

RENFREW YMCA ANNUAL REPORT 2023 EMPOWERING YOUNG PEOPLE

INTRODUCTION

Emotional Intelligence rather than Artificial Intelligence

This year, one topic seems to have constantly come up in the news - Artificial Intelligence (AI). Whether it has been the revolutionary development of platforms such as ChatGPT or individuals dreaming about how we can get technology to write an AGM report for us (these are my own words - honest!), it has continued to dominate board rooms and press headlines.



Much as technology is great and we ought to embrace it, we cannot let it dominate us or disempower us and the work that we continue to do in Renfrew YMCA is vital to ensure that the young people, volunteers and communities that we work with are equipped with the skills that they need to not just be successful but also to be agents of change.

Such skills often require Emotional Intelligence which can include developing empathy, effective communication and social skills, self-awareness, self-regulation, and motivation. It is these skills that we are often trying to build in all those that we work with at Renfrew YMCA.

As we continue to do this, we still have firmly in our mind that by building these skills with our participants that they in turn can lead us in fulfilling that wider 2030 vision where we are building community wellbeing, meaningful work, a sustainable planet and a just world.

The staff team have always played a key role in building these skills and we recognise that going forward into 2023-24 will be a key time of change with some key members of the staff team moving on, not least of which being Samantha Gillan, the Centre Manager who has been with us around 12 years. Whilst these members of staff will be sorely missed, they have developed strong foundations in which we can build the next generation of Renfrew YMCA.

Graeme McMeekin (Chair of Renfrew YMCA)

INTRODUCTION





Renfrew YMCA has had another amazing but challenging year, and the biggest change is the development of a second building, renovating a shop unit within the town centre, as a space to be used by our staff team and Youth Social Action Group. 2022-23 has been difficult for our members with the cost of living crisis, and the impact this has had on our families along with a rise in in mental health issues affecting young people

We have tried to support our families by providing more free services which have included a fun action packed summer project, free meals and being as reactive as possible to the changing circumstances. At the time of writing, November 2023, Taylor Smith, our Youth Development Worker, has moved to manage Kilmarnock YMCA.

We wish her every success and welcome Robbie Forde to the management team. This is my last AGM as Centre Manager and I wish Renfrew YMCA all the best.

Samantha Gillan (Centre Manager)

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To focus on creating a more successful country with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish through Increased

opportunities, wealth and power more equally

We live in communities 000 that are inclusive. empowered, resilient and safe

We grow up loved, safe and respected so that we realise our full potential

wellbeing, and sustainable and Inclusive economic growth

OUR VALUES We are a society which treats all our people with kindness, dignity and compassion, respects the rule of law, and acts in an open and transparent way

