# **MAKING AN IMPACT**

DOUBLE SCREEN

Annual Report 2019 / 2020

YMCA SUTTON COLDFIELD



# **INTRODUCTION**

**YMCA Sutton Coldfield** is an independent charity transforming the lives of vulnerable children and young people in need. We provide support, respite and safe spaces for disadvantaged young people in Sutton Coldfield and their families.

We operate in **6 distinct areas of youth work** and young people are at the heart of what we do. We have helped more than 2000 young people and their families over the last year.

We are completely self-funded and rely on grants and awards from local and national organisations to fund our programmes, together with help from the local community to be able to continue our work.

#### **OUR PROJECTS:**

#### **YOUNG CARERS**

- Release (Support & Respite)
- Young Adult Carers ( Support & Coaching)

#### DISABILITY

- Meerkats (Youth Club)
- KKats (Youth Club)
- Short Breaks (Holiday Club)
- Moving On (Youth Club)
- Stepping Up (Informal Education Programme)

#### **ACCOMMODATION & SUPPORT**

- Housing and support for young adults
- Care Leavers (Housing and support for people leaving the care system)
- Shine

#### **YOUTH WORK**

- Triple A
  - (Youth Engagement Programme)
- GIRLS Move
- (Social Action Programme)
- Virtually Minded (Male Mental Health Project)

#### **PLAY WORK**

- Holiday Club
- Little Lodge (After School Play Programme)

#### INTERNATIONAL

- European Solidarity Corps (Volunteering Programme)
- International Youth Exchanges



#### WELCOME

CHAIR OF THE BOARD YMCA SUTTON COLDFIELD COLIN BRILEY It has been my privilege to continue in my role as Chair throughout 2019 and 2020. Little did I know what we would all have to face, in what has become a momentous and truly life changing year. One in which we have had to change and adapt, perhaps as never before.

Although the YMCA has been active in supporting the town's young people for over 100 years, for much of that time it has been one of Sutton Coldfield's 'hidden gems'. But, through the work we do and the lives we are impacting, I can say that even in the face of the challenge of COVID-19, more and more people within the town and further afield, are recognising the life affirming projects and programmes which the YMCA supports and sustains in Sutton Coldfield and its surrounding areas.

Young people are the future of our community. Ensuring that they have the opportunities to develop both individual skills and community spirit, will help them build a strong local community in the future. With services to children and young people under severe pressure, even collapsing as a result of the pandemic, the work carried out by voluntary organisations is ever more important. The need for the services provided by YMCA Sutton Coldfield has never been greater.

We are grateful for the support of local organisations, individuals and businesses who have helped fund and support activities for young people this most challenging of years. We hope to continue to develop and expand this support during the coming year particularly through the partnership with Sutton Coldfield Chamber of Commerce. We are also actively seeking new long term relationships with businesses, organisations and individuals who are prepared to invest in the future of the talented and capable young people of the locality who, with the right support, can achieve success for themselves and their community.

I need to thank everyone at YMCA Sutton Coldfield for their continued hard work and commitment to local young people and their families. The way in which they have responded to the current crisis and adapted working practices and services to the needs of users, has been truly outstanding. The range and extent of the work they carry out is a constant reminder of the often unseen needs which exist in this area and the positive impact which targeted support can have. The case studies set out later in this report evidence the life-enhancing effect of the support that our projects provide.

I would also like to thank my fellow trustees for their time and commitment in voluntarily supporting a worthy cause.

Local young people need the services provided by our dedicated and hardworking staff. But we need you too. Our supporters are our lifeline, providing much needed funding and resources to meet the needs of our community and its young people. If you would like to join us in meeting these needs, we would love to hear from you.

# CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The past 12 months has been at times difficult and other times exhilarating. Who could have predicted that by the end of 2019-20 period we would be in a pandemic, having to redesign our services so we could continue to provide support to those most in need. We set up online, virtual youth clubs and the staff also delivered activity packs and food parcels whilst completing health & wellbeing checks with all of our young people.

I am privileged to work with a team of people who are genuinely passionate about what they do. They are interested in the young people we work with, the positive outcomes they can achieve and the impact they have in our local community. I am proud of our excellent administration, finance and marketing teams and the many committed volunteers who support us all in delivering quality services to young people in need.

