

ymca ireland

Graduation Booklet

2025

ACKNOWLEDGING FANTASTIC ACHIEVEMENTS



“This programme helped me get through all the things I was too scared to speak up about, or show emotion towards. ”
Aoibhínn

FOREWORD BY DAVID BACKHOUSE

“It’s an incredible privilege to watch you grow in confidence, stepping into your own shoes and making your own unique way in the world.”

First of all, a huge congratulations to this year’s Youth Vocation graduates. As I’ve gotten to know each of you, I’ve been struck over and over by your gifts, perspectives and beautiful personalities. It’s an incredible privilege to watch you grow in confidence, stepping into your own shoes and making your own unique way in the world. This path is different for each of you, because each of you have something of your own to offer the world.

On the other hand, something that unites you is that you are all overcoming obstacles and barriers that anyone would find it easy to give in and give up. But you haven’t. You’ve supported each other and called out the best in each other to travel from strength to strength.

The YMCA is committed to supporting young people in mind, body and spirit. We will always be here for you as a place of friendship, encouragement and support. All the best as you embark on the next steps of your journey!



David Backhouse
Deputy National Secretary

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STEP Vocational Training Programme:
Funded by CETB

MESSAGE FROM STEP CO-ORDINATORS

Welcome Everyone to our STEP/Elevate Graduation of 2025. This evening we are here to celebrate the young people from 3 different programmes on their fantastic achievement. The programmes are part of our vocational and training department.

STEP City and Cobh work with young people between the ages of 17-25 who may have dropped out of school, felt they didn't fit in mainstream, may have completed school but felt lost not knowing what to do or needed extra support to achieve a Level 4. The programme offers a smaller more supportive learning environment where participation and the young persons voice is very important. The module delivery includes both academic and practical elements giving the young people the opportunity to work as part of a team, experiencing leadership skills, stages of team development and the accomplishment of having achieved something.

These young people came to us in times of difficulty with a range of struggles including anxiety, low self-esteem, lack of self-confidence and self-belief to mention a few. They reached out in times of need as things arose throughout their journey and we were in a position to either support them through tutors, the outreach worker, the internal counsellor or signpost externally where needed. Throughout the programme they organised events, information mornings, held open days and fundraisers and participated in many workshops including Jig Saw, Manual Handling, CPR training, Sexual Health and Substance Awareness to mention a few and also local collaborations with allotments learning the basics of growing and producing food.

STEP offers young people an opportunity to make lots of little mistakes and take learning from each of them. The level of support they demonstrated for each other was evident throughout their journey and they are a credit to both their families and the YMCA. Each young person here tonight should be very proud of how far they have grown during their time here.

Acknowledgement also must go to the tutors for their ability to build up a good relationship with the young people and support them on their journey. Their patience and professionalism makes the transition into STEP much more comfortable for the young people and our outreach worker has made the whole process much more supportive and needs based.

The team wish to take this opportunity to wish you all the very best with your futures.



Helen O'Shea
Director of Training &
Vocational Programmes



Sharon O'Donovan
STEP Cork Co-ordinator

ELEVATE Recovery Support Project:
Funded by DEASP

An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais, Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige
Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth

MESSAGE FROM ELEVATE CO-ORDINATOR

This has been a stellar year for the Elevate Programme. The Elevate programme has many pillars namely Education, Career Development, Recovery inputs and Health.Our young people have out-shone themselves in each area. In our education programme for the first time, four of our participants achieved a full QQI level 4 Award. Also one participant has achieved his Diploma in Youth and Community from UCC. Going forward we will offer a full Level 4 award over a two year period. Several of our participants have confirmed places for further study next September in our local PLC colleges and now have a solid direction in their future careers.

Furthermore all participants completed a very successful work placement program in different career sectors from retail, to hospitality and the leisure industry. Some obtained part time employment from their successful placement.

Two new innovations were introduced in Elevate this year - the Elevate allotment and weekly gym and swim sessions. Our swim and gym and allotment programmes underpin one of our principles of Elevate ie, "A healthy mind in a healthy body". Working on the allotment gave our participants the opportunity to improve their mental health by working manually outdoors in a relaxed grounding environment. Additionally they learned how to build a polytunnel, build a fence and erect a shed plus they learned how to plant and tend vegetables and flowers in the plot. The highlight of the week is no doubt the weekly sessions in Leisure world. This is a welcome break after all the classroom work and an opportunity for the young people to work on their fitness goals. We also support this principle of building health by providing healthy home cooked meals everyday on the programme. Additionally we provided two semesters of SMART and 12 step recovery modules which were a very beneficial support. We also have inhouse counselling available to our young people by an experienced qualified counsellor.

