

Annual report



2019 / 2020

**Providing a place and
purpose for young people**

Who we are

The Salmon Youth Centre has been reaching out to young people and their families in inner city London for over 100 years.

We inspire young people to reach their potential and contribute to their communities. We promote positive change in young people and support their transition to adulthood in three key ways:

- Improving young people's **health and wellbeing**
- Preparing young people for **education and work**
- Involving young people in positive **community engagement**

What we offer

We provide generic youth work for young people aged six to 25, across 35 weekly sessions, including adventure, arts, dance, drama, music and sports.

Alongside this, we deliver targeted provisions including:

- **Apprenticeship Scheme:** offering young people the opportunity to study and work
- **Harmonies of Hope:** our youth music empowerment programme
- **Mentoring:** one-to-one support for young people, including our disability befriending schemes
- **Mixables and Mixters:** our work with young people with disabilities
- **Work experience and student placements:** offering training opportunities in youth work
- **Young Leaders:** young people volunteering at Salmon and working towards their Duke of Edinburgh Award

Health & wellbeing



“If it wasn't for what you do, I know life would be different for them.” PARENT

At the Salmon Youth Centre, we want to promote health and wellbeing through activities that young people enjoy. Popular activities create opportunities to discuss these important topics with our young people.

MENTAL AND PERSONAL WELLBEING

We provide a place for young people to talk about problems they have been experiencing at home and in other relationships.

In our 10-13s' club this year, our young people created vision boards to describe their dreams and aspirations for the future, including jobs, university, marriage and family. Our youth workers have been able to build positive relationships with the young people in the group and we often see the young people going straight up to a youth worker to catch up as soon as they arrive.

The relationships between our youth workers and the young people in our 14-16s' club have also grown from strength to strength.

Social media and the need to 'fit in' can lead to anxiety in our teenagers. This year we ran workshops for our 14-16s about managing stress and mental health.

These workshops gave the young people new tools to manage the stresses of life and helped them develop resilience. We explored the topics of anger, supporting your friends, healthy relationships, and trauma and bereavement, based on the UK Heads Up resources. The young people were able to talk to trusted adults who helped them think about how to control their own thoughts, emotions and behaviour.

GETTING ACTIVE

Trying new sports can spark new interests in young people and promote long-term physical activity. At the Salmon Youth Centre, we want our young people to understand the role physical activity plays in improving their wellbeing.

This year at Salmon:

39 wheelchair basketball sessions for both disabled and non-disabled young people

39 climbing sessions using our 12m outdoor climbing wall, giant swing, cargo net and indoor traverse wall

39 trampoline coaching sessions with 34 certificates awarded this year for trampoline skills

78 tennis sessions improving our young people's focus and confidence

117 gym sessions including two mixed 14+ sessions and one 'girls only' session per week

156 football sessions with 327 young people taking part in football overall this year

78 weekly dance sessions working towards live dance performances, as well as formal qualifications



Our 14+ girls' sessions have covered a variety of physical activities including multigym, dance work outs, and swimming. The group also cooks together and discusses important topics such as healthy eating, faith, families, sex, future aspirations and mental health.

“We have had a Capoeira instructor come into our 6-9s' club sessions for a number of weeks. None of them had done it before. It was like introducing them to a whole new way to play together.”

YOUTH WORKER

THE ARTS

Music and art are popular activities with our young people.

195 music sessions including guitar lessons, piano lessons, choirs, drumming workshops, lyric writing sessions and digital music production sessions

In our music studio, young people can record their own tracks using the soundproof booth, and our sound engineer can put their recordings together for them. This is incredibly popular with our 14+ age group. Writing lyrics is a great way for young people to express their hardships and frustrations. The vulnerable nature of this allows youth workers to support and guide young people through difficult conversations around knives, crime and poverty.

