



# Greenhill YMCA

## Youth Work Statement

### Introduction

The following statement seeks to lay out the purpose of Greenhill YMCA. It states the purpose and context of which our work takes place, and outlines the basis for how we aim to achieve this.

### What is the YMCA trying to achieve?

Greenhill seeks to create a non formal learning environment for young people which allows them to develop through positive relationships, growth in self confidence and through active participation in group activities.

We support the development of personal assets in individual young people. These assets are within a context of holistic personal development <sup>1[1]</sup> combining the elements of body mind and spirit.

We believe every young person is a valued member of our community with much to contribute as they fulfil their full potential. We recognise the important role of the young person's family <sup>2</sup> in their development. We wish to create environments and activities where young people can recognise and appreciate the diversity of our society.

We accept young people need to make informed choices about their lifestyle, especially in the area of personal health, and learn to appreciate our wonderful outdoor environment. As a faith based organisation we are also keen to create opportunities for young people to explore their personal faith journeys.

In short our desire is to create safe places for young people to explore their own world, the community they live in and to have positive and challenging relationships.

Youth work definition:

*'A planned programme of education designed for the purpose of aiding and enhancing personal and social development of young persons through their voluntary involvement'*

### How does the YMCA work to achieve this?

Greenhill plans its programmes with clear aims in mind. The programmes are devised as responses to identified needs within each visiting group. Working alongside the young people and their leaders, we seek to build up their personal assets <sup>3[2]</sup> such as social skills, self confidence, personal goals and positive values.

The main method of achieving this is through Instructor, young person relationships. Young people like most of us learn more through relationships than any other method, therefore the YMCA focuses on building constructive relationships with volunteers, staff and young people.

Our activities seek to bring challenge and increased self knowledge through experiential learning. The interactive voluntary nature of our programmes encourages young people to participate, take leadership in a manner that supports our vision . Participants and staff are encouraged to review after activities to ensure effectiveness.

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<sup>1</sup>[1] See appendix 1 Youth Work – A Deeper Look

<sup>2</sup> See appendix 3 Family Youth Work

<sup>3</sup>[2] See appendix 2 Building Strengths – A YMCA Ireland perspective on Assets



## What is the guiding philosophy that underpins Greenhill's programmes?

Mia Kellmer-Pringle defines the developmental needs of young people as;

- The need for love and security
- The need for praise and recognition
- The need for new experiences
- The need for responsibility

We design our activities and interactions to support development around these defined needs with strong support for healthy interaction and reflective learning.

To meet these needs our aim is to create a learning process that exploits the opportunity for creative development through four areas:

1. **Relationship building**
2. **Conversation & Dialogue**
3. **Participation**
4. **Experiential learning**

The prerequisites for any learning being created through Greenhill are contained in developing a culture within the Centre which establishes five pillars before activities start:

- **A Safe Space**
- **Invitational leadership**
- **Supportive feedback**
- **Effective communication modelled**
- **Context awareness**

The primary purpose of Greenhill is not the creation of excellence in outdoor activities e.g. climbing or canoeing but in using these as tools for greater personal development, self confidence and group trust. The communication skills of the staff member, their ability to actively show care and their demonstration of belief in the individual together in a shared learning experience is the most important aspect of the work.

To achieve these goals staff must develop the following skills:

Observation  
Creation  
Communication  
Anticipation  
Reflection  
& intervention

The timely and balanced use of these skills is of vital importance in supporting the visiting groups to achieve their goals.