I would like to thank the YMCA management and sponsor for their hard work and inputs and especially Helena O Sullivan (DSP) who supports the programme and advocates on our behalf. Finally none of this would be possible without the hard work of our dedicated staff team and tutors who always go the extra mile. To you, the young person, may you continue to choose to work toward a better future for yourself



Sharon O Connell
ELEVATE Supervisor



MESSAGES FROM STAFF

Congratulations to a wonderful bunch of young people on your graduation this evening. It has been an absolute pleasure getting to know and work with you all this past year. I hope you have enjoyed your time here on STEP as much as I have enjoyed teaching you. You have all grown in so many ways and I am very proud of each of you. I am sure you each see how far you have come in such a short period of time so keep putting the work in, ask for help when you need it and surround yourself with people who can support you along the way. Wishing you all the best on the next chapter of your life.

Don't be a stranger,
Shauna

Thank you all for being part of my first year of tutoring. I have loved seeing your personal and academic growth throughout the year. It's been a pleasure to get to know both the Cork & Cobh groups. Your individual personalities brings so much laughter & fun each day. I'll be praying for you all to have a blessed future upon leaving the YMCA & starting the rest of your lives.

God bless.
Morgan

In Autumn last year, we went on one of our first walks to the Nano Nagle gardens — and let's be honest, the group was in chaos and disarray. Just before Easter this year, we went again, and it was amazing to see how grounded, calm, and collected you all had become. It felt like a full-circle moment.

I say it every year, but it's always true: it is a privilege to work with Young People and be part of your journeys and your growth. Thank you for trusting me and for following the lead in trying out different creative mediums.

You all have the power to shape your future. You are more equipped now, and while the path won't always be easy, remember: you know where to find us.

#thisistheway,
Karolina

Farewell to graduates

As the course draws to a close, I wanted to take a moment to express my sincere congratulations to each and every one of you. It has been a genuine pleasure to witness your progress, engagement, and the contributions you've brought to our learning environment.

Remember the dedication and effort you invested throughout this journey. You engaged with the local community with the continued development of An Garrán, helping the nuns in The Priory and projected a positive image for the youth of Cobh.

Be proud of the knowledge and skills you've acquired – they will serve you well in your future. I am especially proud of your involvement with Techfest – your projects meant we were nominated in five prize categories and the fun and creativity we experienced on the way were immeasurable.



I wish you all the very best in your next steps and future success.
Kate

It has been a pleasure to get to know you all this year. Watching each of you flourish and grow is an honour and a privilege and always does my heart good. You have each conquered many hurdles this year and have achieved a great deal. I am excited to see where you go next!

You will always be a part of our YMCA family. Keep in touch!
Isla Jeffers

Congratulations everyone on your work this year and the very best of luck in your plans for the future -

Good Luck From
Oliver!!!

As a tutor with both STEP and Elevate it was a pleasure working with you during your time with us.

I hope I have helped you on whatever path you have chosen for yourselves.

Even though the next step you will take will be a daunting one, just remember all that you have achieved so far since your first day with us , both academically and more importantly as people as you matured into the person you are today.

Enjoy your graduation tonight and the best of luck in the future and remember we are always here for you.

Regards
Martin

What wonderful young people to get to know and work with. Each and everyone of you set individual goals throughout the year to progress and improve your lives. It is inspiring and moving to see the positive changes you have made. I wish each and everyone of you a successful and happy future. It has been a pleasure to have been part of this journey with you,

Thank you,
Kay

MESSAGES FROM STAFF

Dear Students,
The past few months, with you in the program, have been amazing. There were some challenges, but the numerous great moments we had together definitely outnumbered the not-so-great ones. This group was really giving its best – your participation in many projects, good humour in the classroom, energy and positive attitude exceeded my expectations.

