

NEWSLETTER



OUR 2023



17,322
 YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE BEEN A PART OF OUR YOUTH ZONE SINCE IT OPENED ITS DOORS



WE HAVE RUN
326
 SESSIONS



1431
 NEW MEMBERS



33,552
 ATTENDANCES



276
 MEMBERS WITH A DISABILITY OR ADDITIONAL NEEDS



Free membership, free entry and a free hot meal throughout the Winter



At the beginning of December, we were so excited to announce that we will be providing free membership, free entry and free hot meals for young people throughout the winter, thanks to funding from the Community Organisations Cost of Living Fund delivered by The National Lottery Community Fund.

A recent survey of young people in the West Midlands revealed that 67% are concerned about the cost-of-living crisis, with 25% of them stopping activities outside of school like socialising with friends, sports and hobbies for this reason. This funding will ensure that the young people of Wolverhampton can continue to benefit from our Youth Zone throughout the winter.

Last year, our amazing catering team served 10,986 free hot meals to our young people during the winter months and we are expecting to serve even more this year. We know that the current cost of living crisis is putting a strain on many families, and we want to ensure that young people still have access to our fun, engaging activities and support from our youth workers in a warm, safe environment.

Bringing the community together

Our Way Wonderland Festive Fayre was an opportunity to open our doors to the community and show off all of the fantastic facilities we can offer the young people of Wolverhampton. Thank you to everyone who joined us, we had 400 people visit us, including the Mayor of Wolverhampton, and we raised £1300!!!

We hope to run more events like this for the community throughout 2024.



A Theatre Experience to Remember

**BIRMINGHAM
ROYAL BALLET**

Birmingham Royal Ballet visited our Youth Zone in October to talk to some of our Seniors about their LEAP Ambassadors Programme. This programme is an opportunity for young people who are considering a career in the arts to investigate behind the scenes, experience projects and productions, develop new skills and knowledge and connect with arts professionals.

Birmingham Royal Ballet then offered some of our young people the fantastic opportunity to experience their first ballet performance at Birmingham Hippodrome earlier this month. We were lucky enough to receive tickets to watch them perform The Nutcracker, a perfect start to the festive season!



Panto Community Art Project

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre visited a few of our sessions in November to run art workshops. Each workshop was to create items for their panto display within the theatre which will be seen by thousands of people who visit throughout the year. This year's panto is Snow White and the Seven Dwarves and the display to the left of the foyer presents an interpretation of the light and dark sides to the story.

The display is fantastic and, on closer inspection, you can see the contributions from our Youth Zone members. The beaded spiders climbing up the walls, the trees with their individually designed leaves and the evil queen's mirror framed by our clay gargoyles are all created by our young people.

This was a collaborative project with contributions from various community organisations across the city. We're so proud to be part of this great project!

WOLVERHAMPTON
GRAND
THEATRE



Values Awards

Our Values Awards have been a really great celebration of our young people and the team of staff and volunteers who work tirelessly to deliver a great experience for all of our members whenever they come to our Youth Zone. Since introducing the awards in June, we have had over 130 nominations!!!

Roll of Honour 2023

Juniors

Bartosz
Liv
Bailey
Destiny
Blessing
Isabella
Tyler B
Elsie
Tyler R

Seniors

Mattat
Maddi
Summer
Kira
James
Samual



Holiday Club

Our Holiday Clubs are proving to be really popular. Our October half term club was fully booked with 60 juniors joining us every day to take part in our activities from 9am to 3pm.



We were delighted to welcome the families of our Holiday Clubbers to join in the fun on the last day. It was lovely to see our young people showing their grown-ups around our Youth Zone and taking part in some fun activities.



Keeping Our Young People Healthy

Since COVID, we have seen a decline in the mental health of young people across the UK. Increasing levels of anxiety and lack of social interaction has had a negative effect on their confidence and resilience. With this in mind, we have introduced a new project in our Health and Wellbeing Room over the past couple of months called "Time to Talk".

We have held sessions with our Juniors, encouraging them to understand their feelings and to talk. These activities are run with a light, fun approach and they are to encourage positive thinking and reinforce the great things about our young people. Gratitude journaling, mindful colouring, group activities around anti-bullying, friendships and growing up are just some of the topics we have covered. These are aimed at promoting good mental health but also to identify any signs of anxiety or low confidence at its early stages.

Plans are to roll out Time to Talk to the Senior sessions in the new year.



