

The Youth Project (Hemel Initiative for Youth Action or HIYA)

Introduction

We are now one year into the Project and things have 'gathered pace'. Venus is to be congratulated on co-ordinating youth activity across the four Hemel parishes (each with its own methods of doing things).

Weekly Youth Meeting

These are held on a Sunday after the evening Mass 7pm – 9.30pm. It was originally proposed that the venue would be Our Lady of All Creation but, as their Sunday evening Mass was cancelled, our Parish Centre became the centralised venue for the four parishes (at least for now). Different activities include discussions, movies, treasure hunts, games and recently an introduction to the Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

Other Events

These have varied from taking part in the DENS sleepout (approx £500 raised for this charity) to paintballing, a sportsnight at the Sports Centre, a Mass led by our young people on Youth Sunday (to name a few). This last item was very well attended, enabled young people to have roles within the celebration of Mass and was generally felt to be very encouraging. It is planned that a Youth led Mass will take place once a month.

Disappointingly only four young people 'signed up' for the retreat that was planned for a w/end at SPEC (possibly this was a money issue: £65 later reduced to £40 for the w/end). However these four returned full of enthusiasm for the retreat experience - which hopefully has infected others.

Youth leaders and other Volunteers

Establishing suitable leaders to be involved on a regular basis is a vital part of the Project. So far there are . There are other volunteers who help with different aspects of the project. All must receive Child Protection clearance. We are delighted that there were 18 participants in the Child Protection Training which took place on 26th November.

World Youth Day

This event is involving a huge feat of organisation. There are 18 pilgrims going to Sydney from Hemel Hempstead to be participants in this, the largest youth event in the world. 9 of these are from our parish. Fundraising is a major concern. The young people have themselves shown great strengths of initiative and determination. Many of their parents have also become actively involved – an important aspect - our Youth Worker needs this help. More detail attached as part of the submission for financial help from the parish.

Management of the Youth Project

For this past year there has been one representative from each of the four parishes involved who have met with Venus and Sandra Satchell (Co-director of SPEC and Advisor to the Project). Our meetings have been once a month with the aim of helping to steer and develop the project. During this year the Chair of the Committee has also met Venus once a month for additional supervisory support.

Paul Sitkowski who has been Chair for the past year has now relinquished this role. The other members have recently met David Burke, the newly appointed diocesan Director of Youth Ministry, and are currently reviewing their individual and team roles to best support the Project.

Involvement at JFK

After much discussion with Fr John and Venus herself the Management team agreed that Venus could be seconded to JFK for 6 of the original 32 hrs per week allocated for the HIYA Project. Fr John will direct the work Venus does in JFK – much of it in the form of projects - and the Team considers this development to be a valuable link between school and parish.

Ann Dodd

Management Team of the Youth Project