I wish you all all the best. Whether in college, in an apprenticeship, or at work – I hope you will find happiness, satisfaction and motivation to keep improving your life, to achieve your dreams. A lot of you have praised YMCA STEP for making you realise your true potential. I wish you never forget who you are and what you can achieve, if only you dedicate yourself towards that goal, just as you did in my classroom. Please stop by sometime, to visit us, share your stories and inspire the next group of YMCA students.

Best wishes,
Maja

I'm so proud of all the hard work our participants have done to become graduates this year, and looking forward to seeing what great things the future holds for everybody!

Gill Brennan

This year's graduates are a fantastic group of young people. They support one another, work extremely hard and they bring a great sense of fun to everything they do. It's a privilege to work with them.

Emer Barrett

I want to extend my warmest congratulations and heartfelt best wishes to all of our graduates. It has been an incredible privilege working alongside you all and watching you grow and achieve so much. Your hard work, creativity and resilience have truly inspired me and I have no doubt that you will carry these strengths into whatever path you choose next. I wish each and every one of you all the best for the future.

Mary Stafford









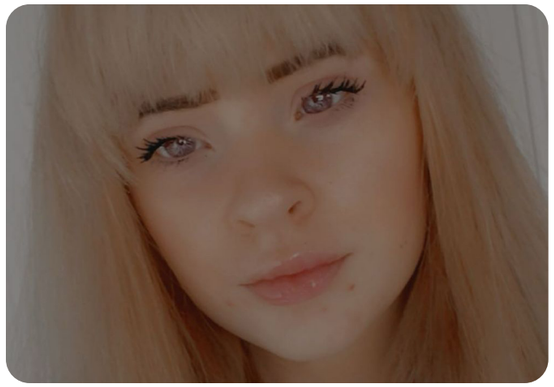
STEP CORK CITY GRADUATES 24/25

John Burke
Darren Conroy
Rachael Cotter
Chelsea Daly
John Delaney
Adrian Fitzpatrick
Conor McDonald
Keyen Morrissey
Lily O'Caoimh
Zak O'Connor
Ava O'Donnell
Jack O'Donovan
Braidy Reed



STEP CORK CITY GRADUATE PROFILES

Rachel Cotter



Hi, my name is Rachael Cotter and I'm 18 years of age. I live in Youghal. I'm interested in music and animals and intend to proceed in my education in college for Veterinary Nursing in Saint John's College . My interest in music is mainly singing and I found this skill at a young age and did not start doing anything with this interest and talent until I was 12 when I joined the School Of Music in a singing group and continued on to join a choir in 2024 where I was able to share my passion for singing with other people with the same interest.

I was in YMCA STEP from September 2024 to June 2025. I have had an amazing experience here as I found it incredibly hard in mainstream school.

Starting in STEP was a huge milestone for me and I enjoyed the time there. What I learned in STEP was that no one in there is in any way judging of what you do and how you present yourself when I joined it was a big fear of mine that I was going to have the same bad experience that I did in school but that was not the case. I was welcomed with open arms and a homely greeting by tutors and students. I have had a very positive experience here and highly recommend it to anyone who has similar or the same struggles.

Adrian Fitzpatrick



My name is Adrian and I am 20 years old. I love animals, dogs, reading, my friends and family. This is my second year on STEP and it has changed my life. When I first joined STEP I didn't have much but during my first year I learned so much and I met so many amazing people and lifelong friends. At the end of the school year I felt like I wasn't mentally ready for college so I came back for my second year where I worked hard and built myself up and now I am more than ready for college. I am going to collage to study animals mostly dogs and dog grooming would be a possible career for me in the future.

Ava O'Donnell



My name is Ava. I'm nineteen years old and I have been attending STEP since December 2023 and I am finally graduating this year. When I first joined STEP I was shy and was afraid to speak up, I have since grown more confident within myself and have made really good friends. The staff have really helped me get through the year and I am forever grateful for their help. I'm going to miss this place a lot but I am really grateful for everything STEP has done for me, this course has given me so many opportunities and I hope the next STEP class enjoys it as much as I did.

Chelsea Daly



My name is Chelsea Daly. I'm 18 years old and I have been on a STEP for nearly two years now. STEP has been a great experience for me not just with helping my confidence but also helping me to grow and get out of my comfort zone. I have gotten so much support from all of the staff members and they have been incredibly helpful. I am so incredibly grateful to have found this course when I did, it really changed my life.