156 art sessions led by our artist-in-residence youth worker

Art provides a great opportunity for young people to slow down and reflect. Our young people are able to try out different mediums, including charcoal drawing, pencil drawing, spray painting, clay modelling, oil painting, t-shirt printing, and creating collages.

For young people who are ready to make art their career, our artist-in-residence Eugene provides specialist one-on-one support. This can include helping them put together an art portfolio or public art exhibition, advising on how to advertise and sell their art pieces, and helping them to get a job in a gallery.

This year, members of our 10-13s' art club showcased their work at a Salmon event attended by members of the general public. This was a great motivation and an opportunity for our young people to have positive conversations with the public.

DISABILITY WORK

This year we have continued to see more disabled young people accessing our ‘mainstream’ activities and being supported to engage with these successfully in the long term.

Our staff team provide truly accessible youth work and promote more inclusive environments for young people. We have also seen great friendships forming between disabled and non-disabled young people.

Our **Mixables** club for disabled young people aged 12-18 has grown, with a number of new members joining after a coffee morning at Spa school. Each member of the group has made good progress in their engagement and social skills.

The needs of the young people in the Mixables group are high. In September our staff team attended a Team Teach training course which was helpful for managing episodes of challenging behaviour.

We have also seen a number of new young people trying out our **Mixters** club for those aged 19-25. Recently, the young people in this group have been able to share their talents with each other in sports, art and music.

Activities for our disabled young people in the **school holidays** have

included: day trips to London Zoo, a Christmas pantomime, ten-pin bowling, an Easter residential at Hindleap Warren outdoor activity centre, and a new playscheme held at Salmon for 14 young people with complex needs referred to us by social services.

All these activities were successful in giving young people and families respite from each other in school holiday time, and enabling young people to experience new activities, spend time with their peers and gain independence.

Connect 2 is a scheme which pairs up disabled young people with trained volunteers who take them out into the local community. The scheme is designed to help improve young people's confidence and independence skills, as they have fun and get out and about. Parents have valued the respite that this provides them and young people enjoy building their skills in travelling, communication and using money.

SPIRITUALITY

As a Christian youth centre, we seek to provide opportunities to explore the Christian faith in all our work, but especially in our ‘Salmon Sunday’ sessions and residential trips to Christian summer camps.

We invite our young people to our Salmon Sunday sessions, where we pray, worship God and study the Bible together. We want to share the good news of Jesus with our young people and show them that Christian faith is about a relationship with God.

This year 40 young people came along, many of whom are not from church backgrounds. To help young people make the transition into church for themselves, we spent time visiting local churches and Christian youth events with them, so that they could see church in many different formats.

In our 6-9s’ club, we explore Bible stories with the young people, using fun group activities to help explain the gospel message. The young people in this group have had some great questions this year, such as ‘If God and the devil had a big fight who would win?’, ‘How did Jesus come back from the dead?’ and ‘How do I pray?’

At all our clubs, our staff find creative ways to explore the Christian faith with the young people.

For example, our 10-13s’ football club pray before they start the session, our dancers learn Bible memory verses, and our 14+ group members go home with a Bible verse and a personal encouragement written by our staff and volunteers. We also run a regular ‘prayer station’ where young people can post prayer requests for our youth workers to pray through.



This year, 26 of our 14-16s took part in an Alpha course, with some using their artwork to explore who God is and what He means to them.

Education & work



“I’ve learnt a lot about how the youth workers work with the young people and have their welfare at the heart of everything.”

WORK EXPERIENCE STUDENT

The activities at the Salmon Youth Centre are intentionally structured to help young people build soft skills that are transferable to school and work contexts.

For example, our 6-9s’ group members have enjoyed opportunities for volunteering, such as scanning each other on the door and washing up at the snack bar.

We have been able to support young people in finding relevant work experience, accessing available funding and applying for driving licenses.

BACON'S COLLEGE LUNCH CLUB

For the last two years, we have been running lunchtime sports activities at Bacon's College.

