



# ENCOURAGEMENT IN EXILE

## Youth work as we knew it has died.

Two successive governments have dismantled youth services and the landscape of youth work has changed beyond all recognition. As we meet with youth workers across the UK, the same themes arise in conversation after conversation. People are struggling. They want to be establishing strong projects which are supporting young people to flourish. Instead, they are facing huge obstacles in workload and funding. Almost all their energy and resources are being absorbed in just keeping going.

Those who work with young people can feel like they're in exile – removed from a familiar land and dropped into a new world; under-equipped and out of place. It can be hard to work out how to adapt. What of our old values and practices do we hold to? What changes do we need to make in order to survive?

We can find some encouragement in the stories of those exiled from Israel. Daniel didn't choose to be in Babylon, but he threw himself into to the opportunities presented to him and he worked for the well-being of the land he was living in. At the same time, he held his commitment to live obediently to God and to put this first.

A key part of our work at this time is helping youth workers and projects to navigate this new land. In some cases, that is through welcoming them in to our community of practice and connecting them with supportive peers (see page 2). In others, it is about providing great resources (see page 4) or modelling a way of working which they haven't encountered before (see page 3).

We know that those in exile need all the support and encouragement we can offer. Thank you for standing with us as we reach out to them.



Debbie Garden

# content



**GROWING  
COMMUNITY**

2



**TOUGH CHOICES /  
CONSEQUENCES**

4



**FYT INTERACT-ING  
AT GREENBELT**

6



**FIRST  
BIRTHDAY**

3



**A SEASON FOR  
CHANGE?**

7



**TRUSTEE  
NEWS**

8

# GROWING COMMUNITY

**It is with great pleasure that we can announce that Clevedon YMCA has joined Frontier Youth Trust's StreetSpace Community.**

Clevedon YMCA, founded in 1875, is a community organisation working with children and young people in the seaside town of Clevedon, near Bristol. They have a lovely building in the town centre, which they use primarily to run clubs for teenagers, as well as sessions for young adults, adults with disabilities and others in the community.

Clevedon YMCA found out about Frontier Youth Trust through their newest recruit, Danielle Curtis, who has been volunteering with StreetSpace Weston-Super-Mare for the last 3 years. The team in Clevedon felt that they too could benefit from belonging to a network of Christian youth projects, working in their communities. They are particularly excited to adopt some of FYT's thinking and resources on discipleship. For example they can envisage using our 9-stage process for growing church with young people in their youth club, with opportunities to work with small groups based on their needs and interests.

Jane Bird, the Manager for the YMCA, says, "We're joining up to StreetSpace because it makes good sense to work together. We work closely with many churches in Clevedon so why not work with a Christian charity who has the same ethos and beliefs as us? Our Board

members were delighted with the work Frontier Youth Trust do. I was personally very impressed by the presentation of the 9-stages and would love to start using the same programme at the YMCA. We have amazing youth workers who will really benefit from joining up and chatting to other youth workers. This should inform the development of our sessions as we can all learn from each other."

It's a double whammy for StreetSpace: both that a local volunteer has recommended us as a home for pioneer youth work to their new project, and that we have partnered with an amazing group of people serving their local community of Clevedon. We're

excited about this new addition because of what we can learn from the YMCA team. They have a long history of amazing work and are working really hard to reach young people who will never go through the doors of a traditional church.

Over the next year we are planning to partner with 10 new projects, with groups already emerging in Hartlepool, Durham and across London. We are really grateful for your gifts that help us support more youth workers working on the frontline.





# FIRST BIRTHDAY!

**ONE YEAR! We've been going for one year! So much has happened in Middlesbrough, even since my last update, so let's catch up a bit!**

Over the summer, our team were able to spend loads of time on the streets, getting to know more young people. Detached youth work is our gig – being present on an estate, walking alongside young people and seeing what emerges. This kind of trust takes time to build, but it was mint (*Andy-speak for "great"!*) last month to take significant steps with several groups.

