

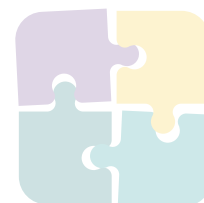
LOURDES YOUTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES



40th Anniversary

1984–2024

Contents



Foreword	3
LYCS Vision and Mission	4
I needed, I wanted, I achieved (<i>LYCS Participant Perspectives 1984 to 2024</i>)	5
Interview with Aileen – <i>founding member of LYCS</i>	6
40 Years in LYCS Part I	8
Interview with Thomas Dunne – <i>local resident and ex-Youth Worker with LYCS</i>	9
40 Years in LYCS Part II	12
Interview with Bernie Walsh – <i>participant, Member Board of Director, local resident</i>	14
40 Years in LYCS Part III	16
Interview with John Farrelly – <i>from the NEIC, ex-staff member and former Chairperson of LYCS</i>	17
40 Years in LYCS Part IV	20
Interview with Siobhan Byrne – <i>ex CTC Learner, Student in Trinity College Dublin</i>	21
40 Years in LYCS Part V	23
Interview with Monica Brady – <i>ex-Crèche Supervisor with LYCS</i>	24
Rutland Street School Refurbishment and Renovation	25
40 Years in LYCS Part VI	26
Interview with Sarah Kelleher – CEO LYCS	27
Chairs and Director/CEO	30
Background to LYCS	31
Strategic Plan 2023 – 2027 Goals and Objectives	33
LYCS Values and Principles	34
LYCS methodologies are influenced by the following practices and principles:	35
Who we currently work with	35
LYCS Programmes and Activities	36
LYCS Services	37

Foreword



Forty years ago, a small group of passionate individuals came together with a bold vision: to create a safe space where learning would be accessible, inclusive, and rooted in the needs of the community of the north east inner city of Dublin. What began as a modest initiative, LYCS has grown into a vibrant and enduring organisation that has touched thousands of lives, empowered generations, and fostered a spirit of lifelong learning. Born from a belief that education should be accessible to all, regardless of age, background, or circumstance, LYCS's founders had a vision to bring education to the people rather than the other way around.

This publication celebrates the remarkable journey of the people involved in LYCS, from its inspiring beginnings to the present-day. It honours local people as learners, volunteers, staff and supporters who have shaped our story, and it reflects on the values that have guided us: equality, social justice, global citizenship, collaboration, and the belief that education is a powerful tool for transformation.

As we look back on four decades of growth, challenges, and triumphs, we also look forward - with renewed commitment and hope - to the future we are building together. We hope that this anniversary be not only a celebration of our past, but a springboard for the next chapter in our shared journey.

Over the past forty years, that vision has flourished. From its early days under Rutland Street School, LYCS expanded into the School on Stilts which became a dedicated learning centre with a diverse curriculum, in partnership with local community organisations and State agencies. LYCS has always been committed to working in partnership with key stakeholders to address poverty and social injustice.

In the 1990s, we introduced adult literacy and digital skills programmes, responding to the evolving needs of the world around us. By the early 2000s, our programmes had grown to include intergenerational learning, creative arts, and wellness education.

Milestones such as our 21st anniversary celebration in 2005, the merger with NCCCAP in 2018, moving out of the School on Stilts in 2019 and the transition to blended learning during the 2020 pandemic reflect our resilience and adaptability. Today we await with excited anticipation of our move into the newly refurbished Rutland Street School in 2026. Each chapter of our journey has been shaped by the learners and educators who brought their passion, curiosity, and commitment to LYCS.

As we mark our 40th anniversary, we honour the legacy of those who built this community of learning and look ahead with excitement to the future. However, we also recognise that structural inequalities and unequal access to services hinders both individuals and communities in general in developing their full potential. Hence, our programmes aim to build the capacity of people to create opportunities for growth and development.

This publication is a tribute to the stories, milestones, and memories that define us – and a reminder that education, when rooted in community, has the power to change lives.

We would like to thank the voluntary Board and our Staff for their commitment to the work of LYCS over the past 40 years. We would also like to thank our community partners and statutory agencies that, in their own way, contributed to our work through meaningful financial and practice partnerships.

