



## Prayer

*Your support in prayer is critical to our ministry, please pray with us!*

### Give thanks:

- That despite the challenges of COVID-19 we have been able to maintain meaningful contact with young people.
- For the deepening of relationships with young people and their willingness to open up and share and discuss the issues which they are having to deal with.
- For the encouraging news that the staff at Riverbank Primary School are keen to have the team back into the school in the new school term after the summer holidays.
- For the Lord's faithful support and care of the ministry among the young of Tillydrone.

### Pray:

- For Matthew and the volunteers as they seek to maintain existing and create new relationships with young people.
- For wisdom and the presence of the Holy Spirit to be with Matthew and volunteers as they deal with the complex and difficult issues presented by young people with whom they interact and that they would have the wisdom to know what exactly to say and when to say it.
- That the schools work would start again in Riverbank Primary School after the summer holidays and that the good relationship formed with the school head and staff would continue.
- That we would be enabled to have more of an impact among the young people who attend St Machar Academy.
- That Cage football events in Tillydrone would begin again later this month and that the Lord would bless this part of our ministry.
- For an increase in regular financial support for the ministry. We are currently operating with less finance coming in that we are having to expend.

## Thank you!

We thank you for your prayer support and interest in the ministry of North East Scotland Youth for Christ. It is truly great to know that there are people out there praying for what God does through us in the Tillydrone area of Aberdeen.

Please spread the word about our ministry and consider giving financial support. Sign up for the Newsletter and find out more at our website [www.nesyfc.org.uk](http://www.nesyfc.org.uk).

## Welcome

### DESPITE COVID-19 . . . WE ARE ENCOURAGED

It has been a challenging few months of having to adapt and re-adapt to the changing restrictions around COVID-19. While we remain very thankful for technology such as Zoom, Facebook etc, which has enabled us to engage with our young people online, we are very aware that the Tillydrone youth work team and our young people are very much suffering from online fatigue. Everyone is so desperate to get back to some form of normality and be able to meet together face-to-face.

A step in the direction of normality came in May when the easing of restrictions allowed us to meet face-to-face indoors with young people in a controlled setting, however access to schools remained out of reach. Alas the freedom to meet face-to-face was short lived and was stopped in June due to a COVID-19 spike in Tillydrone which eventually spread throughout the city.



Despite the ongoing challenges of COVID-19, we have nevertheless been encouraged by how the engagement with young people has gone. We have been able to maintain one-to-one support with young people. Through Illuminate, both online and face-to-face, we have had some great and meaningful conversations with young people around the issues that they face as they do life in our ever changing world. We have had the opportunity to discuss and answer some of the questions they have about such things as God and his existence, themselves, identity, moral issues etc.

We feel that we have made some great steps forward over the past months as we sought to build relationships with young people. Things haven't always been easy, especially having to deal with online stuff, but it has been such a joy and a privilege to work with and support them. We thank our Lord for His faithfulness and the opportunity to share and live out the gospel before these precious people.

Please pray for us as we work at restarting groups after the summer holidays and that we will have the freedom again to meet face-to-face and expand our work and support among the young people of Tillydrone.

*Tom Cowie, Chairperson*

## Update from Matthew

*We catch up with our youth worker Matthew Hamilton on what has been happening 'on the front line' during the past few months*



### ILLUMINATE

*(Regular Bible study, discussion group and games session for young people in S1 - S6)*

Many of our teens are struggling and wrestling with big questions about God, faith, life, and so much more. As a result we felt that it would be beneficial for them if we began a new series on 'Big Questions' earlier in the year. Basically the teens were able to submit any question which they wished to have discussed. We were flooded with all sorts of questions ranging from God and his existence to the issues that the young people are facing in today's world. A short talk was given on each question chosen followed by an open floor follow-up discussion and question session. The series seemed to go down really well with the teens openly engaging in the discussions.

Illuminate has taken place mostly online, however in late May, with the relaxation of COVID-19 restrictions, were again able to meet face-to-face. This was a great help as we seek to draw alongside and support the young people that we work with. There's nothing quite like seeing each other with our own eyes! Our newest series since meeting face to face has been on identity, specifically God's identity and how that reflects in us his creations. The young people attending are showing clear signs that they are eager to learn and searching for a deeper purpose in life.

The group will re-start after the school summer holidays later in August.

### RADIATE ONLINE

*(An online kids club for children in P3 - P7)*

Radiate has continued meeting online using Zoom. Each week the kids enjoy the Bible story, games, songs and memory verses. It really is a big kids club squeezed into 45 minutes. We find that for younger kids a shorter session online helps them stay engaged. We have been deeply encouraged over the last number of months by

those coming along, including some new kids.

Numbers have fluctuated up and down but we have had a core group of 2 or 3 kids who have come faithfully every week, learned their memory verse and really just throw themselves into the group. We have been able to build great relationships with the kids over the past few months.

Radiate will restart again after the school summer break later this month.

### ONE-TO-ONE SUPPORT

Our one-to-one programme runs for all those teens who attend Illuminate. We felt that it would be good for them to have a more personal form of discipleship. Each young person is paired with a leader and they may go for a coffee or something but most of the time they'll simply go for a walk. Many of our young people started off very shy and a bit nervous when out on a one-to-one. However, as time went on we saw a great change in a lot of them. They are now more comfortable and feel more free to speak about issues that they are facing in school or at home.

The one-to-one sessions have been great and a highlight of the ministry in the past months.

### IN SCHOOL YOUTH WORK

Over the past year the schools work in Riverbank and St Machar Academy has been on pause due to COVID-19. Our hope was that the schools would will involve us somehow in their new calendar at the start of August. As we neared the summer holiday break, we received some amazing news that the primary school do want all the groups (Bible Alive, Lighthouse Explorers, Riverbank Football Team Training) back in August! This was a major answer to prayer for us and one which we praise God for.

We will be in discussion with the schools now the summer holidays are over to co-ordinate with them the restart of the groups.

### THE CAGE

Our PANNA Football Cage has proved over the years to be a most excellent tool for outreach among young people. It has however been in storage since the start of the COVID-19



pandemic in March 2020.

We have over the past few months been working on preparing the Cage for use again, primarily in Tillydrone, as COVID restrictions ease. Our current plan is to hold our first event in the latter part of August and thereafter weekly on a Friday evening until the onset of winter.

### EASTER

Easter 2021 was truly brilliant! We had such a great time with children, teenagers and parents alike and received very positive feedback, even from non-Christian parents.

Over Easter week we released daily video devotionals to the kids, teenagers and parents! The videos lasted about five minutes each and each focused on a character from the Easter story e.g. Pilate, Jesus, Peter etc.

We put together Easter bundles for the kids and teens, consisting of Easter eggs, devotional books and other sweets. These seemed to go down very well . . . literally!

The highlight however, was the Easter egg hunt on Good Friday which was run in association with The Lighthouse Support Centre! Over 120 people (all socially distanced) turned up. Each family made their way around Tillydrone to find clues and Easter eggs! We got to speak to families who we hadn't seen for over a year and some who we hadn't met before. It was a brilliant day connecting with the local community.

*\*All pictures here were taken pre-lockdown*

