



## **Our plans and priorities for 2019 - 2020**

### **Welcome to GYA 2019 – 2020**

We welcome you all to the 2019-2020 Gateshead Youth Assembly. We had a fantastic training weekend at Lobley Hill and came up with loads of ideas and priorities for the year ahead. Whilst some of our priorities have changed, we will still be sticking with some of our previous projects, including Child Poverty, Emotional Well-being and LGBTQ+ awareness. We expect that GYA will have another packed year, and it already looks like there are some brilliant projects.

We will continue to be the voice for Young People in Gateshead and continue to work on issues identified by ourselves and our peers. We are looking forward to working with our Youth Assembly team this year and hopefully this newsletter gives you an insight into our ideas. If you want to get involved or have contacts you think we could try, we would love to hear from you.

Watch this space!

Sophie Adams & Freya Ender, Joint GYA Chairs

### **Welcome to Gateshead Youth Assembly 2019 – 2020**

#### **Heworth Grange**

Sophie Adams

Sarah Keegan

Daniel Chard

Abbie McMullon

James McMullon

#### **Grace College**

Ruby Taws

Imogen Oliver

Rosie Greatorex

Lucie Hardy

Faith Henderson

Isla Schrader

Katie Talbot-Brown

#### **Cedars Sixth Form**

Etta Beckreck

Brandon Hood

Katherine Young

#### **Thorpe Academy**

Erin Bilclough

Amy Binks

Tegan Oxley

#### **Independent members**

Freya Ender

Ryan McGurk

Amelie Ring

Esmay Wright

## **GYA 2019 – 2020 Executive Committee**

Following campaigns, speech writing, hustings and elections at our recent training weekend, the following Executive Committee was elected by our delegates:

**Chair** - Sophie Adams & Freya Ender

**Vice-Chair** - Abbie McMullon

**Secretary** - Ruby Taws

**Project Leads** - Rosy Greatorex; Brandon Hood; James McMullon; Tegan Oxley.

Each project lead will work with all GYA members to design, deliver and evaluate their chosen projects.

## **Our priorities for 2019 – 2020**

**Mental Health Issues** – We plan to carry on our existing work around emotional well-being and mental health as this issue hasn't gone away. We run an informal buddy system at GYA so that members who are struggling can access support from other members. We plan to produce a range of resources for parents, teachers and young people around mental health, the signs and symptoms and where to get support.

We are going to work on a publication of people's mental health stories, anonymised, of course. We hope this will be used as a tool to enable people to talk about mental health. We will also create social media content to support this.

We also do our best to ensure that we cover the five building blocks for good mental health:

- **Connect** – We spend time developing relationships with other GYA members, in and out of GYA. Some of our members recently said that apart from GYA and family, they don't go anywhere, as a result of this we are making greater efforts so hold more social activities, even if it's just board games at GYC.
- **Be active** – We aren't known for our physical activity but in 2017 we, collectively, walked over ONE MILLION steps. We had a great time too. We didn't do quite so many steps in 2018. So, for this year, we plan to build on this and set ourselves some challenges.
- **Keep learning** – Everything we do at GYA is about developing existing skills and learning new ones. We also deliver a range of training to our members around committee skills, soft skills, self-esteem. Also, our members deliver training to other young people and adults, so not only do we keep learning, we facilitate learning in other people.
- **Give to others** – All of our members are volunteers, however some of them don't always realise that so lots of our time is spent developing an awareness of what volunteering is and why it's good for both the donor and the recipient. We also collect food, clothing and household goods for our friends at Peace of Mind to give to whoever they need to.
- **Be mindful** – Some of our members take part in the '100 Happy Days' initiative, those who don't, are encouraged to think about it. We firmly believe that we need to pay attention to the world, our place in it and our effect on it and the people around us.

**Self - confidence/self – esteem** – We plan to continue our series of self-confidence and self-esteem workshops throughout the year. Each year these sessions are delivered by young people who have been through GYA, and coming back to volunteer.

**Tobacco & Alcohol** – We will continue to work with Public Health around tobacco and alcohol related issues and how we can protect children and young people from the effects of smoking, e-cigs, alcohol and from being manipulated by the manufacturers of tobacco and alcohol related products. We plan to raise awareness of and highlight the effects of smoking and drinking on mental health. We will develop a myth buster about peer pressure and a lesson plan for schools about the effects of smoking and drinking on mental health. We will continue our work with Fresh and Balance.