Conor McDonald



Hi, my name is Conor. I have a passion for music and I'd describe myself as a creative person. I don't know where I'd be without the STEP programme because it completely changed my direction in life, with all the lovely staff members alongside me, contributing to my positive growth and strong personal development over the last year. I am now utilising the confidence and skills STEP has taught me to pursue a course in Music, Management & Sound in Coláiste Stiofán Naofa and work towards a career in youth work. STEP played a big part in this choice of career because I want to someday make an impact on someone's life the way STEP has on mine.

Darren Conroy



My name is Darren, I'm 18 and I like video editing and writing. STEP this year has been an unforgettable experience and one I'll definitely miss when it's over. After a tough time in traditional school, STEP was the perfect environment for me and really helped me come into myself a bit more. I've made some great friends here and had an incredible time, getting my QQI Level 4 on top of that has just felt like a bonus in the end. Even outside of the help with the actual assignment work, Sharon, Kay, Shauna, Martin, Karolina, and everyone else at the YMCA have done so much for me and helped me do things I would've never got around to doing on my own. Thanks to them, I'll be heading to St. Johns to do a Creative Digital Media course next year but I have a feeling the end of the year won't mean it's my last time in the building.

Braidy Reed



My name is Braidy Reed. I am 19 years old. I've officially completed one year. This one was quite eventful and I had ups and downs throughout but I've gotten to know some really nice people and am quite happy when talking to them. I feel much more included and am very glad I completed my time at STEP.

STEP CORK CITY GRADUATE PROFILES

Jack O'Donovan



Hi my name is Jack. I joined the YMCA STEP Course over a year ago now after being out of main school for 2 years. The day I joined the course I had already made friends with most of the class and throughout the last year I have made life long friends with them all. A Lot of my life has changed since I first joined STEP. I don't think it would have happened without the course and especially the people. I have developed friendship skills and confidence. If you are any bit worried about joining the STEP COURSE don't be because you'll end up having a great time no matter what.

Lily O'Caoimh



STEP is awesome, much better than school.

John Delaney



Hey, I'm John Delaney and I'm 18 years old. I love fashion, dance, online games and drag. Fun fact, one of my legs is shorter than the other! I hate carrots, sleep and skinny jeans. The whole STEP experience was phenomenal and life changing for me. I made life worthy friends, which made coming in and doing my work so much easier and it made my life worth the living. What I learned from STEP is that individuals should be treated the same no matter who they are, no matter what race, sexuality, or their background. It made my life and I never want to leave!

John Burke



My name is John. I am 19. I'm an impulsive person, who wasn't suited to traditional secondary school. I am captivated by creative mediums such as creative writing and game design. I started attending the STEP program in September 2024. I've had a diverse range of experiences in the STEP group. They've provided me with a myriad of opportunities and resources. For example: cooking in Cobh, or health related fitness in the leisure world gym. These have been integral to my personal development. It's also enabled me to pursue the Film, and TV production course in Douglas Street Campus. STEP is a staggering opportunity. I couldn't describe how much it surpassed my expectations. I'm looking forward to the next step, as corny, and unoriginal as that is.



Keyen Morrissey



My name is Keyen Morrissey. I am 20 years old and I live in Cork city although I spent a lot of time growing up in the country. I like animals, nature, music, personal development and my spirituality is very important to me. STEP showed me that if there's a will there's a way .I had the passion to make something out of myself but I was very lost and didn't know how to go about things. STEP showed me to treat myself with respect and not be hard on myself when things go wrong . I feel like I have done so well for myself and others this year than I ever have . STEP opened my eyes to the happiness of the educational and work life . Growing up I really enjoyed education and STEP provided me with support mentally and physically such as workshops . STEP also helped me reduce my anxiety that I hide very well when dealing with social aspects, paper work and personal things .

Zak O'Connor



I am Zak, I'm 21 years old from kinsale. I have worked in construction, I am very passionate about Health And Fitness. I like basketball, gym and boxing. I joined STEP as when I got into recovery I knew I wanted to go back to education. STEP was a great way to do so as it's more laid back then mainstream schools and being out of education since 14/15 years of age it was going to be difficult for me. Due to that I am happy I chose the STEP programme The teachers are very accommodating and STEP offers great support and everyone is very understanding to each student's situations. Next year I hope to do a Business and Accountancy course in Cork College Of Commerce.