Nesson Vaughan
Chairperson

Sarah Kelleher
CEO

LYCS Vision

LYCS imagines a time where no person in this community is left behind; a place where future generations have opportunities to enhance their lives and act as global citizens enriched by excellent education and humanising employment.



LYCS Mission

Our mission is to create educational opportunities that support local people to achieve their full potential as creators of positive change taking informed action to affect local and global transformation.



I needed, I wanted, I achieved

(LYCS Participant Perspectives 1984 to 2024)

I needed a course
and you provided a programme
I needed support and you gave me a hand
I needed direction
and you became my compass
I needed belonging just like it was planned

I needed a place where I could feel needed
I needed a safe harbour without a high tide
I needed a haven of safety and calmness
I needed respite from the tears that I cried

I wanted success
and you taught me some lessons
I wanted a job
and you nurtured my skills and career
I wanted some quiet
and you gave me still silence
I wanted real solace
from my dark, dismal fears

I needed to know the true and the real me
I needed to sense that I actually belonged
I needed a chance to re-start my life over
I needed to banish the hurts and the wrongs

I wanted a place where I could feel wanted
I wanted to come off the edge of a knife
I wanted a scene where I could just be me
I wanted a dream for the rest of my life

I needed a chance to have a go once again
I needed a place where I was caringly nudged
I needed to dance and you provided the music
I needed a space where I would not be judged

I wanted to break out of my own isolation
I wanted to come to the warmth from the cold
I wanted to overcome my stifling shyness
I wanted to learn to be big, brave and bold

I needed to assert my right to a future
I needed to try something new for a change
I needed to break out of old negative patterns
I needed to expand my potential and range

I wanted quick answers to complex questions
I wanted to know it all before I even begun
I wanted to blame
someone else for my problems
I wanted to gallop before I was ready to run

You gave me the time to explore many options
Engaged in fun and the banter along the way
You devoted your time to my development
To ensure the investment would in the end pay

You stood by me always
and for that I am grateful
Helped me stand up direct
when I stumbled and fell
You took great delight
in my growth and achievements
Shaped my favourable future
just like a magical spell

John Farrelly
November 2025

Interview with Aileen

– founding member of LYCS

Aileen, you were involved with LYCS right from the beginning. Can you describe what was happening in the area around that time?

Before 1984 I volunteered in Summerhill in the tenement houses with Peter Mc Verry. At one point, they had got a donation of sewing machines and didn't know what to do with them. So a friend of mine asked me to come in and set up a sewing room. I started doing voluntary work with them and then ended up working there. At that stage the work was focused on young men. I noticed that the young girls were minding babies and doing cleaning jobs. There was nothing for them in the area.

Eventually Peter Mc Verry moved on and we got three new priests in the area, Paul Lavelle, Pete Lemass and Mick Casey. They brought a kind of revolution with them with their different interests. When Summerhill closed, Mick Casey came to me and offered me a job. There wasn't much pay involved. They were going to open a new centre. So my job was to set up the Lourdes Craft Centre and to develop creative activities. I focused on the women and set up a series of women's groups. We had a mix of crafts and also a social element. We also had access to the parish minibus, which was great. I got a minibus license and then I was able to take the women out on trips. We set up clubs with the young people and Thomas Dunne came in as a helper. We then set up a small men's group and then a group for the teens. So we had a service for adult women, adult men and then the teenagers.

Mary Whelan, who was a researcher in UCD, got involved with us. So then we set up a management group and we got funding for what eventually became LYCS. We set up a training centre for early school leavers and ran courses on woodwork and catering. Then we got money to provide childcare for the women so they could attend courses. We also linked in with other groups in the area. I became the manager of the service, and I was the first staff member, and for a good while, the only staff member. LYCS got more funding and employed more staff. The organisation got bigger.

We got funding to send 2 women to the UN Conference for Women in Beijing in 1996 which got us involved with development education. When the women came back, we worked on a project and produced a 'One World Quilt'. President Mary Robinson came and launched it for us. We also linked in with the Women's Project in Inchicore and an artist worked with us and



we produced a piece called 'Unspoken Truths'. But we also used to have a yearly arts and crafts exhibition in Rutland Street School hall around Christmas time where participants would show all their work.