We are healthy and active

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cultures are

expressed and

enjoyed widely

We value, enjoy,

Q

protect and

enhance our

environment

innovative businesses, with quality jobs and fair work for

We are well educated. skilled and able to contribute to society

everyone

We have

thriving and

Credit: Scottish Government

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT **G**ALS

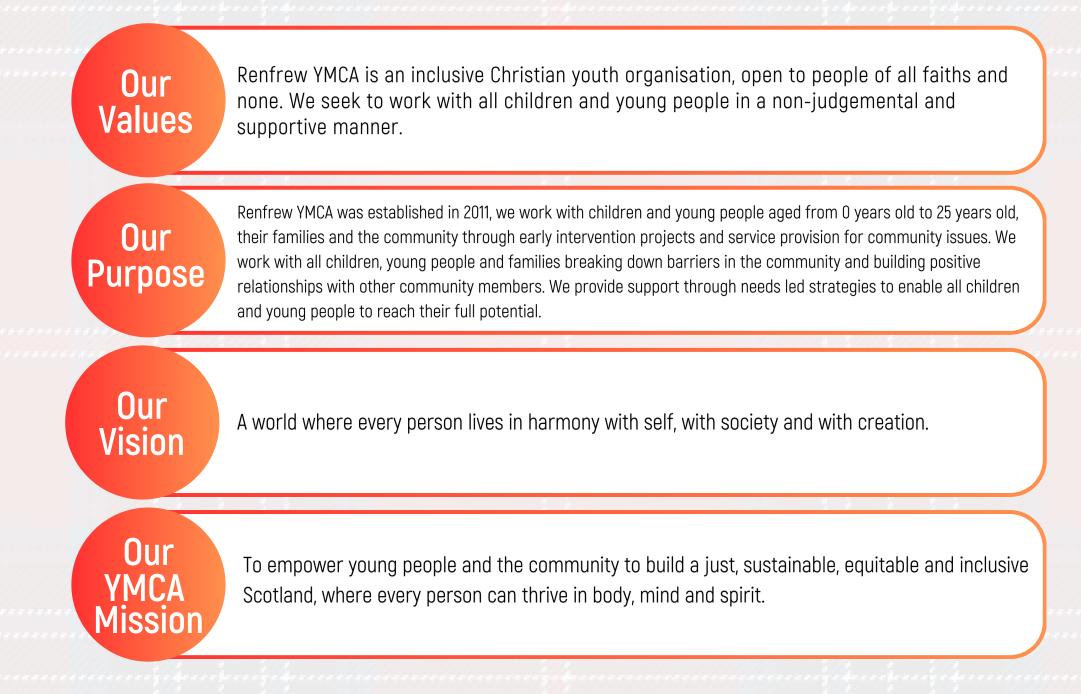




The 2022-2025 strategic plan sees Renfrew YMCA aligning its vision and purpose with the global YMCA movement through the adoption of Vision 2030.

The plan also maps Renfrew YMCA's objectives with the Scottish National Improvement Framework and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.





OUR VALUES IN PRACTICE





As the world's largest and oldest youth organisation, YMCA is committed to upholding the principles of the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

We strive to ensure young people are engaged, heard and consulted locally, nationally and internationally and that they are able to influence and impact the world around them.





YMCA believes that every person should have the means to grow and thrive in body, mind and spirit while taking care of their individual and collective wellbeing.

During 2023 Renfrew YMCA provided strategic support to a number of local YMCAs to develop new and existing YMCA premises, improving safe community spaces and creating new learning hubs.

LITTLE RASCALS - PARENT AND CARER SUPPORT PROJECT

Renfrew YMCA has developed three sessions per week for parents and carers of preschool aged children to connect, we have 2 activity sessions per week which focuses on free play and sensory play for children and time for adults to connect and receive peer support, we also host walk and talk sessions for adults and their children to meet and connect in local parks and walking areas. 81 young people and 58 parents have been in attendance throughout the year

"I love coming along to the little rascals group every week, the support I receive is amazing and my little one is developing so much they started not being able to hold their head up and now they are crawling. I would have struggled to cope after having my baby without the YMCA", - Parent B



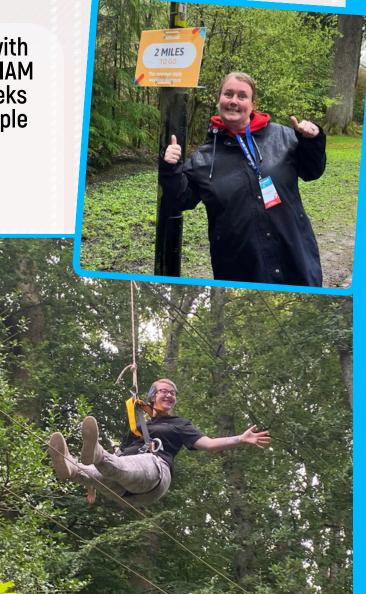
LET'S INTRODUCE ANXIETY MANAGEMENT (LIAM)

Our Youth Development Worker has worked with 5 young people across the year to complete LIAM sessions, each young person completes 9 weeks of LIAM which is a program to help young people manage their anxiety.

Once young people have completed the LIAM sessions they continue to meet with their worker to chat about their week, any concerns or feelings they have.

We have now received funding to upscale this project and support more young people.





COMMUNITY WELLBEING





YMCA believes that all young people deserve the right to learn, engage in flexible dignified and meaningful work, and build sustainable livelihoods.

STAFF & VOLUNTEER DEVELOPMENT

Samantha our Centre Manager completed an Executive Professional Masters in Management of Civil Society Organisations organised by YMCA Europe in partnership with ISCTE-University Institute of Lisbon (Portugal), ISCTE-Executive Education and YMCA George Williams College (UK).

Two development workers completed their leadership and management - Leading in Youth Work.

The Social Enterprise Academy's Leadership Award is a 10credit SCQF Level 9 qualification.

3 youth workers completed their PDA in youth work with Youth Scotland.



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STAFF & VOLUNTEER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Alan started the Leadership Academy.

Through the Leadership Academy Alan has been to Setubal, Portugal and has applied the gained knowledge in practice and has created a project to implement in one of the local primary schools.

His activity is aimed at enhancing peace, justice, equality and intercultural dialogue through his mini-project which is aimed at inclusion of refugees and other vulnerable groups.

Amanda and Shelby completed level 1 NVR.

Amanda completed the Know Your Say course through National Youth representative in Berlin



MEANINGFUL WORK

LIFE

Over the last year we have supported young people from the flexible learning based in Renfrew High to undertake HP Life training. This project is a creative intervention working with young people who are educationally excluded due to various reasons, such as additional support needs, school refusers ect.

Young people will use HP life to undertake various courses such as effective leadership, effective presentations and Social Entrepreneurship to gain training and knowledge that they would not be able to undertake within the school setting, this will be combined with confidence building, self-image and mental health support.

