

We have reached a significant milestone this month of 20 years. It is really quite amazing that we are still here and able to do as much as we do. Those involved at the start of the project might have had ideas and expectations of what it might become. I wonder if it is like they had imagined? I arrived in Dunbar from a very secular youth work role in the Youth Service in Stockport. The churches there would have nothing to do with us and firmly put secular and Christian youth work into two separate boxes. But as a Christian, I could see that great things could be achieved if they were joined together. So I guess, my hope for Dunbar was overcoming that barrier and finding the common ground we share with other organisations, and then building on that. And by the grace of God, doors opened, people were receptive and here we are. A very Christian project, rooted in the demonstration of God's love through practical, relational youth work. A project that will have made a positive impact and that will have sewn many seeds that are growing. We might even see the fruit of some of these labours.

Schools Work - Primary

Check-in Groups - 2 groups have started. I have a P6/7 group and Chris mcArthur has a P7 group. We had a good start and although the young people are not entirely sure why they are there, they are glad to be there. Chris has space for another group so if more requests come in then she can accommodate them.

- It is worth noting that the previous P7 check-in groups have settled very well into high school.

Seasons for Growth - The Scottish governing body for SFG has folded. The programme still exists but it is in limbo while the Australian based HQ find a replacement to run it. Thankfully we had stockpiled some of the resources and have been able to proceed with a new group of Primary 7's. We just don't have anyone to give feedback to. It creates an opportunity to review the material and come up with more economic ways to run a similar programme.

The new group met this week and immediately gave young people a safe space to offload.

Pastoral support West Barns Primary School - I am continuing to work with a pupil from West Barns. This was a very positive experience for me as I have found myself giving this lad a voice that he's previously not been able to find.

RME - Those who attended the last prayer breakfast will have heard some of the things P7's have been saying about God. The Big Questions sessions have gone very well and the new feature of a questions box has brought some good discussions up.

I will have visited East Linton by the time we meet and I recently met the new head teacher at Innerwick and Stenton who is keen to meet and discuss possible involvement there.

- My new room is on the ground floor, which has enabled me to write a couple of weekly 'Big Questions' on my windows for the children to ponder on whilst they line up. This has been very popular and they look forward to them each week.

P4 Easter RME - The RME teacher would like us to make plans for an RME event for P4's covering the theme of Easter. Loads of possibilities and we will be pulling a team of volunteers together soon. The event is likely to be the week of 23 March over 2 or 3 days.

- Also encouraging here is that she has asked me to link her to Christians in our community and invite people in to be interviewed.

P7 Camp 6- 9 October - Chris, Fionna, Moira and myself are off to P7 camp again. Pray for us all as we spend 4 days away together with the P7's.

Schools Work - Secondary

Cup of Kindness Award - I have been involved in promoting the cup of Kindness. This is the award presented by the local churches to high school pupils who demonstrate kindness, and who reflect the teachings of Jesus to love your neighbour and treat others the way you would want to be treated yourself. The nominations come from the pupils themselves.

I shared a week of assemblies with Douglas Hamilton that covered the whole school and then formed a panel to decide a winner. Myself, Douglas, Vicky Allen (Discovery Church) and Arlo Treacy (S6 pupil who attends Dunbar Parish Church) whittled down the 70+ nominees to one winner, Eva McCandlish. I had the honour of presenting it to her at the awards ceremony. Eva was a regular at our holiday clubs and has crossed DACYP's path on a number of occasions.

Lads Group - We were able to get this started straight away. It has been going well but we have noticed a drop in numbers. We think we know why and we are taking steps to change this. One of the lads' mums approached me at the awards night to thank the team for the group and commented on how helpful it has been to him, acknowledging he had been really struggling with his mental health.

Girl's Group - Not much to report here. There is no member of staff available to run this at present. What would help is to have a volunteer or two who can take on the responsibility for it. Whilst this continues we won't have a group.

Other

Harbour Lights - It has been great to have some new faces come along and the 2 lads who came to faith at the SU Holiday. Both have brought friends along and we have freely been able to discuss faith things. Both are settled into local churches and are being gently nurtured. Nick has joined the team and Neil has reduced his input. We will have another volunteer in time, but another female would be good.

Andy's Man Club - I've not mentioned this for a while so a quick update.

- There are now 311 groups in the UK and attracting upwards of 6000 men each week.
- The Dunbar group continues to overlap my work with young people, including young people who are now old enough to attend the group.
- We recently had to meet in St Anne's Church. For some, this was their first time in a church building.

Thanks again for the ongoing support. It is often quite isolating in this role, and although you are good at giving me space to get on with it, please do continue to check in

Richard