This year, we have supported over 250 Young Carers, provided a safe place to stay for over 70 young people and enabled friendship and respite for 150 young people and their families accessing our disability services. Our Girls Move project has supported young people to provide 1,125 hours of community engagement and our Virtually Minded project has engaged with over 300 young males raising vital awareness of mental health issues. Youth work continues to be underpin all of our work and our Triple A youth work project has worked

with over 750 young people over the last 12 months. Prior to the pandemic, we also hosted 12 European volunteers offering them valuable work experience, whilst contributing to our staff team.

We continue to work in partnership with our local community and I would like to say a personal thank you to the following organisations who have gone above and beyond to support the work we do: Sutton Coldfield Chamber of Commerce, Birmingham City Council, West Midlands Police. Local schools. Ark Media Productions, Meta4 Coaching, BNI Elite, Sutton Coldfield and Tamworth Love Ladies. Henwood Court Financial Planning, Simpsons, Moor Hall Hotel and Nigel Gambles from What's On In Sutton Coldfield.

#### "A difficult but exhilarating year"

Clive Yates, Chief Executive

#### YOUNG CARERS

We want Young Carers to know that they are not alone. Our Release Young Carers Project works with children aged 5-18. Typically, these Young Carers are caring for, or living with a parent or relative who has a physical disability, long term illness, poor mental health or suffers from alcohol or substance misuse. We offer regular support and weekly respite to give these disadvantaged young people the chance to be young, to meet other young carers and to have fun.

86 Young Carers received respite from their caring role Often, the young people we meet through the Release Project are experiencing mental health problems, family breakdown, isolation and under attainment in education. So we work with local schools, health professionals and local authority services to raise awareness of Young Carers and the daily struggles they face.

Release offers support for all aspects of a young carer's life from intensive family support, respite opportunities and days out, weekly youth clubs, one-to-one support as well as flexible school work and signposting. We aim to promote the physical and emotional wellbeing of young carers, helping them to thrive whilst keeping families together.



| Young carers accessing our service  | 106 |
|---|-----|
| Young carers who have been kept safe<br>through whole family support                    | 52  |
| Young carers attending respite  | 86  |
| Young carers who have improved academic achievement through school engagement programme | 39  |

RELEASE YOUNG CARERS PROJECT YMCA SUTTON COLDFIELD

"I can't believe people I've never met are willing to help me and my kids. I didn't know people like that existed." Mum to Young Carers aged 7, 11 and 15 Daniel is 7 years old. He cares for his Dad who suffers from depression and paranoia alongside his 11-year-old brother Jason and 15-year-old sister Evie. All three children had always been very active and engaged members of the Release project benefitting from the support packages on offer.

Earlier this year, the situation worsened when a physical altercation took place in front of the children. Worried for her children's safety, their Mum removed herself and the children from the family home, leaving with nothing. With nowhere to go and no family to help, Mum turned to the Release team for support.

The Release team immediately reported the incident to the police and contacted Women's Aid to source emergency accommodation for the fleeing family. We also provided an emergency care kit containing food, pyjamas, toiletries and an activity pack for Daniel and his siblings.

Due to the circumstances, the children were unable to access the family home to retrieve any of their belongings. So we contacted the local community and our business networks to request donations of clothes, shoes and bedding to keep the family comfortable.

The children and their Mum were absolutely overwhelmed by the response. Without any of their own belongings, the clothes, toys, food, vouchers and money they received to get them back on their feet made all the difference to their situation. They felt supported and cared for like never before.

However, understandably, the children remained very upset and confused by their situation. They started to become extremely withdrawn. They missed their friends, school and their home. And they were missing the respite that they usually got from Release.

Working closely with the family, schools, local police and Women's Aid, we were able to put a plan together to enable the children to safely access school and Release project activities.

The family have now been rehomed, Mum has a new part time job and is happy and secure in her new role as a single parent. The children received 1-2-1 life coaching to support them through this difficult time and continue to access regular respite through the Release project. All three children are happy and thriving with a positive future ahead of them.

# We believe every Young Adult Carer should have someone to talk to.

Our Young Adults Carers project provides support to Young Adult Carers aged 18 - 25 through a programme that focuses on their overall wellbeing, helping them to achieve their full potential whilst supporting them in their role as a carer. The project has 3 main focus areas:

1. To raise awareness of carers and their needs 2. To better support carers 3. To work in partnership with families

Young Adult Carers often have limited access to opportunities that others take for granted. Caring responsibilities can have a negative impact on their lives including poor attendance and attainment at School, College, University or in the work place. Reduced social contact and negative health effects are also common and, at times, Young Adult Carers can feel down, isolated and unsupported.