STEP COBH GRADUATES 24/25

Aoibhinn Finn
Edgar Zurovic
Ellen McCarthy
Ethan Collins
Jack Tallon
Jonathon Doyle
Josh Holton
Lee McDonnell
Luke McGoarthy
Sarah O'Leary
Sean Ryan
Shannon Burns



STEP COBH GRADUATE PROFILES

Josh Holton



Hi, my name is Josh Holton and I am a student in the Step program YMCA. When I left school and got an interview for the YMCA I was more than happy to put in work and focus to get a better future. I have been a student in this course for over 2 years now and compared to mainstream school, my education and knowledge have gone up a lot. In this course, I have completed courses I never knew I could do before. I have recently completed my manual handling course, safe pass course, and abrasive wheeling course. I also have made a lot of new friends in this course and a lot of friends have also helped me with work, and courses. In the future I hope I can find a trade in construction or something related to that. YMCA has helped me find my career path.

Ellen McCarthy



My name is Ellen McCarthy. I am 19 years old. My favourite colour is pink and I like shopping, dancing, going out on Saturday nights with my friends, and spending time with my family. I joined STEP in September of 2023. I joined the programme because mainstream school was not working out for me. I found it very difficult to learn and stay focused. Since joining STEP, I've learned a lot more in the last 2 years than I have in my 14 years of education. I've also gained confidence and better social skills which I've struggled with my whole life. I've become happier from being in the environment of kind, funny people. Being a part of STEP also helped me to figure out what I'd like to do with my future and the career path I'd like to take.

Ethan Collins



My name is Ethan Collins and I attend YMCA in Cobh, STEP has helped me with getting my life back on track and helped me in achieving my goals and pushing me in wanting to achieve more. I came into the YMCA after a tough time in mainstream school, always in trouble with teachers and also being bullied which made me suffer anxiety. The minute I came into YMCA I felt at home with a new life and friends also, telling them my goals and them pushing me, my smile and enjoyment in stuff came back. My hobbies are fitness and going to the gym and my main love is soccer. A fun fact about myself is I've played in the league of Ireland with limerick and played the highest level in senior soccer with Avondale, scoring my first senior goal at 17 years old. What STEP gave me is a platform to follow my dreams and direct me in the ways to achieve them by letting me follow my love for soccer and setting me up with college and what I would need to get in. I would say to anyone struggling in life and wanting a fresh start this is a place for you to excel in whatever you do.

Aoibhinn Finn



Hello, I'm Aoibh or Aoibhínn. I'm 18 years old and I was a part of STEP for 2 years, and I learned more than I would've if I stayed in secondary school for 6 years. Through STEP, I found my love for art again. After many years of trying to find myself again, I found myself in STEP, along with new passions for photography, film making, colouring, spirituality and bettering myself as a person. I will never forget or stop talking about the positive impact STEP had on my life. I joined this programme a day after my 17th birthday. I remember being so anxious and upset that it wouldn't help or be right for me but I couldn't have been more wrong. This programme helped me get through all the things I was too scared to speak up about, or show emotion towards. I will forever be thankful to Kate, Maja and Morgan for helping me so much without even realising it. STEP saved my life and kept me away from bad old habits and things I shouldn't have been doing. It showed me I can live without certain things, I can speak up for myself and I don't have to be walked all over or hide away from things. It showed me that it's okay to confide in myself sometimes and let myself feel the emotions that I knew were there. YMCA was my safe space and it will continue to be for the rest of my life. The friends, memories and laughs will forever be with me, I couldn't even imagine where I would be without the friends I made during the programme. I am so incredibly proud of how far they have all come alongside me. I'll never forget the day Ellie, Ethan and I chased each other with icing on our hands, or the day Chulainn and Falvey pushed Josh and Cain as a race down the hallway in little baskets, or the meditation sessions with Maja, or the laughs and joy shared with Kate's random interesting stories. I wish to thank every single one of them for the impact they had on my life. I wouldn't be where I am today without them. A couple of years ago if you asked me to describe myself it would all be negative, but today I feel safe to say that I am a funny, bright and resilient person who wants to have the same impact on everybody else as they did on me. I loved my years in YMCA and everyone within them.

