



BEYOND EARLSTON & STEPPING-STONES NEWSLETTER, FEBRUARY 2021

Hello and welcome to our February 2021 Newsletter. This past year has not been the year we had planned for our Members, but we have worked hard behind the scenes (from the comfort of our own homes) to try to keep things running and to offer as many fun virtual activities as we could think of. We understand the difficulties, worries and anxieties of Young People at this time and the impact that it is having on, We would like to let you know how proud we are of you all and everything that you have been through this past year. Your adaptations, coping skills, Health and Wellbeing, Kindness, School Work... everything!

**March – October 2020**

When we first went into Lockdown on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020, we didn't know what to expect and we were concerned that we weren't going to be able to reach out to you. However, we offered Online Photograph Competitions, Arts and Crafts, BE Mindful Sessions, BE Green – Recycling and Gardening Tips, Beyond Earlston Bake-Off, Topic Tuesday (which covered a range of issues e.g. Drugs, Alcohol, Stereotypes, Peer Pressure, Bullying, Racism, Relationships, Sex, LGBTQIA+, Addiction, Mental Health, Self-Harm...), Quizzes, Games and Virtual Youth Club Sessions (at our usual Wednesday Youth Club time).



Beyond Earlston, Stepping Stones and Rowlands Stepping Stones (Selkirk) collaborated in a new family lockdown Cooking Session, where Nicole delivered the recipes and ingredients to the participating Households each week. Maria made a cook along video and everyone cooked the delicious dishes and gave us their feedback. Following the success of this, we then offered Baking Packs, which included the recipes and ingredients, and Art and Craft packs to some of our Young People.

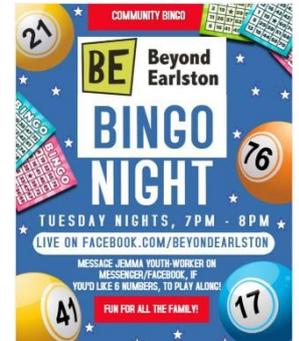
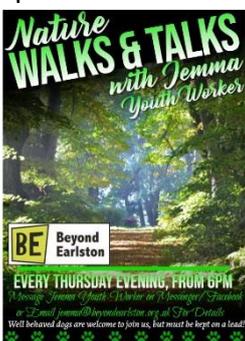


We set up a campaign entitled "BE Mental Health Aware" where some of our Young People and some volunteers helped to produce a Digital Treasure Hunt and interactive activities to find out what Mental Health Services are available to our Young People, in the Scottish Borders. Prizes were awarded to those who were first to find the clues each day.

Unfortunately, our BE BOLD Easter and Summer Programmes, both had to take a back seat as we were still in the middle of the first Lockdown. We are keeping our fingers crossed that we will be able to offer some kind of "Socially Distanced Holiday Sessions" this year and have already started to plan for this.



When restrictions were lifted mid-August 2020, we were able to offer some Outdoor Groups and Sessions. We had a Walks and Talks Group, which we offered in different towns to try to reach as many people (and their dogs) as possible. We had a Meet Us on a Monday Group where we met outdoors and did different activities, e.g. BBQ, Games, Football, Crafts, Kite Flying, ate Cakes and drank Hot Chocolate... and we began a Random Acts of Kindness Group that completed Random Acts of Kindness around Earlston. We also introduced a Community Bingo Session, live on Facebook, which was good fun and had a few people taking part.

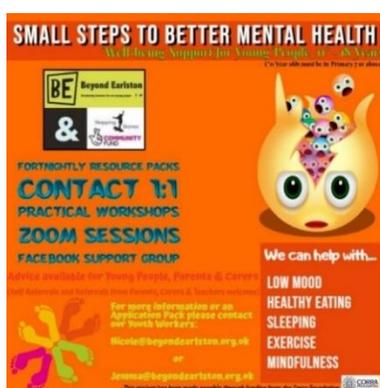


## **Beyond Earlston Summer Lockdown 2020 Playlist**

Our young People came up with a list of songs they were listening to during the first lockdown period. One of our Young People then put these songs together and made us our very own Beyond Earlston Playlist. You can listen to it here: <https://soundcloud.com/user-868995969/sets/beyond-Earlston-summer>

## **Partnership with At Birkhill House**

We were also able to facilitate some activities with Lara, from At Birkhill House. We made Origami Hearts during the first lockdown, then we managed to meet up and have a Plastic Fusing Workshop, in November and we made Christmas Tree Bunting in December. So far this year (2021), despite being back in Lockdown, we are still running sessions with Lara. We have been able to offer 2 workshops, in January, with Lara through Zoom. We have made mobiles with the theme of "Turning Over a New Leaf", due to the New Year and to encourage Mindful Personal Growth. We have also learned to make Origami Cranes and embellish them to make beautiful hanging ornaments.