Our services include one-to-one support and life coaching, practical workshops and opportunities for respite and social interaction. From informal drop-in sessions where carers can talk about their concerns, to events and residential trips where carers can socialise outside of their caring roles, our service is tailored and flexible and centred around positive change.

Young Adult Carers are also supported by YMCA Sutton Coldfield within 5 campuses at 3 colleges across Birmingham. We continue to support students in a number of secondary schools, where we work closely with teachers and student welfare support services.

We also try to support the families of our Young Adult Carers and we offer a food parcel service to those experiencing financial difficulties, as well as support with CV writing, employment opportunities and workshops to improve skills.

| Young Adult Carers accessing our services  | 150 |
|--|-----|
| Young Adult Carers accessing career and CV support   | 22  |
| Young Adult Carers attending University<br>or College thanks to life coaching              | 87  |
| Carers volunteering or gaining employment  | 27  |
| Case boxes collected to provide basic toiletries<br>& necessities for Young Carers in need | 118 |
| Carers attending respite trips or activities   | 23  |
| Carers who have received officially recognised carer cards                                 | 19  |
| Young Adult Carers receiving 1-2-1 life coaching   | 108 |

101 young adult carers received one-to-one life coaching

"Thanks to the YMCA, I am starting to see myself as more than just a Young Adult Carer." Coc.

Amy, 18, Young Adult Carer

## RELEASE UPBEAT YOUNG ADULT CARERS PROJECT YMCA SUTTON COLDFIELD

Amy is 18 years old. She cares for her Father, a double amputee who is blind in one eye and suffers from a heart condition.

When we met Amy, she was very quiet and had little selfconfidence. Over time, she began to open up and told us the story of her family breakup. This led to her becoming the main carer for her father. We learnt that she had suffered constant bullying which resulted in her putting her own life at risk. Amy regularly experiences anxiety attacks and was struggling to balance her caring role with her own educational and personal goals. We discovered that Amy was also worried about her financial situation.

We started by setting up regular 1-2-1 meetings which allowed her to speak openly and frankly about her situation. We encouraged Amy to talk about her own goals, aspirations and thoughts for the future. We also worked with Amy to identify work experience opportunities such as volunteering, to develop her self-esteem and give her the confidence and experience to start her own career.

Regular support and a bespoke, flexible approach was just what Amy needed. Amy's newly adopted all-inclusive attitude and self-belief has impacted on the whole family. Amy is finally beginning to appreciate her true potential and has a bright future ahead.

#### DISABILITY

We believe every person with a disability should have access to the opportunities, experiences and support they need to take an active part in community life.



13.9 Million people in the UK have a disability and 1/3 of these people experience difficulties in accessing public, commercial and leisure goods and services. These statistics highlight why the work that we do is so important in enabling adults and children with disabilities to reach their full potential. We offer a range of services which aim to promote independence, provide respite for families and create opportunity for social interaction amongst peers.

In the past year, we have worked with over 150 young people and their families. From our informal adult education programme to Short Breaks for children aged 8-19 and weekend and evening youth clubs, all of our services provide fun, social opportunities for children and adults with disabilities.

Stepping Up has provided 1,500 hours of support through workshops and independent living sessions, providing a much-needed service to adults with learning disabilities whilst promoting independence and friendship.

hours of support for children and adults with learning disabilities The Short Breaks programme has provided respite for families of children with disabilities during every school holiday. This service, which includes sensory play, outdoor activities and trips gives these children much needed time with their peers and a chance to have fun.

Additionally, we have provided 170 hours of youth clubs for adults with disabilities, promoting inclusion and preventing loneliness.

#### **OUR DISABILITY SERVICES**

Meerkats: Youth Club for children with physical or learning disabilities. Age 8 - 12 years

KKats: Youth Club for young people with physical or learning disabilities. Age 13+

Moving On: Youth Club for young adults with physical or learning disabilities. Age 18+



Short Breaks: School holiday activities and day trips for children with physical or learning disabilities. Age 9 - 19 years

Stepping Up: Life skills and education programme promoting independence for adults with learning disabilities. Age 18+

| Children and adults accessing meaningful and fun activities            | 150 |
|--|-----|
| Respite sessions for parents of children with disabilities             | 90  |
| Hours of support and social time for adults with learning disabilites  | 170 |
| Children that report feeling happier and have a life outside of school | 30  |
| Young adults performing in live theatre shows                          | 20  |