Shannon Burns



Hi, my name is Shannon, I'm from Cobh and I'm 18 years of age. I love to go to the gym with my friends. I started attending the YMCA because I was all over the place. I had dropped out of school just hanging around and I was actually getting bored cause there was nothing to do and I honestly didn't know what I wanted in life but when I started the YMCA something in me changed. I started realising what I wanted to do in life and the YMCA is really good and an eye opening experience and everyone gets along with each other. It's a great opportunity.

Lee McDonnell



Hello, my name is Lee, I am 18 years old and I like music , spending time with my Family and Friends , going out for walks and I like History & Army History. The YMCA has helped me gain confidence and helped me to figure out who I am as a person and helped me to get out of a dark place. My plan for the future is to join the Army. I really enjoyed the YMCA. It was a great experience. The tutors were always nice and there to help.

STEP COBH GRADUATE PROFILES

Sean Ryan



My name is Seán Ryan and I like WWE and my girlfriend, friends and family. I grew up in Cobh and have been here my entire life. I don't really like office jobs so I don't think that I could ever do one of those. People find me to be a very honest person and maybe sometimes it could offend some people about how brutally honest I am. Fun Fact that I know is back in the days of the Roman Empire there was a guy named Hannibal that was part of the Carthage army and he went into Italy and started wrecking everything and he was the only Cartagian army in Italy at the time and the Roman were scared of him.

I Liked the YMCA STEP programme for the most part. I can't lie there were some points in it that I wasn't the biggest fan of it but I guess I can look over that for now as what it brought me. It has helped me gain new friends and even I met my girlfriend through YMCA so it has given me a lot. I would love to say that I like it all of the time but there were definitely points in it that I had some run-ins with the tutors.

I got a QQI level 4 from STEP and where is it going to bring me. I am maybe going to college for youth work but I haven't heard anything back from them yet. I would like to help out with youths and help them progress further than what they think they can achieve.

Edgaras Zurovic



Hello, My name is Edgaras Zurovic. I joined the STEP programme after I was finished secondary school as I wasn't sure what I wanted to do after school. STEP helped and guided me to find out what I was truly interested in and I had support all along the year by the wonderful tutors and students. Growing up in Ireland as a Lithuanian was difficult as i didnt know how to progress in life as the culture and society are completely different. The STEP program really showed me that there is a future ahead for any young person who wants to get far and succeed. I was always interested in Wiring and dealing with electrical components but just didn't know what exactly until I found out about becoming an Electrician and now I am in the process of having that come true.

Jack Tallon



Hi, my name is Jack. I joined YMCA's Cobh STEP when I was 17, after leaving school in transition year. YMCA helped me get the qualifications I need to create my future, without having to deal with the issues I dealt with in school with my teachers. It has led me to choose to apprentice in Electrical Instrumentation and helped me meet people owning companies I can apprentice with.

Luke McGroarty



Hello My name is Luke McGroarty. I joined the STEP programme when I left school when I was in 6th year. I left school because the school system didn't suit me and I found it very difficult to concentrate there. I struggled with self confidence and anxiety for a while but ever since I joined STEP it has helped me a lot. I found friends for life in YMCA People like Jack,Darragh and Aaron, I have interests in Boxing, Acting and football. I have found passion for acting more recently and I will be doing acting classes in the near future, The teachers in YMCA have played a drastic role in me getting better confidence in myself, They have always been there when I needed help with anything so I am very grateful for them. I would highly recommend people to try out YMCA if they do not like school or are stuck and don't know what they want to do with their life.

Abigail Byrne



Heyy!

My name is Abbie, I am 20 years old, and I live in Cobh. I have a love for Cars, Makeup, Music, History and photography. I have many many more interests, if I was to list them all we would be here forever haha.

I had joined the STEP Program because I did not get the college course that I had wanted in Saint Johns, I was completely lost with myself, and I did not know what to do. I was struggling badly getting work and slowly realising makeup might not be my main path. By the end of the year I have made new friends and have found my path, my purpose and what I really wanted to do with my life. I had gotten the most amazing support from the tutors; they are always there for us and had never let us slip.

As a young person I believe that STEP is an amazing thing for young people, and they have helped us achieve our dreams and goals in our life.

