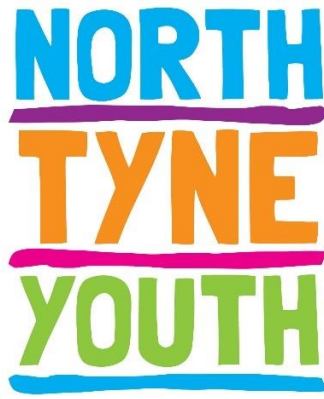




Tuesday 6th August 2024

Young people from rural Northumberland make a splash!

As the sunshine finally breaks through the clouds and the summer holidays stretch out ahead of us, local youth project North Tyne Youth (NTY) has been making waves with young people from rural north-west Northumberland!

Throughout June and July, 49 NTY club members aged 8-14 have taken part in outdoor swimming under the expert tuition of H2oTrails' professional instructor and champion ice swimmer Fenwick Ridley. That means almost 20% of our membership-as well as our super staff team-has learned all about how to stay safe in open water, the science of our bodies and the benefits of safe, instructed outdoor swimming!

The response from our members has been incredible, with many young people telling us they'll be telling their friends all about what they learned, and offering three-word feedback like, "That. Was. AMAZING.", "more of this", "best night ever", "WOW thank you!", and "I can swim!"

With the hot weather and long summer holidays drawing young people outside and close to our rural rivers, water safety awareness is an essential skill.

The National Water Safety Forum states that 400 people a year die in the UK as a result of accidental drowning, and it's an international issue too, with World Drowning Prevention Day taking place every July. Royal Life Saving Society statistics indicate there's been an 85% increase in drownings amongst young people between 2019 and 2022.

Close to home, Northumberland's beautiful countryside has sadly been the backdrop for a number of water-related deaths, most recently in May of this year when two teenage boys drowned in the Tyne at Ovingham, only two years after another boy lost his life in the same stretch of water.

NTY's Youth Development Worker, Lisa Robinson, says,

"Our young people have grown up surrounded by phenomenal natural beauty, and we want to encourage them to make the most of the great outdoors. Youth work supports young people to make the best decisions they can, and gives them opportunities to learn valuable life skills like risk management and critical thinking. Learning how to play safely around water

empowers our young people to be independent, make good choices for themselves, and look out for their peers too.”

And H2oTrails’ owner and professional instructor Fenwick Ridley says,

“H2oTrails has an incredible place here at Sweethope Lough for young ones to learn and experience outdoor swimming safely. With shallow waters and a sandy floor, it’s great for them. This year we have seen more attendance from youth groups, and close to home this has included NTY. I’m so pleased to be supporting the kids and families in aid of water safety, as right now it’s super-important.”

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About North Tyne Youth

North Tyne Youth (NTY) exists “To advance in life and help young people through: (a) The provision of recreational and leisure time activities provided in the interest of social welfare, designed to improve their conditions of life; (b) Providing support and activities which develop their skills, capacities and capabilities to enable them to participate in society as mature and responsible individuals.”

We run term time youth clubs across rural north-west Northumberland, in Otterburn, Bellingham, Kirkwhelpington and Humshaugh, as well as school lunch drop-ins across the county, trips and holiday activities, and pop-up and specialist provision.

NTY is about to celebrate its fifth birthday, so please keep an eye out for our birthday celebrations!

For more information, you can contact Lisa Robinson, our Youth Development Worker, via email at Lisa.Robinson@northtyneyouth.co.uk or on 07826 020949.

About H2oTrails

Our private lake venue sits not far from Hexham on the A68 and if any groups want to get in touch to book, please email H2otrails@outlook.com or call 07737 300470. The H2otrails website has more info: <https://www.h2otrails.co.uk/>