We had a lot of socials with the women and one night when I was at a function, I got chatting to a man, called Larry Furlong, who asked what we were all doing. I told him about our group and he told me he had a house in Rosslare and he offered the use of it to us. We used that house for 7 years. We were able to take the women on short breaks for very little money. We used to go down in the minibus and we'd stop in Wexford to pick up supplies. We went out on day trips to different places and this was the only real break those women got. If we were there in a Sunday, the women would go to the local pub for a few drinks and I would cook the dinner for them. This was the only time someone else cooked for them. They spent all their time looking after other people.

We also had access to a house in Rosstown in Donegal which was made available to us by one of the Franciscan Friars, Oscar. We had some great trips up there and the kids were really respectful of the monastery gardens.

What difference did this work with the women make to them?

It gave them a sense of competence, a space to experience other things and to look outside the box. The work on 'Unspoken Truths' gave them access to an outside influence that they wouldn't normally have had. They captured their experiences in this project, some of those experiences were good and some were bad. That piece of work travelled to Connemara and Denmark. The art work was great for helping people who didn't have the confidence to speak in a group, to sit side by side and have meaningful conversations without feeling under pressure to talk, or to write something.

The women who came to the groups wanted something for themselves, they had an appetite for something different. Eventually some of these women moved into this work, as tutors in the training centre, working in community development and for ICON and Community Action Network (CAN). They were being recognised for their skills and were being paid.

How would you describe the way you worked in those early days?

When I worked in the craft centre, we had freedom with the work. There were very few restrictions. If there was a need and someone said 'will we try this?', we did try it - to see if it worked. The work we did with stained glass was an example of that. Someone suggested that we do some work on that. I didn't know anything about it at the time but I went and did a course on it and then I started training people. That group is still going and one of the men Brian, I originally trained is now teaching the stained glass in LYCS.

All I ever wanted to do was to get on with the work. If I saw something and thought I could do something about it, I went for it. A lot of us lived locally and really knew the community. We worked together and socialised together. We were known on the street... we were not known as workers... we were just known. A lot of the work was done over a cup of tea. You could just pop into someone's house, have a chat and work out what they needed with them. We went out and knocked on doors and met people.

What's your surname Aileen?

I'm just known as Aileen – if I tell you that, no one will know who you are talking about 😊

40 Years in LYCS Part I

1984	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Lourdes parish authorities secured funding from the Youth Employment Agency (YEA) for a two-year pilot period, merging together three former insecurely funded projects to establish the legal entity Lourdes Youth & Community Services (LYCS). Michael Casey and Mary Whelan were central to the successful negotiations with the YEA. ▶ Newly recruited LYCS staff spent an initial two-week period together, team building and defining the core values and objectives of the project. ▶ Thirty-six young people aged between 15 to 25 participated in a full-time training programme alongside up to one hundred Equivalent Trainees (ETs) who participated in part-time programmes. ▶ Dave O'Brien appointed as the first overall Manager of LYCS. ▶ Larry Whelan first chairperson of LYCS.
1985	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ First annual LYCS Arts and Crafts Fair held in the main hall Rutland Street school where project participants displayed products and wares they had produced on the various programmes and courses in LYCS.
1986	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Comprehensive Evaluation report of the pilot phase of LYCS completed by Pauline Faughnan (Social Science Research Centre, UCD). The evaluation report defined LYCS as a "community education and development project".
1987	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Intensive negotiations and lobbying campaign with the YEA and other statutory agencies to secure long term funding for the various LYCS programmes.
1988	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Long term funding for LYCS programmes secured with annual renewal contracts.
1989	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Launch of the report "Crime, Custody and Community" – Juvenile Justice and Crime with particular relevance to Sean McDermott Street, which was written by John Farrelly and published by the Voluntary & Statutory Bodies (V&S).
1990	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Aileen Foran appointed Manager of LYCS. ▶ Production and launch of the video "City Women" which was funded by the Combat Poverty Agency. The video focused on the lives of a group of women attending a personal and practical skills development course in LYCS. ▶ First EEC NOW funded programme delivered in LYCS for a group of local women.
1991	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ LYCS Annual Arts and Crafts Fair opened by Brian Keenan. ▶ John Farrelly chairperson of LYCS.
1992	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ LYCS one of six projects from across Dublin city profiled in the publication "Dublin Communities in Action" which was written by Patricia Kelleher and Mary Whelan and published by CAN and the Combat Poverty Agency.