Jonathan Doyle



Hi, my name is Jonathan. I was born just outside Limerick and moved to Cobh when I was 3 years old. I like playing online with my friends, I also like writing poems and songs. Something I am not a fan of would be most crisps, people with no personality and lying. I have enjoyed coming to the YMCA STEP Program since I sat down in the classroom. I realized that all of my friends are here too and it just brings a smile to my face. If it wasn't for this program, I would not have gotten even closer to these people. There have been some bad days, but I can look past those. It's just an overall great time here and it's going to be so upsetting to leave. I got a QQI level 4 and I am working on hopefully composing music someday. For the meantime, I just want to get a stable enough job that just pays well for my Family.





ELEVATE GRADUATES 24/25

John Noonan O'Connor
David O'Donovan
Aaron Kiely
Jordan Collins
James Howard
Ben Sullivan Velco
Leon Thommen Jeffires
Evan Browne

ELEVATE GRADUATE PROFILES

Leon Thommen Jeffires



Hi my name is Leon Thommen Jefferies. Elevate is a safe space for healing and recovery while learning valuable life skills. The program has taught me the importance of structure and routine in the face of chaos.

Ben Sullivan Velco



Hi, I am Ben. I enjoy combat sports and the gym. I enjoy the Elevate course because the staff are very supportive. I'm working towards my QQI LVL 4 and i hope to get more skills to make me more employable such as a security licence

John Noonan O'Connor



Hi my name is John, I have been in the Elevate programme for 3 years and it has been a huge help and blessing to my life. I had the opportunity to complete a Diploma in Youth and Community work in UCC which was made possible by the support I received in the YMCA. Additionally, having gained much experience through many other short courses and workshops has helped me hugely develop my character. I can only say thanks very much to the YMCA for all they have done to help.

David O'Donovan



My name is David. I have been on Elevate for almost 5 years. This programme has helped me so much over the years and I have had so many fun experiences while being here like going to the gym and going on trips with the Y.M.C.A. I am very grateful for everything they have done for me and I'm looking forward to leaving here and going to college next year.

Aaron Kiely



Hi I am Aaron Kiely. I love this course because they always looked out for me for anything i needed. They feel like family to me inside the YMCA. When I first started in Elevate I fell straight into a company where I knew I could depend on people inside here. I just completed my work experience in catering and i hope to attend a professional cookery course end of this year.

Jordan Collins



Hello, my name is Jordan, and I like to play soccer and be outdoors a lot. Fun fact about me is you'll never see me without headphones. I dislike school. I've had a good experience in YMCA and still am, I feel I had a lot of learning and awareness to improve myself. YMCA has given me a lot of opportunities and one of them was work experience in a gym and I am looking into being a fitness instructor now.

James Howard



My name is James Howard, I live in Mayfield and I like Liverpool and dislike Man United. My hobbies and interests are combat sports, football and heavy lifting. Funny fact, I have an identical twin. I am enjoying Elevate, I like the company of the place and I enjoy the stuff we do like go on trips and go to the gym every Thursday. I want to work in a warehouse. Elevate is helping me with that and trying to book me in for a forklift course and when I am done that I will get my forklift licence.

Evan Browne



My name is Evan Browne. I like watching Netflix and going to the gym. I play games as my hobby. I've enjoyed Elevate as they introduced me to new people, helped me get out of a rut, where I was doing nothing. They've helped me into getting into work by allowing me to do different courses and by helping me beef up my CV. They've helped me narrow down further what I want to do, which now I'm thinking could be a teacher.

GRADUATE AWARDS

ABBIE:
Best person to be deserted on an island with

AOIBHÍNN:
Most unique

ELLIE:
Most likely to get married first

ETHAN:
Most like to become famous

EDGAR:
Most likely to succeed

JACK:
Most opinionated

JOSH:
Most likely to get caught texting in class

JON:
Most likely to win the lottery and lose the ticket

LUKE:
Most likely to beat Mike Tyson in a boxing match

SEAN:
Most likely to become a comedian

SHANNON:
Best laugh

SEAN & LUKE:
Best Bromance



AUTOGRAPHS


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YOUTH VOCATION

Youth Vocation (our Step, Rise and Elevate training programmes, as well as other back to educational initiatives) provides support for a young person's 'next steps' in life; be that employment support, personal development, career advice, education and skills, and/or work experience. These programmes help young people achieve success through non-formal learning.