



Kelsi – age 20

GOVAN YOUTH INFORMATION PROJECT

A Second Family

I started coming to GYIP during the holidays in primary school. When I was younger I used to bottle my feelings up. I'd avoid problems rather than voice them. The youth workers paid attention to how I was doing emotionally, constantly checking in and noticing if there was a change in my behaviour. I felt like I could trust them and open up. They've become like a second family to me.

The youth workers and the volunteers work as a team – we all encourage and motivate each other. We all have different approaches and we appreciate one another for that. The way youth workers give feedback helps me learn. They're honest with me. Sometimes they'll say "you might not want to hear this but...". It's their honesty along with their support to improve that builds my confidence. To begin with I'd be shy – not want to run activities. But the youth workers have helped me to say yes to things, even when they are out of my comfort zone. I might feel scared or worried sometimes but I've learned to think – "let's just try it". Now I'll face most challenges head on.

I wouldn't be where I am without the training I've had through my volunteering experiences: first aid, introduction to youth work, child protection, adverse childhood experiences. I've also been able to gain awards like the Dynamic Youth Award.

Recently I got a new job, working night shifts at a residential children's home. One of the team at GYIP gave me a reference and supported me through the application process. In the job I think I'm more willing to take responsibility and I seem to be able to handle tricky situations better than some of the older people that I work with. I've built strong relationships with the young people already, and I try to put their needs first. I know they are relying on me to be there for them. I feel like I had that support at GYIP when I was younger – now I want to give that back.