

Portadown Gets Active

A scheme to support local children celebrates educational success

Eighty young people from the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon area who took part in and completed the Portadown Gets Active Youth programme over the summer months were presented with an Open College Network (OCN) accredited award last week in Portadown.



Photograph Caption: Alan Armstrong, CEO of Almac Group and Pauline Leeson, CEO of Children in Northern Ireland with young people at Portadown Gets Active Awards night

Hugh McCaughey, Chair of the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP) welcomed families and professionals to the awards event and commended participants and staff on the programme. Mr McCaughey highlighted that CYPSP are committed to identifying what works through partnership working, co-design and co-production with organisations, children and their families. This work is being driven by a regional task and finish group for Northern Ireland.

The "Portadown Gets Active" youth summer programme encouraged young people to stay active during the summer months and helped them understand the

importance of healthy living by providing them with the skills and confidence to cook simple nutritious meals on a budget. The OCN accreditation of the programme shows the possibilities of learning outside of a school setting and over the summer months in a fun and interactive way. The Portadown Gets Active Programme emphasised the confidence, independence and team building skills that were built in the young people who participated on the programme.

Andrew McCreery from Oasis Youth Project spoke on behalf of the partnership and said: 'We are passionate about children and young people achieving their potential and recognise that being healthy is of prime importance in achieving this. Portadown Gets Active provided an excellent opportunity for our members to be educated about the importance of maintaining an active and nutritional lifestyle during the summer break'.

In addition to creating a safe place for young people to continue learning and participate in physical activities during school holidays, the programme also fostered their relationship building skills and helped develop resilience to improve emotional wellbeing.

The awards evening was attended by statutory agencies including the Education Authority, Southern Health and Social Care Trust and the Health and Social Care Board who came together to celebrate the participation of young people on this programme. Thirty eight young people received an OCN in Healthy Living and 58 young people aged 8-12 years were awarded with a mini medic's first aid certificate of achievement. The awards event also showed the recognition of twenty peer mentors aged 12-16 year as who received an OCN in Peer Mentoring and collectively accrued over 720 volunteering hours of support on the programme over the summer months.

Alan Armstrong, CEO, Almac Group commented "We were delighted to support this innovative programme and it is a privilege to be here this evening presenting OCN certificates to these inspirational young people. Congratulations to everyone involved in this outstanding project which has had a very positive impact within our local community."

The Portadown Gets Active programme was delivered through the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership's (CYPSP) with partners Children in Northern Ireland, Pathway Activities NI, Oasis Youth Project, Education Authority, Public Health Agency, ALMAC, Brakes and many more partners.

Pauline Leeson, Chief Executive of Children in Northern Ireland, said: "We are delighted at the success of our young people. Learning loss is a major barrier for a lot of children during the long school holidays, so to see them achieve these qualifications is tremendous. I also commend all the partners in Portadown Gets Active, it is so unique in its approach and why it has been a huge success. It is only by working together that we can achieve so much especially improving outcomes for our children and young people."

Find out more:

For further information and to watch the Portadown Gets Active short video see <http://www.ci-ni.org.uk/portadown-gets-active>

Contact Us:

If your organisation would like to get involved in the End Holiday Hunger Campaign contact Ellen Finlay, Children in Northern Ireland at 028 9040 1290 or email Ellen@Ci-NI.org.uk

Notes:

CiNI represents the interests of its 160-member organisations providing policy, information, training, and participation support services to members in their direct work with and for children and young people. CiNI membership also includes colleagues in the children's statutory sector recognising that the best outcomes for children and young people are increasingly achieved working in partnership with all those who are committed to improving the lives of children and young people in NI.

The Children & Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP) is a multi- agency partnership, led by the Health and Social Care Board. It includes the leadership of key statutory agencies and community and voluntary organisations that have a responsibility for improving the lives of children and young people in Northern Ireland.

The Almac Group is an established contract development and manufacturing organisation that provides an extensive range of integrated services to the pharmaceutical and biotech sectors globally.

Pathways are the youth engagement delivery team for the Reserve Forces & Cadets Association for Northern Ireland. The team delivers across all communities throughout Northern Ireland, has been in existence for 2 years and has delivered 62,350 places, primarily to the primary and post primary education sectors as well as a variety of community groups.

Oasis is a local community group based in Portadown who work directly with over 700 children, young people and their families on a cross community basis, including a wide range of those from minority ethnic backgrounds.