



Annual report 23-24

There is so much to celebrate this year at Thrive – big happenings like the placing of our Youth Building and smaller occurrences like the joy of conversation over a meal at Messy Church – all big in value, meaning and connection!

The end of the year brings the opportunity to give attention to what has been happening and finish the year well, as we look towards September. Last week we gathered young people from across five different groups to recognise their contribution locally at our **Young Volunteers Celebration**. We host this alongside our partners InterACT and between us had 19 young volunteers to bring together! This time together gives the opportunity to award our certificates and badges, as well as share some specific words about what we value about each individual and where we have noticed them making a difference in their volunteering role. It is a real highlight and fantastic to see relationships growing between the young people who wouldn't encounter each other outside of this. At Thrive this year, young volunteers have given 621 hours to support work with children and young people – amazing! This is alongside our brilliant adult volunteer team, who have contributed 660 hours between them. And here are some stories of what everyone has been spending that time doing...!



Messy Church has continued to welcome many of our regular families as well as some new ones each month. We've enjoyed thinking about lots of the events around Easter and prayer amongst other topics. The young leaders have got more involved this year – we've had new ones join us and we're developing more intentional roles for them. It's great to have young people who are so enthusiastic about giving back to others!



We love the fact that Messy Church is a place of welcome to many people, where they feel safe to come and we all just bring who we are. It's something we've been reflecting on this year, and it has become a key value to us.

One of the parents of a member at **Totally Tuesday** shared *"My child has a real sense of responsibility and community. He's loved being part of TT and the group leaders have always made him feel valued and heard."* It has been fantastic working with our team of young volunteers, some of whom have been leading for their second year! This grows relationships between them and other group members and has meant they've been able to shape activities around the interests of the group, as well as feedback opinions and comments into our debrief sessions. We've enjoyed wide games at a park trip, stealthy teamwork at laser zone, as well as our usual games, chat and team activities during sessions at the centre, where young people share and listen to each other about their thoughts around faith, life and what's important to them.



We have had a wonderful time at **WOW** this year. Over the year we have discussed many topics, from careers to poverty, friendships and miracles with great discussions talking about how faith works within these topics and in the lives of our young people. We lead sessions in small groups, together in the main hall, in the park, at the new Stainbeck building and spent time on a wellbeing walk together.

We also had some guests to talk to us, starting with our careers panel which included a musician, a bar and restaurant owner and a wastewater manager and engaged our group to ask questions and discuss pathways and experiences in those careers. In the new year we had Homeless Street Angels come in and

tell us about the work they do which led to the group deciding to make snack packs for Homeless Street Angels to hand out to those living on the streets. This has been in the hearts of many of our group for a while, so it was good to see it in action.

The year has ended with many of our group taking their GCSE's, AS-levels and mock exams which we have supported with messages, postcards and prayers. It has been a pleasure this year to be part of the dialogues around faith and the questions, curiosity and the sharing of experiences from the young people.



Drop In has been a welcome after school space for young people to gather and connect, through games, sport, crafts and chat. The programme varies each week according to what the young volunteers have planned after consulting with the group. Next year we will see some new people joining the team, who will be supported and encouraged by our current team in everything it takes to make drop in happen – being a friendly face, preparing snacks through to washing up!

A project that began at Drop In and has grown to include the whole of Thrive, has been our community wall hanging, which we are creating together to hang in the new Youth Building. We have been so glad to have been supported in this work by Stitch Up, who are a Meanwood creative organisation. Everyone who is part of Thrive has been invited to decorate a piece of fabric, which has then had the chance to be embroidered by someone else – a real creative collaboration! The pieces are going to be sewn together and the finished result will then hang in the Youth Building in the grounds of Stainbeck Church. I'll include a photo in the next report!



The last few months have seen the placement and kitting out of the **Youth Building**, which has meant some exciting decision making from our young volunteers around colours for the kitchenette, carpet and layout designs. Thankfully there was a general sense of agreement in taste! We are just awaiting the installation of steps and a ramp, which will mean that the space is accessible and ready to be used. It has been brilliant to see this space emerge after all the planning and fund-raising, as well as to see young people using it and engaging in bringing it to life. We look to next year with much hope and anticipation about working alongside them to create a home and hub where community can flourish.



This year we were awarded the **Scope Inclusive Activity award** and really enjoyed the opportunity to learn and reflect on our practice and culture. You can see the TT team proudly holding the certificate above! We were encouraged to hear that Thrive are '*a shining example of inclusivity and making people feel included*' – a real celebration of what can happen when young people and adults come together to volunteer their time, gifts and heart for their community.

Hannah, Helen and Sarah, Thrive staff team