**Lurgan Town Project**

**Peace Camp 2014**

Summer 2014 was an eventful time for the Lurgan Town Project as 40 young people took off to Greenhill YMCA for the annual summer peace camp. This year the peace camp was driven by a youth steering group which was supported by YMCA Lurgan, Clann Eireann, SELB Youth Service Inclusion Unit and the Lurgan Town Providers forum.

The steering group had the opportunity to plan the programme, secure the venue, recruit participants, deliver key aspects of the peace camp programme and oversee the evaluation. They also had to meet with external agencies / facilitators to choose a range of suitable workshops which met the aims of the peace camp. This led to the PSNI Neighbourhood team, Lurgan joining us in Greenhill for Laser tag, high ropes as well as a question and answer session. A cultural music workshop was also facilitated by Stephen Heasley, which lifted the roof of Greenhill YMCA.

Over the 4 days the young people were involved in a number of reflection / evaluation activities below is what they had to say about their experience:

*What Young People had to Say:*

**Best Part of Residential;**

During the evaluation process the young people had the opportunity to have their say on all aspects of the peace camp. Most young people cited that the best thing overall was the opportunity to meet new people and build friendships with young people that they may not otherwise get the opportunity to.

The workshops delivered received very positive feedback. The young people felt they had the opportunity to learn about flags, cultures and religions particularly through the Flags, Music and Faith Matters workshops. The PSNI Workshop was also really well received and the young people highlighted that this gave them the opportunity to find out more about the police and the role of the neighbourhood team as well as get to know the police in a relaxed and fun environment.

Greenhill YMCA got great reviews from the young people with particular mention to the quality of the food, the good views of Newcastle and the comfy beds!! The outdoor activities were well received by young people with laser tagging and bouldering getting great reviews.

The steering group were highly commended; the young people stated that they were supportive, engaging, friendly and easy to get along with. One young person said “*The Steering group were fab. I got along with them so well and because they are near the same age as us it made it easier for us. I would really like to be part of the steering group next year”.*

When asked to describe the peace camp experience the young people gave a variety of answers which included; “*Unreal, Brilliant, exciting and upbeat, best residential ever, Adventure Friendship and opportunities”*

One Young Person summed up their experience saying;

*“I learnt that different people have different opinions on things, that friendship can happen out of the smallest of things and that there are a lot of differences between the catholic and protestant churches”.*

**Improvements:**

There were limited factors that young people would suggest for improvements for future opportunities. However what was suggested was to schedule more free time for young people to socialise throughout the duration of the programme. Some young people felt that the programme was quite intense and at times would have liked more time for themselves.

*Do’s and Don’ts for Next Year:*

As a result of the experience shared by all in the summer peace camp 2014 and considering the feedback received it is possible to make the following recommendations:

* Recruitment to start 1 month earlier with a target of 4 young people from each centre to be recruited.
* Information from community mapping to be presented by Steering Group members to Young Ambassadors group, Youth Providers, local council staff/councillors etc.
* Continue to involve the PSNI staff with one day of the general activities to help with developing relationships between young people and PSNI.
* Re-run the music workshop but continue to ensure sensitivity to message portrayed.
* Consider introducing at least 1 new issue based workshop for next year.
* The success of the camp to be shared across the Area.

*Thank You*

* The Lurgan Town Project would like to acknowledge the help of the following in assisting with the success of the peace camp;
* The Main Funder – Craigavon Borough Council, Peace III Programme and SELB CRED Enhancement Scheme for supporting the development of the Steering Group
* Brian Wilson who produced the logo which the Steering group designed
* Those who supported the role out of the issue based workshops in particular, Stephen Heasley for the delivery of the Music Workshop, Michael, Tina, Helen and Chris from Lurgan Neighbourhood PSNI, Colm and Timmy for the Faith Matters workshop.
* Paul Moorehead who produced a promotional DVD of the peace camp.
* Tesco Lurgan for provision of Goodie Bags for participants
* Saffron Lyness and Edel Foy for volunteering their time to support the delivery of the peace camp over the 4 days.
* Thanks also to staff and volunteers from Greenhill YMCA who supported us over the 4 days and allowed us to use the centre to create the ‘camp atmosphere’ that was crucial.

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