"I worried about Dominic when his time in education was over. But with the help and support of the YMCA Sutton Coldfield, Dominic has grown in confidence, made a fantastic friendship group and loves going to Stepping Up every day!"." Mum to Dominic, 23, Stepping Up Member

## STEPPING UP LIFESKILLS FOR ADULTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES YMCA SUTTON COLDFIELD

Dominic is 23 years old. When his time at college came to an end, Dominic's Mum was worried about his future and found herself wondering what his next step would be. This is a situation we see far too often. When school provision ends, there is a distinct lack of services available for adults with learning disabilities which can often lead to isolation and loneliness.

Dominic has a diagnosis of ASD and had always struggled with communication. He started attending Stepping Up in September 2019 and attends 5 days per week. We started by encouraging Dominic to participate in our daily 'news and chat' sessions to build his confidence. With support and encouragement from the team and his peers, Dominic is getting more and more confident at sharing what he has been up to with the rest of the group.

Dominic has also formed many friendships within the group which has given him the confidence he needed. His communication has improved significantly and we love hearing him engage in so many conversations and have fun with his peers.

Dominic has been a brilliant addition to our Stepping Up group and it has been a pleasure watching him blossom and grow.

#### ACCOMMODATION & INTERNATIONAL

# We believe every young person should have a safe and affordable place to stay.

#### **ACCOMMODATION & SUPPORT**

YMCA Sutton Coldfield offers low support and quality accommodation for young people aged 18-30 at affordable, below local market rent prices. Our aim is to help young people build their independence, self-esteem and self-sufficiency by providing accommodation, activities and support in order to promote positive emotional wellbeing.

In March, the Corona Virus pandemic forced us to adapt our annual Sleep Easy event which could no longer take place as planned. Instead, 125 supporters spent the night on their sofas to raise awareness of hidden homelessness and funds of £10,000 to help us prevent more youth homelessness.

#### **CARE LEAVERS**

Many young people leaving the care system have had a tough start in life and lack the stability, skills and support to live independently.

This year we have been able to continue with our dedicated Care Leavers programme to help young people leaving care. We are now able to offer care leavers as young as 17 a safe place to stay and the intense support they need to bridge the gap from foster care or care homes to independent living.

#### SHINE

Shine provides intensive support to young people with complex needs. Complex needs is defined as a young person having experienced 3 or more of the following: homelessness, substance misuse, childhood trauma, offending behaviours, self-harm, mental health difficulties, learning needs, physical disabilities and attachment difficulties.

The project champions an organisational shift to improve support and access for the most marginalised 16 to 25 year olds. As part of the wider project alongside 7 other YMCAs, we deliver 1-2-1 intensive support, life coaching, motivational interviewing, employment and education guidance and mental health and wellbeing support.

#### INTERNATIONAL

Over the past year, 12 European volunteers have stayed and worked with us for 12 months. With volunteers from different European countries, this year's project has been extremely successful and has not only offered young people the chance to learn new skills but has also built capacity for our organisation.

| Care leavers supported into independent living                    | 16  |
|---|-----|
| Sleep Easy participants   | 125 |
| European Volunteers staying and working at YMCA                   | 12  |
| Young people with complex needs receiving intensive 1-2-1 support | 16  |

82 young people receiving support and accommodation

"The YMCA is so supportive. My key worker is always there for me and has really helped me make the change to living independently." Daniel, 18, Care Leaver

## CARE LEAVERS SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE LEAVING CARE YMCA SUTTON COLDFIELD

Daniel is 18 years old. He lost his mother to cancer at a young age and has very little contact with his alcoholic father. Tragically, plans to live with his older sister were also destroyed when she too lost her life to cancer.

Daniel's heart-breaking situation meant that he spent most of his childhood in foster care, eventually moving into a children's home until he turned 18. Daniel found the children's home particularly challenging due to negative behaviour from his peers.

When Daniel turned 18, he was no longer eligible to stay at the care home and was referred to the YMCA. He found the transition into semi- independent living incredibly difficult, a situation which is all too common for young adults leaving care. So we provided regular 1-2-1 life coaching with an emphasis on the emotional support he so desperately needed.

Daniel began to build friendships and started to engage in other projects which helped to build his confidence and self-esteem.

We supported Daniel with applications for benefits and college as well as more practical life skills such as budgeting which are key to preparing him for independent living.