Young people worked in groups to undertake social enterprise projects which give back to their community, taking everything learned within HP Life and putting it into practice, problem solving, being creative and gaining practical hands-on experience.

"HP life allows our young people to develop their skills in an alternative setting and gives them ownership over their own qualifications. Our young people love the self-guided projects and the opportunity to design and create ideas independently"

Kimberley Roan McVeigh Principal Teacher

MEANINGFUL WORK



YMCA believes that we should all commit and take action for the protection and regeneration of our Planet, preparing for a Just Transition to a world where humans live in full harmony with nature.

YMCA commits to become a Greener Movement, an active youth voice on climate justice and champion of youth-led sustainability solutions.

YOUTH SOCIAL ACTION

Youth Social Action is a cohort of young people at Renfrew YMCA who are dedicated to stopping climate change.

Over the last year our youth social action group have been very busy developing projects for the community to raise awareness and up-skill community members of the effects of climate change and how as a community we can make a difference.

Young people held Christmas upcycling workshops with Kirklandneuk primary school, where children used recycled materials to create new Christmas decorations, the group then held an open day for the community to showcase this event.



YOUTH SOCIAL ACTION

Young people hosted a sustainable afternoon tea where they delivered a presentation about the environment and how the community can help fight climate change.

Young people held Easter family upcycling craft sessions during the holidays - 63 young people attended.

The youth social action group are now based in our new Dunlop street building, young people designed and provided input on the development of this new space, young people upcycled creative furniture and undertook part in upcycling workshops.

Volunteers from youth social action supported our junior members to undertake a community litter pick.





SUSTAINABLE PLANET

JUST WORLD

YMCA believes in the power of young people and communities to promote and advance justice, peace, equity, and human rights for all.

YMCA will become a global voice in the fight against systemic discrimination, inequity, injustice and racism in all its forms, amplifying the voices of young people and communities where it is active to ensure that everyone's voice is heard.

PARENT SUPPORT

Our young volunteers from our youth social action held a free community fun day with the focus on children's mental health. Over 120 bags were given out to children and young people including fidget toys, mindfulness colouring and information on support, over 200 adults also attended this event.

Renfrew YMCA have been focusing more on the mental health and wellbeing of parents and carers of our young people, this year we invested our time to supporting them to alleviate the impact of the cost of living crisis.



PARENT SUPPORT

This year we have:

- Hosted a free breakfast with Santa for over 30 families, each child met santa and got a gift
- Hosted a free family Christmas ceilidh for 80 members
- Gave out £3000 in vouchers to families
- Implemented that each child gets a free meal at every session
- Hosted a spa day for the parents where they got to use the spa facilities and have a treatment
- Held a dad's group for dads to meet other dads while engaging with their children, this took place at Finlaystone Country Park







IN IT TOGETHER

In It Together over the past year have been working on building relationships and why they are important.

Setting boundaries with each other and creating goals to work towards. The young people enjoy creating and building great self esteem, feeling good about themselves and others. It gives each young person great confidence.

One of the barriers we faced was young people struggling to regulate their emotions, this caused them to act out and be violent.

We introduced risk assessments for each young person which had what a young person's trigger was, coping mechanisms and how staff can help them cope, this has helped a lot with young people's behaviour.





IN IT TOGETHER - QUOTES AND CASE STUDIES

Young person aged 13 - "I love that I get to be myself at the group and don't have to pretend to be someone I am not"

Since this young person started attending the In It Together program they have grown in confidence and learned new skills in how to interact with others and make bonds with those who attend the group.

This young person came along with their sibling to the group and would shy away and let the sibling do all the talking, but through attending every session they have come out of their shell and engaged more in sessions.

Since the pandemic hit and everyone was having to isolate the young person became withdrawn from everything and really struggling.

Thankfully this project has helped them to re-adapt to society and learn new skills they may not have had before the project started.

They have been working on learning social cues and different skills they need to attend mainstream groups out with this organisation. They began to engage more and ask questions.

This young person has grown so much in confidence since starting with us and is loving getting to know new people and make new friends through this.

Young person aged 11- "I am thankful there is a place I can go that accepts my differences and supports me to achieve the goals I set myself"





ACTIVE PLAY - QUOTES AND CASE STUDIES

Young person aged 9

"I always have so much fun at active play and I love seeing all my friends"

This young person has shown us so much growth throughout the project she's now at a stage where she is actively wanting to help the younger children in the group.

This young person's confidence levels have improved so much she's leading games for everyone and she has really surprised us with that.

Now the young person is taking the next step within the YMCA by becoming a youth ambassador.

We know that she will bring a lot to the youth ambassador team.





