fact of the Week:

The pattern of Yoda's speech from Star Wars is found in only 0.3% of the world's languages. This structure is called anastrophe, in which the normal order of the subject, verb, object is changed. - Lewis

### Book recommendation

I am Malala by Malala Yousafzai

I am Malala is an inspirational story of how one girl stood up for education and changed the world. She was shot in the head by a terrorist group and this is her story. I would recommend this book because it is inspirational and it shows how unfair, frightening and difficult life can be for a young girl whose country is ruled by the Taliban. One child, one teacher, one book, and one pen can change the world. - Hannah

### Riddle of the week

Can you name three consecutive days without using the words Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday? - Freya

16th February 2021



## HAPPINESS BULLETIN

By the members of Gateshead Youth Assembly

LET YOUR SMILE  
CHANGE THE  
WORLD  
BUT DON'T LET THE  
WORLD CHANGE  
YOUR SMILE

Do you want to know more about GYA? Then contact Valerie valeri-eender@gateshead.gov.uk

Easy pancake recipe—because pancakes are NOT just for Shrove Tuesday! - Ruby

1 cup of SR flour

1 cup of milk

1 egg

Pinch of salt

Mix it all together and fry for one minute each side in a frying pan with a little bit of oil or butter, until golden brown.

Add chocolate spread, lemon and sugar, maple syrup or anything else you like.

Jokes - Kaelan

What's the best thing about Switzerland?

I don't know, but the flag is a big plus.



Fun Fact—trees can make friends and talk to each other through their root system.—Lisa



Looking for something new to watch or read? Here are a few recommendations from me. Sam

**Book-** The Hunger Games trilogy as it is a great mix of action, politics, drama and some other bits mixed in to make one of the biggest cultural phenomena of the past century.

**TV-** Doctor Who. Where can you go wrong with a show like this? Normally villain of the week with 50+ years of episodes to dive into. Any Whovian will tell you to watch it and I would recommend you OBEY!

**Film-** The new Dragon Rider adaptation. Based on the books by Cornelia Funke, this brand new animated film is fun for the whole family.

Riddle of the week answer:

Today, Tomorrow, Yesterday!

## **OK, so what? You may well ask .....**

Well, apart from the benefits we make to the wider community in terms of poverty relief, intergenerational harmony and political awareness, we get involved with loads of projects and develop massively in terms of our personal and social skills.

We think Young People are given a rough ride and frankly, we don't deserve it. Young People are amazing individuals who, with support, encouragement and opportunity can achieve great things. The skills Young People develop while working on their projects are the soft skills that employers seek, the everyday things we often take for granted but aren't part of a school curriculum.

We did a little bit of brainstorming a while ago, and by little, we mean little, this was five minutes' worth. Imagine if we had more time?

### **What are the benefits to being involved in GYC?**

- Developing a 'can do' attitude.
- Learning to problem solve.
- Developing resilience.
- Learning and developing life skills.
- Developing political awareness.
- Starting to understand civic society.
- Developing civic responsibility.
- Learning about citizenship.
- Developing awareness of community ownership, leadership & responsibility.
- Increased self-esteem.
- Increased self-confidence.
- Developing critical thinking skills.
- Learning to recognise and challenge inequality and stereotypes.
- Experience of people from different social groupings.
- Learning to work with people from different groups to achieve common goals.
- Develop an awareness of others, their feelings, needs, qualities and limitations.
- Recognising and appreciating all of these differences.
- Developing empathy with others.
- Developing mindfulness about self and others.

- Practicing effective decision making.
- Learning to negotiate.
- Developing communication skills.
- Developing research skills.
- Developing skills in presenting self and ideas.
- Working with people in positions of power.
- Understanding power structures, how they can be a struggle to comprehend.
- Developing awareness of how power structures can affect self and others.

## **Funders**

Of course, we can't do any of this without the help and support of our wonderful funders. They are fantastic and we are so grateful for their support.

Our work in 2020/21 was funded by The Tyne and Wear Community Foundation; United Way and Costco; Alec Dickson Trust; Greggs and, crucially, The Key who enable us to access funds to deliver our projects by way of a skills framework which allows and enables us not only to develop skills and experience but also to map it, and track our developments.

## **Thank You's**

Thanks go to Gateshead Council for their support, particularly around staffing (Valerie), also to all of our members' parents and carers, Greggs for their generous donations of food, schools and organisations for accommodating GYC requests, Rachel for her help with our arts awards, all of the other organisations that we have worked with this year and those who support us with hugs and funding ideas!

Special thanks to the Board of GYC, particularly Sue, but also the rest of the Board, without whom, we just couldn't operate.

Thanks also to Valerie and Anthony Ender for creating birthday fundraisers again for us. It will pay for a residential!

But most of all, thank you to our fantastic members who turn up, week in, week out and deliver all of this!