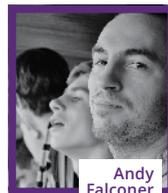
With one group, some older young people who hang out at the MUGA (multi-use games area), it was simply that we were welcome on their patch. Other groups click more quickly – 2 young people (Josh and Ben) walked us round the places in Whinney Banks that they want to see improved. Another group are co-creating a comic book. Meanwhile, in the terraced streets, we were at the heart of some alley regenerations. Young people are leading the way.

We started this first year aiming to establish youth work in Middlesbrough which modelled symbiotic and shalom values. That meant us taking gradual steps to being accepted long-term on Whinney Banks. We're now in touch with over 100 youth there, with small



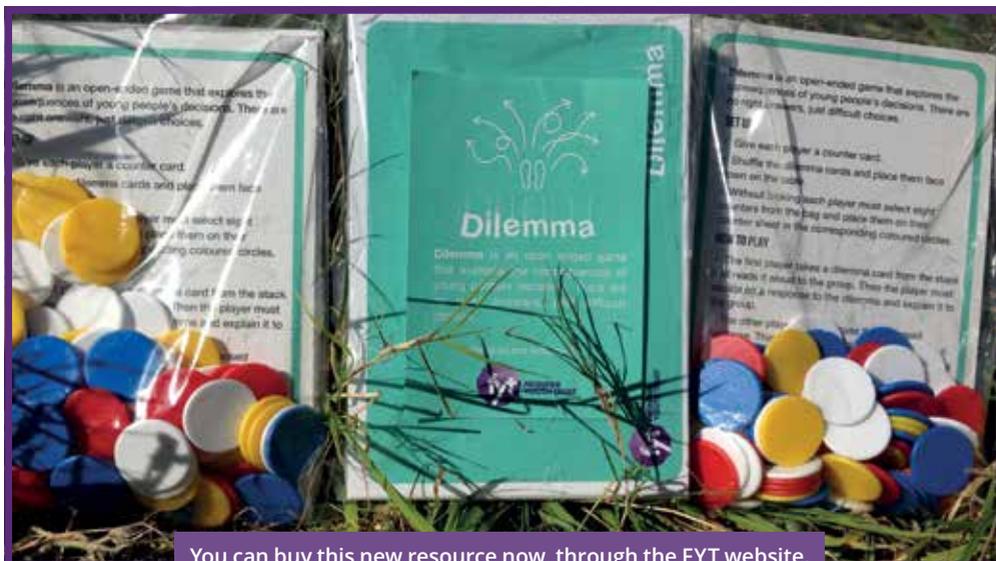
groups flourishing. We also wanted to help inspire new work across the region. Just in Middlesbrough we're now working in six neighbourhoods and exploring some very exciting spin-off projects. There have been frustrations, misunderstandings and obstacles. Of course there have. This is the life of an activist. But we have achieved so much.

Thank you for all the support you offer. We look forward to 2017, especially for those group spaces to deepen the relationships we've made. Please pray for us as we seek the best ways to sustain work in 'Boro long-term. Pray also for our evolving local team as our work moves to new, riskier stages.



Andy Falconer

# TOUGH CHOICES CAN HAVE TOUGH CONSEQUENCES



You can buy this new resource now, through the FYT website.

**Young people often face tough choices. We wanted to develop a resource that gave young people the chance to explore dilemmas and their consequences.**

Through the generous funding of WF Southall Trust, we've developed a resource to engage young people in responding to moral dilemmas and developing an understanding of how their responses affect their friends, family, community and their own sense of inner peace.

In turn, players decide how they would respond and then have their decision evaluated by the other players. This gives them a different insight

into how their decisions ripple out and affect others. We are committed to providing creative

resources for those working with those working on the margins and it's been great to hear how our resources are helping young people to analyse their approach to tough decisions. This open-ended, non-prescriptive approach to moral and ethical dilemmas has inspired us to apply this approach to a new range of discipleship resources, which will be available in 2017. Watch this space!

Your mum is a recovering alcoholic and has been sober for three years. You are so proud of the progress she has made. Three years ago, before your mum had got control over her problem, things had got so bad that your dad had said that he would leave her if she ever drank again. Everything seemed okay until your dad got a new job this year and had to travel a lot.