Generation Isolation

As part of the Onside network of Youth Zones around the UK, we were involved in their recent national survey of young people to find out more about the time they spend outside of school.

The research laid bare the devastating consequences of the cost of living crisis on young people's lives and opportunities outside of school. It also showed that young people continue to live their lives through online interactions, rather than experiencing the face-to-face activities and social connection that they need to build confidence and skills for adulthood.

It surveyed over 5,000 young people aged 11-18 and these were some of their key findings:

- 76% of young people spend most of their free time on screens
- 80% of young people spend most of their free time at home
- 69% are concerned about the rising cost of living
- 50% experience high or very high levels of anxiety

We believe our Youth Zone and others in our network are a solution to the issues highlighted in this Generation Isolation report - for just 50p, the young people who come to our Youth Zone can access over 20 activities each night, keeping them active and engaged with friends, as well as feeling supported by trusted youth workers. Our Winter Hunger Fund further supports this, with free membership, entry and a hot meal for all of our young people until 31st March.

Christmas & New Year Opening Times



Friday 22nd December - CLOSED

Saturday 23rd December - CLOSED

Monday 25th December - CLOSED

Tuesday 26th December - CLOSED

Wednesday 27th December - Open as usual

Thursday 28th December - Open as usual

Friday 29th December - Open as usual

Saturday 30th December - Open as usual

Monday 1st January - CLOSED

Tuesday 2nd to Friday 5th January - Holiday Club

Tuesday 2nd January - CLOSED FOR JUNIORS SESSION

Wednesday 3rd January - Open for Seniors

Thursday 4th January - CLOSED FOR JUNIORS SESSION

Friday 5th January - Open for Seniors

Monday 8th to Friday 12th January - CLOSED



Our Arts Award programme is currently running for a second time on Juniors. This is a 10 week Discover project for our young people to explore the arts all around them, investigate different art forms, research an artist, and then share their discoveries with others. Once they've completed the programme, our young people get the opportunity to invite their families into our Youth Zone for our Arts Award exhibition and they're presented with a certificate.

Discover is the first stage of the arts award adventure and our arts team are now qualified to deliver the next stages of the programme - Explore, Bronze and Silver (the silver qualification is working at the same standard as GCSE grades A*-C/9-4). We will be launching more Arts Award programmes in the new year.





Chess Team Assemble!!

Our Chess Club is going from strength to strength. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, the club is open to all ability levels from beginner to advanced. Young People can play against their peers, members of staff or computer bots in a safe and conducive environment. Sportsmanship is promoted in the club and young people are encouraged to help each other to learn and improve.



Our young people also get the opportunity to play Virtual Reality Chess where they play in fantastic environments where the pieces come to life.



Steven, our in-house Chess Coach, has now launched a chess coaching session on Saturdays 1pm-2pm in the Enterprise Room. Due to limited spaces, there must be a commitment to attend regularly and parents/carers must stay at the Youth Zone during the session.



You can register your interest to join The Way Chess Team at the reception desk.

Join Our Team

Do you have a skill that you could share with our young people?

We have some vacancies on our Youth Team to deliver specific activities.

MUSIC - We would love to increase our music offering to both Juniors and Seniors. We are especially looking for someone who can deliver musical instrument lessons on some of our evening sessions. We are flexible on the number of hours and times.

CLIMBING - Do you want to use your climbing skills to give young people an opportunity to develop new skills? We have an exciting opportunity within our Youth Zone to work with young people in our Climbing Wall. Applicants must have strong organisation skills to take responsibility for the climbing wall activities we offer, C.W.I. qualified and flexible in your working hours.

BOXING - We want to enhance our boxing activities for our young people. You will be involved in teaching the fundamentals of a single sport to young people, as well as facilitating taster sessions, competitions and challenges which build young people's engagement, skills, and fitness levels.



KEEP UP TO DATE WITH OUR YOUTH ZONE



@thewayyouthzone



www.thewayyouthzone.org



@theway_youthzone

CONTACT US



01902 328290



info@thewayyouthzone.org



Wolverhampton Community Lottery

Don't forget, you can support us through the Wolverhampton Community Lottery. For as little as £1 a week, you can enter the draw for £25,000.

There is also an additional chance to win a £3,000 cash bonus just in time for 2024 if you enter by 23rd December.

With 60% of the ticket price donated to our charity, it's a win-win!!!

www.wolverhamptoncommunitylottery.co.uk

We'd like to wish all of our young people, families and supporters a very merry christmas and a happy new year.