Despite Daniel's troubled childhood, he is currently studying for a food and beverage qualification and pushes himself to attend college even when things are tough. Daniel has high hopes for the future and is hoping to go on to university or travel abroad to further his career in hotels or silver service.

#### YOUTH WORK

# We believe every young person should have the support they need to be ambitious, to aspire and to achieve.

Our youth work programme engages with young people in order to promote confidence and self-esteem and to help and inspire young people to achieve.

#### **TRIPLE A**

Now funded by the Henry Smith Charity, this project aims to raise aspirations in young people, increase their ambition and help them to achieve their long and short term goals. Working in Kingstanding and Falcon Lodge, we run focused workshops around crime, antisocial behaviour and drug and alcohol misuse. The project helps young people aged 10-19 to build resilience, resist peer pressure and improve their expectations for the future.

#### HIGHLIGHTS

14 young people attended a week-long residential trip to Cornwall, where they engaged in confidence and team building activities as well as surf lessons at Sennen Surf School. 10 young leaders also attended the trip where they volunteered their time for the week, supporting staff in running the trip, taking charge of activities and enhancing their skills and work experience.

10 young people attended a life changing skiing trip to Alpe D'Huez in the French Alps. The group spent the week learning to ski and for many, it was their first trip abroad.

# 566

young people with increased confidence and self-worth

| Young people who have engaged with<br>our Youth Work Projects        | 1400 |
|--|------|
| Young people with increased confidence and self-worth                | 566  |
| Young people who have gained<br>employment knowledge and experience  | 389  |
| Young people who have engaged volunteering and leadership activities | 256  |

TRIPLE A ASPIRATION, AMBITION AND ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAMME YMCA SUTTON COLDFIELD

"Triple A is the reason my confidence has been boosted so much... The staff at the YMCA have played a very big part in my life; they're always there to talk to, they will never judge you or make fun of you." James, 15, Triple A Member I originally joined the YMCA with the Young Carers group. I started off with very little confidence, always thinking I was being judged and looked at all the time, wanting to just stay back in case someone was looking and laughing at me.

Later on, I got to know more people within this group and found out they were a lot like me; very little confidence, not really wanting to socialise.

My confidence grew when I was invited to go on a trip to Cornwall. I met the Triple A team and soon got to know them; they spoke to me and made me feel welcome within their friendship group.

However, I was still always that kid that kinda just waited for people to come and talk to me. I would sit inside until someone would come and say "hey". I always felt awkward introducing myself to people or going up and joining people, especially because I didn't know them at all. I just felt like I was judged with everything I did.

After the Cornwall trip, I started going to the Triple A youth club on Tuesdays and soon got to know everyone there. Triple A is the only reason my confidence has been boosted so much. I used to suffer from so much anxiety. I never wanted to socialise because I'm scared of meeting new people. I was never even able to order a cheeseburger from McDonalds without having an anxiety attack or something. I still have difficulties socialising. I still hate trying new things unless I know at least one person in the room.

The Staff at the YMCA have to, they will never judge you feeling like you can't handle something on your own, they won't let it go unnoticed. I was feeling very stressed at one point and just felt like there was no point in me even being on Earth. Someone had obviously noticed and asked to talk to me. I told them what was going on that is. That's the biggest lesson I learnt. If you ever need to talk, never keep your stress to vourself because it won't help. Never keep it held back there to grow bigger and destroy you slowly because it will get worse.

If you are a young male like me, suffering from depression, anxiety, any mental health matter, then the biggest advice I can give is to definitely try and talk to someone. It doesn't matter who, as long you feel comfortable talking to them. Trust me it will help a lot.

#### HEALTH & WELLBEING

# We believe that young people should have the leadership opportunities they deserve.

#### **GIRLS MOVE**

Our Girls move project encourages young women aged 11-15 to engage in Sport or Physical Activity, developing their confidence and leadership skills. This year, our young leaders have lead over 320 instances of social action. This adds up to an incredible 1,125 hours of their own time to deliver nontraditional sport and physical activity sessions to their peers and to young children in the community.

Their social action engaged a further 300+ young people aged 5-18, and 15 adults with learning disabilities in sport or physical activity through structured and free play activities. We have delivered sessions in local parks, schools and school holiday programmes.

In October, we took 8 young women on a leadership training residential to the Isle of Mull in Scotland. As well as participating in a variety of physical activities from walking to pony trekking, the group also had the opportunity to shape the training and programmes for future Girls Move young leaders. This was a unique opportunity for these girls, developing a programme for young people by young people.