Recently when your dad has gone away with work, you have started to see the signs that your mum has started drinking again. You don't know what to do. You want your family to stay together, but you also know that your mum needs help.

What do you do?



Dylan Barker

# A NEW HOME

Since Out4Good was first piloted in 2009, we have worked hard to build a great staff team, foster local support and develop an effective model for working with young people reducing their offending. As you will have seen in FYT News, we have celebrated the many ways Out4Good has helped nearly 150 young people, from giving them opportunities to learn new skills, to supporting them to engage in volunteering or training and finding paid work.



FYT has always been at the forefront of new youth work and FYT helped to support and incubate the creative ideas of Pete Hope as he started Out4Good and develop that into what it is today. It is now an established project, with significant recognition in Colchester. Over the past few months, we have been working to find a new home for Out4Good, to enable the project to grow into its next stage.

In September, Out4Good transferred to Worth Unlimited, a long-standing partner of FYT. We are delighted to have found a new home for Out4Good in an organisation with such similar ethos and values, which also has an exclusive focus on youth work delivery and an infrastructure designed to support and develop that work. We are very excited about this move and the possibilities it creates for Out4Good.

Julie and the team have been fantastic contributors to the FYT community and we are going to really miss them. At the same time, we know that they have a very bright future ahead of them and are sure that the work will continue to change the lives and futures of many young offenders. Please join us as we pray for the journey that they are currently on, the young people they work with and give thanks for all they have contributed to FYT during a wonderful 7 years with us.



*Out4Good is grateful to receive funding from Big Lottery Reaching Communities Fund*

## PRAYER DIARY

Thank you to those of you who pray regularly for FYT. The 'cut-out-and-keep' weekly diary below highlights some of the areas where we would really value your prayers.

**Please pray and give thanks for:**

### SUNDAY

Give thanks for the good work that Out4Good has done and pray for strength as it moves away from FYT and looks to grow in the way forward under the leadership of Worth Unlimited. May they continue to make a difference in young people's lives.

### MONDAY

New youth workers who find themselves unexpectedly in positions of management, that they will have the strength and courage to face the challenges before them and that FYT will continue to provide them with the right support.

### TUESDAY

For all the work of FYT in Scotland, supporting and praying for those especially working with the effects of acute poverty.

### WEDNESDAY

Youth workers grappling with discipleship amongst young people beyond the church, that God will give them encouragement in challenging circumstances and may they provide support to those who need it the most.

### THURSDAY

New work with young people starting in the North East as part of our development plan.

### FRIDAY

The appointment of a new chair to FYT. Please pray for Mark Vernon as he takes on this role to lead us forward and supports FYT in providing a home for pioneer youth workers.

### SATURDAY

Please also pray for any trustees who are responsible for any local youth work projects, may God grant them the wisdom to make decisions for the good of the young people.

# FYT INTERACT-ING AT GREENBELT

**In August, I helped to deliver the Interact teaching stream at the Christian arts, justice and faith festival, Greenbelt. Under the thoughtful and creative guidance of Andy Robertson, a journalist and good friend of FYT, we encouraged hundreds of people to connect their faith and spirituality with computer games and to consider gaming as both a medium of art and a means of helping young people and young adults explore meaning and faith.**

We used a number of games that involved interaction within community and teams, which not only helped to build a deeper sense of belonging but were also a lot of fun.

At the end of the weekend, I was really touched as some parents expressed their thanks

to us, saying that their son had felt listened to, heard and accepted at Greenbelt over the course of the weekend and hadn't missed a minute of the stream.

So many young people relate to the virtual and digital world that it is vital for us, as Christians and youth workers, to explore the games they play, the language they use and to find ways to learn from young people how they experience their faith when gaming. We will be continuing to work with groups of young people and resourcing others to engage in this work.

Thank you for your support of FYT. We really appreciate the ability that gives us to innovate and try new things that are not yet being explored in other parts of the church and Christian community.





