



Ethan – age 24

GOVAN YOUTH INFORMATION PROJECT

Widening Horizons

Over the years, I've experienced a whole range of volunteering opportunities through GYIP. I started out as a young volunteer, helping out at youth clubs and in the holidays. Later I partnered with an organisation called 'Fixers' to design and run a drugs and alcohol awareness project which reached 4000 young people in schools. I'm now an I Will Ambassador, volunteering to support youth social action in Scotland. My work at the moment is focused on empowering young people to take action and create change.

Building strong relationships with staff at GYIP helped me to gain confidence and opened my eyes to opportunities. It's a small organisation so the connections across the staff and volunteering team are strong. In school, it felt like teachers asked young people to volunteer to do some of the things they didn't want to do themselves. Here the youth workers are doing the work alongside the volunteers, and they are such a valuable support network for us.

When I was doubting myself, the youth workers were consistently reassuring. It was OK to fail or to bottle out and come back and try again. In school, as a comparison, if you tried something and it didn't work first time, it was more stressful because you always felt like you were being judged somehow.

I've recently become a sessional youth worker at GYIP. Moving into a paid role here felt like a natural next step from volunteering, but it also feels very different: as a volunteer, my contribution is my choice. As an employee, I carry full responsibility for the young people in our care, and my role is to guide the young people who are coming through behind me as new volunteers.