Our volunteers have loved being a part of the programme so much that they refuse to leave! This year we celebrated our volunteers by throwing an awards ceremony for them. They received recognition of their volunteering contributions as well as personalised awards highlighting key qualities recognised during their volunteering period.

# 1,125 hours of volunteering delivered

| Instances of social action delivered                            | 320  |
|---|------|
| Hours of volunteering   | 1125 |
| % of girls with increased confidence and self-worth             | 85%  |
| % of girls who experienced a positive impact on their happiness | 81%  |
| % of volunteers who will continue<br>to volunteer in the future | 85%  |

"Girls Move has helped me to develop my level of self-love and confidence. It has also helped me to build strong friendships and relationships with other girls." Romiqua, 14, GIRLS Move Peer Mentor

## GIRLS MOVE SOCIAL ACTION PROGRAMME YMCA SUTTON COLDFIELD

Romiqua joined Girls Move at the age of 14. She seemed bright and bubbly on the surface but she also suffered with social anxiety and low self-esteem. Romiqua began attended our training programme and we spent time discussing identity and culture and celebrating our differences. Romiqua steadily grew in confidence and bravely volunteered to support a local play scheme in Handsworth. Over time, Romiqua has become one of our most valued and hard-working volunteers. She is now part of a team of volunteers working at Laurel Road Community Sport Centre where she is responsible for welcoming children to the holiday club, planning and delivering sessions, taking payments and supporting other volunteers.

Over the last 12 months Romiqua has gone from strength to strength. She is a mentor for the Girls Move steering committee helping us to develop an up-todate and relevant programme for future young leaders. She has also become a mentor for new volunteers. In her spare time, Romiqua has become a Daily Mirror Next Gen article writer amongst other young people across the city.

With her positive and welcoming attitude and high ambitions, Romiqua is a valuable member of the Girls Move project and has a bright future ahead of her.

#### HEALTH & WELLBEING

# We believe that young people should be empowered to remove the stigma around mental health.

#### VIRTUALLY MINDED

Funded by Comic Relief, our Virtually Minded Project aims to raise awareness of male mental health in teenagers and young men. Mental health problems in young adults are worryingly common, especially depression, anxiety and misuse of alcohol and other drugs. With suicide being the biggest killer of men under 30, the project engages with local young males to provide education and training around mental health, using comic book art and social media campaigns to generate awareness and positive social action.

We were thrilled that the project was chosen by Comic Relief to be the focus of their nationwide school program, bringing awareness of male mental health into every secondary school in the country. The project was also featured on Comic Relief's Instagram Takeover by Formula 1 legend, Lewis Hamilton.

The project has always used creativity as a way for young males to express their feelings and emotions. 15 project members were given the chance to attend a music workshop to write and record their own raps and songs about mental health. And when project members showed an interest and flair for the written word, we launched a blog site to showcase their work and inspire other young people struggling with mental health

November 2019 saw the return of our Comic Con event organised by a team of 30 Virtual Heroes. With over 200 attendees from the local community, the event continues to promote vital awareness to stamp out the stigma attached to mental health.

#### VIRTUALLY MINDED MINIS

Launched in October 2019 and also funded by Comic Relief, this project works with younger males aged 10-12 to raise awareness of male mental health. Particular focus is given to students transitioning from Year 6 to Year 7 to ease the step up to secondary school and support their mental health at this time of change.

Working to the proven methods and structure of its parent project, we created a steering group and developed the training programme with its 10 members during a residential at Ackers Adventure. The group have risen to the creative challenge using TikTok as one of their chosen platform to raise awareness.

The steering group also benefitted from equine assisted therapy courtesy of Choices to facilitate talking about emotions and feelings and trying out different coping strategies.



# 248

young men with better mental health & wellbeing

| No. of hours delivered                        | 624 |
|---|-----|
| Young males who have engaged with the project | 308 |
| Better mental health & wellbeing              | 248 |
| Greater levels of confidence & self-worth     | 184 |
| Improved creative ability & expression        | 183 |

"To have the opportunity to speak about my mental health was a big thing. I met these lovely people and I feel like they're family to me now." Reece, 17, Virtually Minded Member

## VIRTUALLY MINDED MALE MENTAL HEALTH PROJECT YMCA SUTTON COLDFIELD

Reece is 17 and studying engineering at college. He's the youngest of four and lives with his mum and one of his brothers. Reece was just 10 when his dad left and he hasn't had an easy time since. He began helping to care for his mum, who needs support with her mobility and help with household jobs like cooking and cleaning. They had to move to a new area where there were high levels of crime and anti-social behaviour. Reece didn't know anyone and found his new surroundings intimidating.