The College has noticed a decrease in challenging behaviour and fights when we are there. The lunch club also enables us to build relationships with local young people and advertise our clubs and events to them personally.

APPRENTICES

14 apprentices from a wide variety of backgrounds and situations

Our apprentices come to the Salmon Youth Centre either because they specifically want to train to be youth workers, or more commonly because they have become disengaged with education and work, and need some direction.

Many of them face multiple difficulties in their day-to-day lives, such as homelessness, separation from families, mental health problems, financial problems, discrimination, involvement with the criminal justice system, disability, chaotic home lives, and bereavement.

Our apprentices get involved in all of the youth work sessions we deliver at Salmon on a weekly basis, as well as trips out and mentoring relationships. They are a valuable part of our team, being closer in age to our young people and able to relate to them in a different way.

This year, we have been focusing on tailoring each apprentice's experience to their likely future career direction and creating suitable training opportunities. We have also enabled our apprentices to gain work experience outside Salmon and to develop personal, social and life skills.

Considering the multiple difficulties that many of our apprentices face, it is a great achievement that most of them leave Salmon and move onto employment or further education. We continue to support those who are still looking for their next step.



WORK EXPERIENCE

37 young people took part in work experience

Most of our work experience students this year came from local secondary schools. Work experience students spend a week or two working alongside our staff team and gaining an insight into how we do excellent youth work.

We have a fruitful partnership with The City of London School. A large number of boys from the school have supported our generic youth club sessions and taught specialised sport, art and music sessions. They grow so much themselves as they develop their communication and leadership skills. It is wonderful to see these young men come into a very diverse setting and get stuck in, building relationships with disadvantaged young people with a 'can-do' attitude.

Community engagement



“I've loved the residential. I've made amazing friends here and it helped me realise that there is more to being a Christian than just reading the Bible and praying. I feel like I've been in a very strong family who care for each other.”

YOUNG PERSON

MENTORING

51 young people received one-to-one mentoring in areas such as future aspirations, spirituality, wellbeing and relationships

At the Salmon Youth Centre, we believe that every young person has potential. We are committed to inspiring each young people to reach their full potential and contribute positively to the community they live in. Mentoring is one of the keys to achieving this goal. Young people can be mentored in our youth work sessions and by volunteers from the community.

Our young people can choose to meet regularly with a community mentor who can provide a listening ear. They can give advice on choosing a career, encouragement to apply for jobs, and undivided attention, all of which may be lacking in the young people's homes.

“My mentoring experience has been amazing. No matter how big or small of a problem, [my mentor] was such a good listener and helped me to lay out my problems and think in a clear way. I have seen myself improve with solving problems maturely without overthinking and adapt my own strategies.”

YOUNG PERSON

OPEN ACCESS CLUBS

Open access work is at the heart of everything we do. Throughout the year, we run age-specific open access club sessions, where young people can take part in a wide range of activities at the Salmon Youth Centre.

This year at Salmon:

122 young people took part in our 6-9s' club

81 young people took part in our 10-13s' club

179 young people took part in our 14-16s' club

88 young people took part in our 14+ club



PEER RELATIONSHIPS

At our 6-9s' clubs, we aim to create a family atmosphere that is welcoming to newcomers. We celebrate birthdays and achievements, especially when they are related to good social skills, participation and confidence. This has created a good atmosphere in the group, with a decrease in playfighting and arguments. Young people are engaging more positively with each other (especially with disabled young people) in group games.

Many of the young people in our 10-13 girls' club were dealing with conflict, both with each other and with family members. Sometimes these conflicts even prevented them coming to Salmon.

To address this, we ran six workshops and events, looking at the importance of respect and building positive relationships. Mentoring relationships also enabled these young people to discuss their problems and receive advice.

As a result, we have seen young people resolving their own arguments with their peers. At the start of the year, many of the girls were reluctant to take part in group games, but towards the end they were happy to do activities together.



