

SCOTLAND'S NATIONAL YOUTH CHAMPION OF THE YEAR 2019 ANNOUNCED

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Eilaine Coffey, a youth worker from Dundee has been named Scotland's Youth Worker of the Year 2019 for her work in empowering vulnerable young people to turn their lives around.

Eilaine works for Hot Chocolate Trust (HC) based in the Steeple Church, Dundee. Since 2001, HC has worked with thousands of young people who hang out in the city centre, building relationships and supporting them to navigate the changes towards adulthood and positive futures. They have big imaginations, big hearts, and big ambitions for their amazing community (and city!).

And a great motto to live by: 'The best way to predict the future is to create it!'

Speaking after receiving her award, Eilaine from Hot Chocolate Trust said:

"For me the biggest honour on receiving this award is that young people took the time to nominate me. I can honestly say I was blown away when I found out. I have spent 10 years of my youth work life at Hot Chocolate, because it's a place where young people and team can grow and learn together. The project gets alongside young people, providing space for them to connect, to explore, to share their life, dreams, hopes, fears and ambitions, and at Hot Chocolate every day is most definitely a new day."

One young mum, who was suffering domestic violence at the hands of her partner, explains what Eilaine's support has meant to her:

"I don't want pity. What I want is for young people who are going through the same thing to know that they're not alone; that they don't have to put up with it; and there's so much support out there. No-one should be ashamed of what they've been through. This is what I want my life to be about. The sky's the limit these days. I'm free."

"There's no judgement here - there's nothing but support. It's like having another set of parents who give us unconditional love no matter what." Jack R, aged 21.

The other winners included:

Modo – Circus with Purpose based in Peterhead, picked up a **national award for reducing youth crime** and building community relations. Their approach has seen a 46% reduction in anti-social behaviour in the local area. In the last year 600 youngsters have used the drop-in youth café every week, where they have the opportunity to play sport, get involved in circus and creative sessions and get one-to-one support from youth workers about issues they are facing in life.

The project has overwhelming support from Police Scotland and the local community. It has brought together young people from all backgrounds and cultures in the area.

Scotland's **Inspirational Leader of the Year** went to Fergus McMillan, CEO of LGBT Youth Scotland. Whether he's judging a drag lip sync battle with the Cabinet Minister for Equalities (yes, that did happen at Dundee Pride), speaking up for LGBTI young people's rights in the media or welcoming new volunteers into the LGBT Youth Scotland fold, his leadership style brings people together. Commenting on his award, Fergus said:

'It's an honour to lead such a talented and dedicated team of volunteers and staff, helping make Scotland the best place to grow up for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender young people. Visible and positive leadership is very important in championing the rights of young people in Scotland, especially for those who sometimes have those rights called into question.'

And the accolades for the organisation did not end there, Daniel Bustillos of LGBT Youth Scotland in Stirling was named **Volunteer of the Year** for his work with local young people.

A campaign highlighting mental health support, called '13 ways' won the **Mental Health and Wellbeing Award**. The campaign led by Year of Young People Ambassadors in North Ayrshire,

The ambassadors wanted to counteract, what they saw as negative messages coming from the Netflix series '13 Reasons Why' which centres round a young woman's 13 reasons why she committed suicide. Working with local partners and a creative agency, they developed a range of digital content and campaign messages to highlight support available to young people.

Commenting, CEO of YouthLink Scotland, Tim Frew said:

"These national awards are about celebration and joy, but also hope and belief that the inspiring youth work we see highlighted will expand and develop, in spite of economic challenges. Every day youth workers walk alongside young people, supporting them through life and learning, being there at all the key transition points of their lives. Investing in youth work ensures all our young people are valued by society."

Speaking after the event, Richard Lochhead, the minister responsible for youth work in Scotland said:

"We want Scotland to be the best place in the world for children and young people to grow up and the excellent work carried out by the youth work sector is a vital part of this. Involvement in youth work activities offers young people the chance to build connections, develop skills and improve their wellbeing.

"We are committed to building on this, and I was delighted to announce the Scottish Government's continued investment of £500,000 in the National Voluntary Youth Work Organisations Support Fund, which goes directly to the Youth Work Sector.

"I congratulate each of those youth workers who were recognised with awards, and commend the thousands of others who give their time and skills to positively influence our young people."

The National Youth Work Awards 2019 celebrates Scotland's 80,000 youth workers, who work with over 350,000 young people every year. This national event, co-designed with young people, showcases their amazing talents and recognises the impact of youth workers on the lives of young people.

James Sanderson, aged 18, who is part of the co-design group said:

"Having myself been recognised for my achievements from the #iwill volunteering campaign, I was keen to help celebrate the work of so many other inspiring people across Scotland."

The National Youth Work Awards were announced on Wednesday 13 March 2019 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Glasgow.

Ends.

