



Re- Evaluation for Investing in Children membership:

Gilesgate Youth Club

For the purpose of this evaluation I met with Katie, John, Liam, Daniel and Lauren who are members of Gilesgate Youth Club.

Gilesgate Youth Club continues to involve some young people in the decision making process, which allows developments and changes to the way in which the Youth Club staff operate their youth provision. Gilesgate Youth Club still opens on a Thursday evening, operating from Gilesgate Comprehensive School. The youth club continues to run a junior session from 5.30pm until 7.00pm and the senior session is from 7.00pm until 9.00pm, with programmes and activities that are based on what the young people who use the facilities want to do.

This report will highlight opportunities the young people have had, through dialogue, over the last year, to be active members of the community centre. It will identify any changes that have occurred over the last year based on what young people want to do within the Club.

Opportunities for Dialogue and Change.

Programme Planning.

There is an open dialogue meeting with all young people and staff about what young people want to do at the start of each term. This has been instrumental in changing some of the programmes on offer to young people. This is done through the ideas and decisions some young people make about what they want to do.

Liam explained, **“Lots of young people meet with Ann and ask about what we want to do”**. He went on to add, **“We also talk with staff about what we think of different things we do at the youth club”**.

As a direct result of young people making decisions about what they want to do at the youth club, and the staff responding to this, more discos have taken place over the last year, a BBQ in the summer has taken place and 50 young people went to Alton Towers in the summer holidays. More boxing equipment has been bought for the club as a direct result of young people being involved in session planning.

Working Party

This continues to provide some young people with the opportunity to work in partnership with staff to make decisions and plan activities and trips based on what young people say.

Kate, who is a member of the working party, told me, **"We talk with other young people about what they want and then speak with Anne about it "**

John another member of the work party, told me, **"We are now starting to work at the Junior Youth Club as this is what we wanted to do".**

This is allowing some young people who are not members of this group, the opportunity to talk about their views and ideas to develop the club. The working party then meet with staff to discuss the ideas which are generated through this method. Perhaps, however, more young people's views and opinions could be taken on board if a suggestion box system was introduced in the club. This would allow those young people who do not feel confident enough or who do not wish to discuss with the working party, the opportunity to put forward their opinions on the running of the youth club and give ideas for activities and projects which interest them.

Members of the working party are now also working with members of the junior youth club.

John told me, **"We decided it would be good if we could work with the Junior Youth Club to make it better and find out what they want to do"**

It will be interesting to discover how the junior youth club develops over the next year using this positive approach to participation, which has been taken by Anne and other staff members to allow some young people to work with other young people to develop and direct ideas at the Junior Youth Club.

Lauren also explained, **"I have been working with Chelsea for the last 2 years at the youth club as I wanted to go to college and be a teacher"** Chelsea is a young person who has Downs Syndrome and has been supported by Lauren in accessing the junior youth club. When I visited the project to read the evaluation with some members, the Sunday Sun were interviewing Lauren as she had been short-listed for North East Volunteer of the Year award.

Friday Fun Night

This has been planned by young people and staff as many young people have been asking for additional activities.

John told me, **"Many young people have been asking for lots of things to do so we thought we would put them on a Friday night"**

'Friday night fun night' was organised for the 16th February and if successful, may continue. Many activities young people have asked for at the youth club have been included in this night. Such as tattoo art, karaoke and tshirt art.

Trampolining Sessions.

The trampolining continues to offer some young people an opportunity to get involved in decision making at the club and they have directed how this activity has progressed since my previous visit to Gilesgate Youth Club for Investing in Children membership in November 2005. Since then members of the youth club have been involved in the designing of a leotard for both boys and girls. These young people also went to Belfast last year, with the support of the youth club to enter a competition. The young people identified that they wanted to enter this competition and did so through the support of staff at Gilesgate Youth Club.

Youth Capital Fund.

A group of young people applied to the Youth Opportunity Capital Fund and received £1165 to develop the community room where young people meet. Members of the youth club worked throughout the summer to make the change to the community room.

The young people I met with at the Gilesgate Youth Club do feel they get listened to and are involved in decision making at the club.

For these reasons I would like to recommend that the Gilesgate Youth Club receive Investing In Children Membership and I look forward to seeing further developments made by the young people at the Youth Club when coming to re-evaluate the project for membership next year.

This report has been read and agreed by the following young people who attended Gilesgate youth Club, they are Amy, Amy, Liam, Daniel, Kate, John and Lauren.

Rob Johnson
Investing in Children Project Worker
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