OUR WORK - QUOTES AND CASE STUDIES

Ethan aged 10

"Very cool, best thing I've ever been to"

Sophia aged 7

"Very awesome to meet new friends here and a really good time"

Farrah aged 10

"Love everything about the group, it is nice to have someone to talk to about stuff at home"

Elsa aged 6

"My favourite thing about the project is making the food"

Young person aged 10 "I can open up more about my feelings after attending LIAM sessions"

Young person aged 12 "I am grateful for the help and guidance I have had in LIAM"

Young person aged 13 "Without LIAM I don't think I could have went on my primary 7 residential"

"My 16 month old and I started coming to the YMCA when he was 6 weeks old. We went along during the summer holidays and met up with other mums.

We go every week and we love it. It is amazing from being a new-born baby to now he is on the move and walking! I love it!! It's great for both me and him as I feel so welcome and it's a lovely place and great atmosphere.

There is so much for babies to do and it is lovely to chat to other mums. We are made to feel so welcome by all the staff, they are like our extended family!!"

Parent X



Trustees and Staff

Honorary President Walter Johnston

Chair: Graeme McMeekin Secretary: Louise McFarlane Treasurer: Heather Mutch

Trustees:

Dave Beck Stephen Dow Pauline Hoyles Karen Ross



STAFF

Centre Manager: Samantha Gillan

Youth and Community Development Coordinator: Amanda Reid

Youth and Community Development Coordinator: Robbie Forde

Youth work team:

Alan Hoey Ellie Gallacher Graeme McDonald Shelby Davidson Lynsey Muir Jodie Comiskey Erin Vaughan

THANKS

Renfrew YMCA expresses its sincere gratitude to:

Foundation Scotland (£6237) Renfrewshire Council (£61150.21) Impact Funding (£13000) BBC (£55016) Scottish Council (£14550) Coop (£1028.20) Garfield Weston (£20000) Inspiring Scotland (£15004) Engage Renfrewshire (£34851) Tiny Changes (£9622) Main Grants (£35007) Radio Clyde (£3095) Groundwork (£375) People's Postcode Lottery (£24140) HP Life (£18000)

Renfrew YMCA can only continue with the wonderful support from our individual donors, charitable trusts, and our business sponsors. We would like to extend a special thanks to all our donors in 2022/23.

FINANCES

Financial Review

The charity generated a net surplus for the year of £8,035 (2022: £38,840). The total income amounted to £317,094 (2022: £244,978).

At the balance sheet date, the total reserves were £164,380 (2022: £124,028).

Daniel McElhinney Chairperson Renfrew YMCA

SAMANTHA'S JOURNEY

I started working at Renfrew in November 2011, I was just out of university after finishing my Postgrad in Community earning and Development at Glasgow University. I was employed as a Youth Development Worker, I had lots of experience in youth work, but this was my first 'adult' job, I was excited, hopeful, some may say naïve.

Renfrew YMCA was a complete blank slate for me, I had to learn and learn quick: funding, management. overall, how to run a charity. I had so many amazing people to support me; Marion, Jim, Graeme and Walter who all trusted me when I suggested let's renovate and knock walls down!

Over the last 12 years my role has significantly evolved, from Youth Development Worker, coordinator to Centre Manager. I believe the success of Renfrew YMCA has been that we are community-led, we listen to our community, and they drive our work. I have always been a massive advocate for this, and I have always been inspired by our young people and families while working at Renfrew YMCA.

I have had amazing experiences with the YMCA, from attending YMCA 175 to going to Florida to attend the YMCA USA's women's conference.

I have met some of my closest friends at Renfrew YMCA who have supported me personally through the best and worst times of my life. I hope that I have been a leader who has inspired her team to strive for more, feel secure and have fun along the way. The team at Renfrew YMCA has always made me feel like that.





SAMANTHA'S JOURNEY

I have led Renfrew YMCA from having less than 10 young people and no focused projects to an organisation that is at the heart of the community supporting 1000's of people a year, we now have an innovative multi-sensory building supporting our community and I am incredibly proud to say this was under my leadership.

I have just completed my Executive professional master's in civil society organisations with YMCA Europe, this course allowed me to connect with YMCA leaders from all over Europe and gain further education.

I am now moving to work at YMCA Scotland as their income generation officer (couldn't leave the YMCA movement!!), the last 12 years at Renfrew YMCA has been a privilege, joy and maybe a little bit of stress but I will never forget how blessed I have been to be surrounded by the community of Renfrew, the staff and the board of trustees over the years. There is no way I could write about everything that's happened in the last 12 years, but it has made me into the worker I am today and I am incredibly proud of the work I have been involved in and how Renfrew YMCA has evolved.

I want to thank everyone who has been on this crazy journey with me, and I know Cairinne Macdonald will lead Renfrew YMCA onto so many amazing new opportunities.

Samantha Gillan