On top of these big changes and his caring responsibilities, Reece was being badly bullied at school. He was shouted at every day and experienced regular physical attacks included being hit on the legs with a bat. The mounting pressure left Reece experiencing depression and anxiety. Reece started receiving anonymous text messages mocking him and encouraging him to kill himself. These were the worst years of Reece's life and he felt there was no one he could trust.

When he was struggling the most, he felt unable to confide in his friends and didn't want to worry his mum. Reece felt there was a lot of pressure for young people to be outwardly tough and emotionless. He believes it's particularly hard for young men to let their guard down and speak out about how they are feeling.

We met Reece a couple of years ago when he joined our new male mental health programme. It was the support he needed at a crucial time and helped him to remain resilient when he was feeling his lowest.

Without Virtually Minded, Reece doesn't know where he'd be. Reece now uses his own experiences to encourage others to do the same and has recently taken on a mentor role to support the youngest members of the group.

Reece believes young people deserve to live the best life they can, and that nobody should have to go through difficult times alone. He feels it is vital that young people feel confident to share and talk about how they are feeling. In the future, he hopes to train as a youth worker so that he can continue to support others and help to inspire change.

#### PLAY WORK

# We believe that all children should have the chance to play and learn in a safe environment.

#### LITTLE LODGE

Funded by Children in Need, Little Lodge is a play provision offering much needed play and respite opportunities for children aged 5-9 years on the Falcon Lodge Estate.

The project aims to raise the aspirations and ambitions of young people and offer them opportunities they would not otherwise have access to.

We offer weekly 2 hour play sessions and deliver 10 activity days and 5 aspirational trips per year, using play work to facilitate learning and personal growth in disadvantaged children

This year, as well as a focus on trips and activities, we have partnered with our Virtually Minded project to bring mental health training into play sessions. Creating awareness of mental health through play encourages children to talk about their feelings and emotions from a young age, helping to remove the stigma.

#### HOLIDAY CLUB

We provide a high quality, inclusive Holiday Club for children aged between 5-11 years old with a wide range of activities and play opportunities. We work closely with the children and their families to get their input into activities and children are also able to enjoy trips as part of the programme.

| Play work hours for disadvantaged children                            | 164 |
|---|-----|
| Children receiving aspirational support<br>and learning opportunities | 63  |
| Young children with improved confidence and self-belief               | 52  |
| Children with increased aspirations                                   | 56  |

47

disadvantaged children better equipped to resist coercion

"Little Lodge is great for Charlie. The staff are so great and so patient. They've really helped him with managing his behaviours." Mum to Charlie, 9, Little Lodge Member

### LITTLE LODGE AFTER SCHOOL PLAY SCHEME YMCA SUTTON COLDFIELD

Charlie is 9 years old. He joined the Little Lodge project when we first opened and attended with his brother. Charlie has Autism and ADHD, but attends mainstream education. At first, he had very little respect for staff members and did not know how to manage his own emotions. We quickly realised that his confidence and selfworth were very low.

Charlie struggled with his emotions, often getting angry and finding it hard to calm down. Heartbreakingly, Charlie would also call himself names during outbursts, saying that he was stupid or an idiot.

So we worked hard with Charlie over a long period of time in order to build trust so that we could help him make positive changes. We used 'silent' life coaching with Charlie, using role play and activities to teach him how to manage his emotions and increase his confidence and self-worth. His Youth Worker was able to build up a strong, positive relationship with Charlie, learning how to best to work with him and help him.

Charlie is now an active member of the group. He shows great leadership skills and works well when given some responsibility. He still has momentary lapses of self-doubt, but his confidence and self-worth have increased significantly.

Charlie's outbursts are much less frequent and he is learning how to manage his emotions and communicate his feelings more easily. He has taken part in many day trips and activities which have broadened his horizons and given him opportunities he would not otherwise have had access to.

Next year we look forward to supporting Charlie into our junior youth club and helping him in his transition to secondary school.

#### Chamber of Commerce Charity of the Year May 2019

YMCA Sutton Coldfield are voted as the Sutton Coldfield Chamber of Commerce Charity of the Year beginning a 2 year fundraising partnership with the Chamber.