PHOTO CAPTION – Eilaine Coffey, Hot Chocolate Trust, Dundee

For media enquiries and further information please contact Sarah Paterson, Communications and Public Affairs Manager at YouthLink Scotland on 07804 603762 or 0131 313 2488 and at spaterson@youthlinkscotland.org

Notes to editors

List of winners – National Youth Work Awards 2019

Time to Shine Arts and Creativity – sponsored by Creative Scotland

Re-Formation Project, Dundee (Winner)

SambaYaBamba Youth Street Band, Glasgow (Finalist)

Rebekah Aitken, PEEK, Glasgow (Finalist)

Team of the Year – sponsored by CLD Standards Council Scotland

Shetland Islands Council Youth Services (Winner)

Royston Youth Action, Glasgow (Finalist)

Hazlehead Academy Youth Work Team, Aberdeen (Finalist)

Equality and Diversity – sponsored by BBC Children in Need

Action for Children's Heritage and Inclusion Project, Edinburgh (Winner)

The Spartans Youth Work Team, Edinburgh (Finalist)

Interest Link Borders (Finalist)

Mental Health & Wellbeing – sponsored by Prince's Trust Scotland

Donna Anderson and North Ayrshire YOYP Ambassadors (Winner)

Y sort it's Young Carers Service, West Dunbartonshire (Finalist)

Hannah Lind, Crocus Group, Highland Hospice (Finalist)

Digital – sponsored by Sky Academy

Digi Crew, Fife (Winner)

John Taylor, High Life Highland YOYP Social Media Team (Finalist)

Bolt FM, St Paul's Youth Forum, Glasgow (Finalist)

Raising Attainment – sponsored by Education Scotland

The Spartans Community Football Academy, Edinburgh (Winner)

Paul Ross, Inverclyde Council (Finalist)

Home Link Team East Ayrshire Council (Finalist)

Skills for Life – sponsored by SQA

Helm Training, Dundee (Winner)

Cupar Youth Café - 16+ Activity Agreement Programme – Fife Council CLD (Finalist)

Glasgow North East Strategic Youth Alliance (Finalist)

Prevention & Inclusion – sponsored by Scottish Police Federation

Modo – Circus with Purpose, Peterhead (Winner)

The Street Regenfx Youth Trust, South Lanarkshire (Finalist)

Jeannie Gray, Moore House Care & Education, West Lothian (Finalist)

Youth Participation – sponsored by Scottish Government

Y sort it Youth Management Board, West Dunbartonshire (Winner)

Renfrewshire Youth Voice, Renfrewshire Council (Finalist)

North East Youth Ambassadors, Citadel Youth Centre, Edinburgh (Finalist)

Faith Based – sponsored by YMCA Scotland

Ben Raw, St Paul's Church, Glasgow (Winner)
Camas Team, Iona Community (Finalist)
St Rufus Youth Group, Moray (Finalist)

Community Based Youth Work – sponsored by Youth Scotland

Elgin Youth Café Youth Team (Winner)
Coatbridge Youth Action (Finalist)
Mayfield and Easthouses Youth 2000 Project (Finalist)

Volunteer Youth Worker – sponsored by Young Scot

Daniel Bustillos, LGBT Youth Scotland, Stirling (Winner)
Ty Stock, The Sea Cadets, Rosyth (Finalist)
Michael Docherty, Our Lady's High School Motherwell (Finalist)

Youth Worker of the Year – sponsored by Scottish Fire and Rescue

Eilaine Coffey, Hot Chocolate Trust, Dundee (Winner)
Lyndsey Coleman, Y sort it, West Dunbartonshire (Finalist)
Alan Bell, Recharge Youth Work Centre, Tranent (Finalist)

Inspirational Leader – sponsored by Scottish Government

Fergus McMillan, LGBT Youth Scotland (Winner)
Alastair MacKinnon, Fast Forward (Finalist)
Paul McIlvenny, Include Me 2 Club (Finalist)

Lifetime Achievement Awards – sponsored by YouthLink Scotland

Margaret McKinlay, The Girls' Brigade Scotland (Winner)
Jim Sweeney, YouthLink Scotland (Winner)
Mary Matthews, Girlguiding Scotland (Winner)

Information about YouthLink Scotland

- YouthLink Scotland is the national agency for youth work. It is the voice of the youth work sector in Scotland.
- The Youth Work Sector in Scotland is worth £656 million to the economy.
- It is a membership organisation and is in the unique position of representing the interests and aspirations of the whole of the sector both voluntary and statutory.
- YouthLink Scotland champions the role and value of the youth work sector, challenging government at national and local levels to invest in the development of the sector.
- YouthLink Scotland represents over 100 organisations, including the 32 Local Authority Youth Work Services and all major national voluntary youth work organisations, which support over 350,000 young people in achieving their potential.
- YouthLink Scotland promotes a positive image of Scotland's young people and seeks to promote their value to communities and society.