## A SEASON FOR CHANGE?

**Youth ministry is seasonal. There is a natural ebb and flow of work as your team changes and young people move on. Working with young people goes in fits and starts. There are seasons when there are more young people than you know what to do with, and others when it can feel like nothing you do works. When things aren't going as well as you'd like, stopping to review is really important. Review enables us celebrate the good times and to refine our work for the next season.**

Every congregation and community is filled with brilliant people, so every setting has numerous, wonderful ways of reaching out to young people. The art of review is connecting those brilliant people with the opportunities present on their doorstep and allowing God to take the ministry in a new direction. Over the last few years Frontier Youth Trust has tried and tested Appreciative Inquiry, a method of review which identifies the hidden assets in a community or congregation, seeks out the hidden dreams, and considers how those dreams and assets can come together to build a better world for young people.

Recently I went to help a church in the Cotswolds to review their youth ministry, during a season of challenge. Together we looked at the very best of the project to date. We mapped out all the skills and opportunities currently available to the church. We uncovered the dreams of the congregation for young people. Finally, we

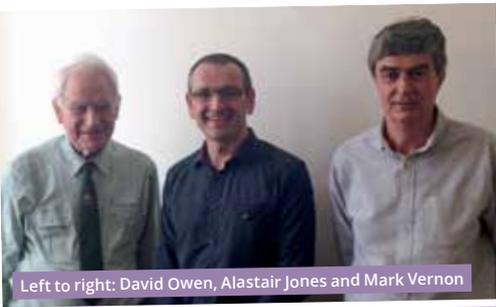
took time to listen to the local community, for opportunities where the church might play an active role. It was a great journey of discovery. We found some great cross-over areas. We pitched new projects, including a breakfast club, which used the congregation's cooking skills and a mentoring programme involving the arts, connecting with the church choir and drama group. We then offered them support and expertise to re-found their original project for the next season.

Review is an essential element of keeping a youth ministry fit for purpose as the seasons change. What we at Frontier Youth Trust like about the Appreciative Inquiry method is that it is fueled by the gifts, skills and dreams of the congregation, team and youth worker.

We are now actively seeking churches and groups who would like to undertake an Appreciative Inquiry in early 2017, and we would be especially keen to talk to groups wishing to start new work, those who are undertaking a re-think of their existing youth ministry programme, or those seeking to do youth ministry without a paid youth worker. We are currently able to offer FYT members a reduced rate starting at £1850 plus expenses. Will you join us on a journey of discovery? How could your church more effectively build a better world for the next generation of young people?



John  
Wheatley



Left to right: David Owen, Alastair Jones and Mark Vernon

## THANK YOU!

At our last Board meeting, David Owen retired from his role as trustee after an amazing 34 years of service. David has shown incredible commitment to FYT and a real heart to see transformation in young people's lives. We are immensely grateful for his practical support and his encouragement over many years. Thank you David. Happy retirement!

## WELCOME TO OUR NEW CHAIR

In September, the Board appointed Mark Vernon (pictured right) as Chair of Trustees. Mark has been involved in youth work for many years, in both a volunteer and professional capacity. In the late 1980s, Mark moved from retail management in Witney to become full-time Youth Worker at St Peter's Church in Yateley. This was followed by eight years as Head of Youth Training at Oasis Trust – an international Christian charity working

primarily with young people. During his time at Oasis he successfully obtained an MA in Youth Work at Brunel University whilst pioneering one of the first national Christian Youth Ministry training courses with centres in London, Manchester & Glasgow. Mark subsequently worked for West Berkshire Council as Head of Youth Services. In 2012, Mark returned to work for St Peter's Church in Yateley as Church Manager overseeing a staff team of seven plus more recently a £1million development of a new shop and cafe as frontline mission to the local community. Mark has maintained an active interest in local youth work – as team leader / volunteer in local youth clubs and for the past 3 years as Chair of Vision 4 Youth – a charity set up between the local town council and church to deliver programmes for marginalised young people in Yateley. He is married to Bennie with adult twin sons and 4 young grandsons. We're delighted to welcome Mark and look forward to working with and learning from him. Please pray for Mark as he settles into his role.



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