ENGAGING WITH POLITICS

Our 10-13s' 'Presidency Campaign' project helped the group explore politics, democracy and voting.

Young people put themselves forward to run for president. They were assigned a mentor to help them write and deliver a speech, design posters and talk about their campaign promises.

The president was voted in by the young people and became the voice for the group. She ran a committee that met every four weeks to talk about upcoming trips and ideas to improve club sessions.

During the UK general election this year, we encouraged the young people in our 14+ group to register to vote and to take online questionnaires to see which party aligned most with their views. We also had a lively debate about different political issues. Most of the young people had views on these topics but didn't realise that they were 'political' issues

For our 14-16s' group, we partnered with the British Transport Police (BTP) to reflect on the topic of hate crime using music, art and a quiz. The BTP presented the topic to the club who then created t-shirts and music reflecting their thoughts and feelings around hate crime.

RESIDENTIALS, TRIPS AND HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES

Residential, trips and holiday activities give young people opportunities to step out of their comfort zones, learn new skills and make new friends. Many of our young people wouldn't have had these kinds of experiences without Salmon.

95 young people took part in 9 residentials

Highlights included: an activity week at PGL for 7-13s, learning to sail a 72ft challenger yacht around the English Channel for our 14-19s, camping at the Soul Survivor Christian festival, and a seven-country exchange in Germany for our Young Leaders.

341 young people took part in 28 trips

Highlights included: white water rafting, go-karting, paintballing, Thorpe Park, Go Ape, professional music studios, art galleries, theatres, Christian festivals, and a visit to our corporate partners for a day in industry with Gallup and Price Water House Cooper.

11 young people took part in our disability holiday scheme

The disability holiday scheme ran for five days, from 10am to 2pm. The young people's disabilities included autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and Down's syndrome.

The young people took part in a wide range of activities and were encouraged to step out of their comfort zones. All the young people made new friends, and as the week went on, we saw great improvements in their confidence and ability to express their feelings.

97 young people took part in our 6-13s' holiday scheme

Our 6-13s' holiday scheme ran for five days, from 10am to 2pm. The young people were put into teams at the beginning of the week to encourage them to make new friends. They took part in a whole host of activities including: team challenges, trampolining, climbing, cooking, and a trip to the cinema. There was a daily slot called MCK (Making Christ Known) to explore Christian topics such as God's love, forgiveness, and the cross.

Six of our 14+ group helped to lead a team at the holiday scheme. It was great to see them lead and support the younger ones, gaining invaluable leadership experience, work experience and, best of all, confidence.



FAMILY SUPPORT

25 families supported with a range of challenges

At Salmon we want to support families who are facing particular difficulties. This year, this has involved supporting parents in understanding and managing their children's behaviour, offering practical help to families in crisis with housing or financial situations, supporting young people and parents who are involved in the criminal justice system, visiting those in prison, and attending court appearances. We have also supported those suffering with poor mental or physical health.

Families have often been dealing with a number of complex issues at the same time and have needed support in navigating and accessing support from relevant authorities and services.

YOUNG LEADERS

Young Leaders is our leadership programme for young people aged 14 and over. Young Leaders volunteer in at least one Salmon session each week and attend weekly training meetings.

The Young Leaders are a real asset to Salmon, as they provide a bridge between our youth workers and the young people who attend our sessions.

In 2019, four Young Leaders achieved their Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award. They volunteered at the Salmon Youth Centre, participated in a physical activity every week and learnt a new skill for six to 12 months. In the summer, they completed their expedition, walking 26km over two days, with one night of camping in the East Sussex area.

Eight of our Young Leaders were involved in a research project funded by the Mayor of London to find out how young people and the community view the police.

Our Young Leaders developed focus group questions and a short questionnaire with a target audience of 14-19 year olds. With the help of a researcher, the Young Leaders evaluated their findings and delivered a presentation to the North Bermondsey Ward Safer Neighbourhoods Panel.



Providing a place and purpose for young people

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