

Filling the holiday gap with activity and healthy food

Teenagers from the Newry and Mourne area recently took part in a summer scheme with a difference. Apart from keeping active, the young people aged between 11 and 17 years also learnt how to cook nutritious, healthy food.

The pilot “Kilkeel Gets Active” youth summer programme encourages young people to stay active during summer months and helps them understand the importance of healthy living by providing them with the skills and confidence to cook small simple meals on a budget.



Kilkeel Gets Active Youth Summer Programme led by Pathways Adventure NI, CiNI, SPACE NI, Newry, Mourne and Down Council and CYPSP

Pauline Leeson, Chief Executive of Children in Northern Ireland commented on the programme, “We are delighted that so many young people have participated in these activities. Parents have the added strain on their household budgets during the school holidays, this programme goes some way to ease that financial pressure and ensure children are not socially excluded.”

She also added: “We also hope that the Northern Ireland Executive will see the benefits of such schemes and recognise that more programmes like this are needed during the long summer holidays.”

A recent Northern Ireland Child Poverty Alliance conference held Stormont in May 2016 highlighted that there are approximately 23% children living in poverty in Northern Ireland in comparative to UK average of 11%.

Allison Slater from Supporting People and Communities Everyday (SPACE), a charity offering bespoke family support in the Newry and Mourne Area offers their experience, “during the long school holidays many families struggle to meet the financial cost of having children at home all day. Activities, daytrips, additional child care, and extra food that are needed when children are at home can put many families under extreme financial pressure”.

The programme brought a range of experts together including the Children and Young People Strategic Partnership, SPACE, Pathways Adventure and Children in Northern Ireland to deliver challenging team building activities for young people, coupled with fun cookery sessions. At the end of the two week-long scheme, the participants also received an OCN Award in Healthy Living for the Individual.



Young people from the Newry and Mourne area completing the OCN Healthy Living Programme during the Kilkeel Gets Active Summer programme



Young people keeping active on the bungee run during the Kilkeel Gets Active Summer programme

Feedback from the young people was very positive and among the comments were “I have met lots of new people and for one of the activities, I got to go to the beach for the first time ever” and “I have never cooked anything in the kitchen before and today I’ve just made Spaghetti Bolognese!”



Make Lunch Session with Southern Regional College Home Economics Tutor during the Killeel Gets Active Summer programme

The two week summer programme took place at the Samuel Boyd Hall in Killeel and up to 20 young people were involved.

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