## **Small Steps to Better Mental Health**

Beyond Earlston and Stepping Stones, with funding from the Corra Foundation, set up a Wellbeing Support Group – Small Steps to Better Mental Health. We offer fortnightly resource packs, 1:1 advice, practical workshops, zoom sessions and a Facebook support group. Young People can self-refer or we can take referrals from Parents, Carers or Teachers. Please contact our Youth Workers [jemma@beyondearlston.org.uk](mailto:jemma@beyondearlston.org.uk) or [nicole@beyondearlston.org.uk](mailto:nicole@beyondearlston.org.uk) if you would like more information or a referral form.

## **Links with the Community**

Beyond Earlston and Stepping Stones have invited the community to get involved in some of our activities. We had an Easter Egg Decorating Competition, Fancy Dress Competition, Pumpkin Carving Competition, Christmas Quizzes, Bunting Making, Like and Share Competitions and we have given prizes to our winners. We have also signed up to some magazine subscriptions and pass the magazines on to our Young People as well as handing out books to read. We have continued to offer support for Youth Awards, throughout the year and hope to get a few more people interested in completing a youth award in the coming months. Check out Saltire Awards, Hi-5 Awards, Dynamic Youth Awards and Youth Achievement Awards, for more information or contact one of our Youth Workers.

We began a Primary 7 Transition Baking Group with our local Primary Schools. Newtown Primary School were the first to take part. 10 Young People received baking packs, with ingredients and recipes, from us for 4 weeks. In return we asked for an evaluation of the recipes and photographs of the bakers in action. Unfortunately, we have had to halt this activity again, now that we are back in lockdown, but hope to be able to get around other Primary Schools as soon as we can.

## **Christmas Meet Up**

Just before Christmas we met with 7 young people and 7 dogs, to try to recreate the Nativity Scene. We had a lot of fun dressing the dogs up and trying to get 7 Young People and 7 dogs to sit for a photograph. Following this we had a little "Christmas" get together with pizza, chips and juice from Alfonso's Takeaway.



### **Thank You to Funders**

Staff at Beyond Earlston would like to thank the following companies for their help and funding throughout the Lockdown. Without this extra funding we would not have been able to offer the activities and resources that we have offered over the past year and the opportunities we hope to offer this year .

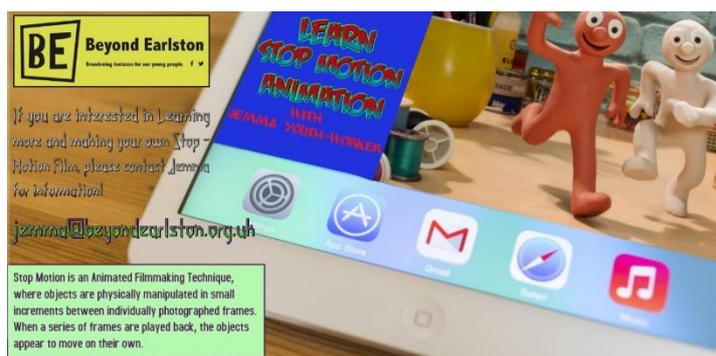


### **2021**

Our plans for 2021 have had to be altered once again, but we will continue to try to offer activities and sessions that we think may interest you. Please get in touch if you have an idea for an activity, want to learn a new skill, try something new... At the moment, we are running weekly activities, where we deliver the resources to your door (social distancing applied) and you join us in a zoom meeting to take part in a live session. Please keep an eye on our Facebook and Twitter pages for these being advertised and let us know if you wish to take part.

### **Film / Animation Group**

Jemma has also advertised a Film and an Animation group, so please get in touch if you are interested in either of these.



For more information please look at our website: <https://www.beyondearlston.org.uk/>

Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/BeyondEarlston> or Twitter Page: @BeyondEarlston

Messenger: Susan Beyond-Earlston / Jemma Youth-Worker / Nicole SteppingStones YouthWorker

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