**Life Skills** – We will develop a range of social media content, lesson plans and posters around life skills, how to develop them, why its important and where young people can find support. The issues we will concentrate on include: voting, how to vote and how to choose who to vote for; how parliament actually works; skills for leaving home (tax, benefits, CV's, interview skills, how rent. Mortgage and bills work); Trading standards (not to avoid being ripped off).

**Environment** – We will continue to support WWF Earth Hour and make efforts to reduce our consumption of disposable products and encourage our members to use public transport where appropriate. We refund our members public transport costs and try to ensure that all our school holiday activities use public transport. We use reusable cups and plates to use when we are out and about, so we don't need to buy paper ones. We will work with Gateshead Council on its Climate Change Emergency Declaration. We will continue our work with the Environment Agency around flood resilience.

**Child Poverty** - We continue to work on issues around child poverty, we regularly hold collections for the Foodbank and the Peace of Mind Drop in.

**Arts** – We continue to support our young people to gain Arts Awards, even those of us who can't or don't want to 'do art' can help other people get involved. Last year lots of us were awarded a Bronze Arts Award for the volunteering we did around arts events. We will continue to develop our work with City of Dreams, and the aspiration for all children and young people in Gateshead and Newcastle to access good quality art and culture experiences, with the added value effects that brings.

## **LGBTQ+**

We are going to continue to develop links with existing groups to highlight the available support, challenge inequality and discrimination and work to make sure that all Children and Young People in Gateshead are supported to be themselves, whatever that means to them. We will also promote our LGBTQ+ Facebook page providing inspiration, motivation and support. We plan to work with Gateshead Council and be part of Northern Pride in 2020.

**Fair Trade** – We will continue to work with Gateshead Council to keep Gateshead a Fair-Trade Town by encouraging our schools to be Fair Trade Schools and by using Fair Trade products at our meetings and events.

## Position Statements

**We have developed the statements below; we accept that unfortunately we cannot change the world or indeed legislation in one GYA year, but we do have opinions and these statements have been agreed by GYA for 2019 – 2020**

- We believe that everyone should be paid the living wage, regardless of age. The argument that young people don't work hard enough is just fluff, any worker not working to the expected level is a management issue, age is just an excuse.
- We believe that Emotional Well Being and Mental Health Services need improving, with our help.
- We believe that young people will be more ready to be properly contributing workers if they secure good quality work experience and careers advice.
- We believe that young people in Gateshead are entitled to and need a good quality Youth Service. We further believe that the Government should commit funds to a properly funded statutory Youth Service.
- We believe that organisations, whether public, voluntary or private need to engage young people in their decision making in real, not tokenistic, ways.
- We believe that young people should be able to access support to develop their self-confidence and self-esteem; this has been stated by Northumbria Police as the best protection from being exploited.
- We believe that it is everyone's job to try and limit the effects of poverty on children and young people. Whatever the cause of a family's poverty, the children never had any influence over decisions made. We must all work to ensure that these children and young people are protected and their dignity preserved.
- We believe that for young people to make informed decisions when it comes to voting, sound political education should be delivered efficiently within schools.

- We believe that young people aged 16 and 17 should be entitled to vote in all elections. Nothing happens between the ages of 16 and 18 which make people better qualified to vote, so why not?
- Gateshead Youth Assembly supports Fairtrade and uses, where possible, fairly traded goods. We firmly believe that we all have a responsibility to ensure that people all over the world are treated fairly, with dignity and respect.

If you want to get in touch with us to find out more, get involved or anything else please email Gateshead Youth Council at [info@gatesheadyouthcouncil.org.uk](mailto:info@gatesheadyouthcouncil.org.uk) You can also find us on Facebook by searching for Gateshead Youth Assembly.

If you are a young person who would like to get involved please contact our support worker Valerie at [valerieender@gateshead.gov.uk](mailto:valerieender@gateshead.gov.uk) or [valerie@gatesheadyouthcouncil.org.uk](mailto:valerie@gatesheadyouthcouncil.org.uk)

GYA meets weekly, usually at Gateshead Youth Council, 12 Gladstone Terrace, Gateshead, NE8 4DY but we do hold our monthly formal meeting on the second Tuesday of each month at Gateshead Civic Centre, Council Chamber.

If you want to attend a meeting for any reason, please contact Valerie Ender in the first instance as these are private meetings and guests are welcome by invitation. This is so that the GYA members retain control of their meeting.

Thanks for all the support, we really do appreciate it!