#### Youth Cornwall Camping Trip July 2019

24 inner city young people learnt how to surf at Sennen Cove.

#### Leadership Training in Isle of Mull for Girls Move Project October 2019

8 young girls experienced a luxury retreat on the Isle of Mull with the chance to shape a peer mentor programme to improve selfesteem in young girls.

#VirtualHero

#### CELEBRATING OUR WORK

# Our year in pictures...

#### Youth Works Conference November 2019

YMCA co-hosts the 3rd and final Birmingham Youth Works Conference, bringing together over 100 Youth Workers across Birmingham.

#### YMCA hosts Comic Con November 2019

174 people attended our second Comic Con event, organised by young men from our Virtually Minded male mental health project.

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#### Henwood Court Charity Bake-off November 2019

Local Financial Services company hosts a charity bakeoff judged by members of our Stepping Up group.

#### Alleykats 'Aladdin' Show December 2019

The YMCA Alleykats theatre group entertain audiences at Highbury Theatre with their colourful performance of Aladdin.

#### **CELEBRATING OUR WORK**

# Our year in pictures...

#### Youth Ski Trip February 2020

Trip to the French Alps for 10 young carers to learn how to ski.

#### The Big Sofa Surf 27th March 2020

125 supporters swap sheets for the sofa as Corona Virus forces a creative change to our annual Sleep Easy.

#### Sport Relief March 2020

One of our Virtually Minded members Reece is chosen as the face of the 2020 Sport Relief schools campaign, inspiring young people with his mental health story.

# A big thank you

We couldn't do the vital work that we do without the many charitable trusts, foundations, groups and businesses who support us.

This year, we would like to thank the following organisations for their support:

**Baron Davenport Trust Big Lottery Fund Birmingham City Council BNI Elite Sutton Coldfield British Council** Britwell Road Community Group Children In Need Cole Charitable Trust **Comic Relief** Edward Cadbury Trust **Eveson Charitable Trust Grantham Yorke Trust** Henwood Court Financial Planning Ian Hazel Funerals Ltd John Stedeford & Sons Langdale Trust Love Ladies Business Group (Sutton Coldfield & Tamworth)

**LTSB Foundation** 

Masonic Charitable Foundation Meta4 Business Mastermind Group Midland Mencap Moor Hall Hotel NHS Bham South and Central **PWC Birmingham** Royal Sutton Cycling Club (RSCC) **Roval Sutton Coldfield Town Council** Simpsons Gin Bar Sport England St James Church Sutton Coldfield Chamber of Commerce The George Henry Collins Trust The Grimmitt Trust The Henry Smith Charity The W.E.D Trust **YMCA England** YMCA Germany











#### HOW YOU CAN HELP

**£5** could pay for the transport of a group of young adults with learning disabilities

£10 could pay for one respite session for an isolated Young Carer

£30 could pay for a life coaching session for a young person in crisis

£50 could pay for an intense family support visit for a family in crisis

£80 could pay for a day of respite for a child with disabilities



#### DONATE TODAY

| First Name:   |
|---|
| Last Name:  |
| Address:  |
| Postcode:   |
| Monthly Donation Single Donation £5   £10   £30   £50   £80   |
| I have enclosed a cheque payable to Sutton Coldfield YMCA   |
| I will pay by Visa   Mastercard   Maestro   |
| Card Number:  |
| Expiry Date: Signature:   |
| I will pay by bank transfer to Sutton Coldfield YMCA<br>Lloyds Bank Account No: 00085400 Sort Code: 30-98-37  |
| GIFT AID - please treat the enclosed as a Gift Aid donation. I am a UK taxpayer and have paid / will pay income<br>and / or Capital Gains Tax for the current year (6 April - 5 April) that is at least equal to the tax that all charities and<br>CASCS that I donate to wil reclaim on my gifts for the current tax year. I understand tht other taxes such as VAT &<br>Council Tax do not qualify. I understand that the charity will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1.00 that I have given. |

To find out more, get involved or to donate, please visit our website at www.ymcasc.org.uk

Email: admin@ymcasc.org.uk

Call: 0121 354 5614



Charity number: 1008752



YMCA enables people to develop their full potential in mind, body and spirit. Inspired by, and faithful to, our Christian values, we create supportive, inclusive and energising communities, where young people can truly belong, contribute and thrive.

SUPPORT & ADVICE

ACCOMMODATION