Interview with Thomas Dunne

– local resident and ex-Youth Worker with LYCS

Hi Thomas, can you tell me how you first got involved with LYCS, and a bit about the early days?

I grew up in the north inner city and started out in what was then called the Craft Centre, an after-school club that ran in the yard of the School on Stilts in the mid-1980s. We did arts, crafts, and other activities with local children. Back then you could volunteer and eventually become a leader, which I did. When LYCS was formed, I knew I wanted to be part of it. I started job-sharing with Raymond Collins. I was 18 when I began working with the Adult Education Programme. We were based in the basement of Rutland Street School, running morning classes for adults and clubs in the evenings. It wasn't formal training at that point – more social and skills-based clubs. We also ran afternoon clubs for kids.

Eventually, I worked full-time in Adult Education but later moved into youth work, running clubs with young people. Around then, the CTC became more formalised and focused on accredited training, while myself and Tricia Martin continued with the youth work side of LYCS.

Did you see yourself as a youth worker? How would you describe your role?

I first saw myself as a project worker – that's how I understood the job at the start. Over time we evolved into what became the Youth Work Programme and took on the title "youth workers." But we were always encouraged to look beyond the building and stay engaged with the wider community. I'm from this area, so I see the everyday issues – constant drug dealing and so much more. People here saw us as community workers as well. I always felt like I was both a youth worker and a community worker. It's hard to separate them. The social issues in the community shaped everything we did.



Things have changed a lot over the years. What stands out to you, having been involved since you were 18?

Back then, programmes were incredibly popular. The Craft Centre had over a hundred women attending every week. Today there's much less emphasis on community development nationally, and a lot of organisations have had to shift towards pure service delivery. That's been a big loss on the ground. After the 2008 recession, major funding cuts hit communities hard – reduced services, weakened infrastructure, and a real sense of being let down.

LYCS had to focus more on accredited training because the funding wasn't there for the softer skills we used to prioritise in the 80s – communication, teamwork, problem-solving, leadership. I understand the need for structure, but there has to be a balance. Young people also need simple drop-ins, a place to just be. Back then, we didn't have the language for it, but the clubs were protecting people's mental health. They reduced anxiety, gave people connection. They were a haven. There are no longer funded community workers who have the time to sit with people, talk about their lives, and help form social groups. Those informal moments matter – they build belonging and community.

I've always believed that people who work in community organisations need to get to know the place and the people. If it becomes just a job where you clock in and out, something is wrong. You need to be visible, out in the community, joining networks like YPAR and NICCC, hearing directly from people about what's going on.

So funding shapes the work. To keep the lights on, organisations follow funders' criteria. You see that as a problem?

Yes. I recognise the value of accredited training and courses. But we also have to stand up for what we believe is important. We have principles. The outcomes around positive mental health, confidence, and wellbeing are just as important as any certificate. That's the argument the community sector needs to push. We need funding that allows us to do real community work on the ground. The people setting the rules in offices don't always know what's best. There needs to be genuine partnership between funders and organisations.

Looking back on your work in LYCS, what moments stand out?

LYCS supported me all the way through the years, just like it supported people in the crèche and other programmes. LYCS has helped local people get qualifications and move on in life – that matters.

I'm proud of a lot from the Youth Work Programme. We never had much money, but we made it work. Young people came not because of fancy activities – we had a pool table, a TV, and time to talk. They came back for the relationships. They got something they needed from LYCS.



Tricia and I always wanted to help young people become more independent. I'm proud of that. When parents stopped us on the street saying their child is now making their own bed after a weekend trip – that meant something. Residentials in the Wexford and Cavan Centres were huge. Young people looked forward to them for months. That's where trust was built. They had freedom, they learned to look after themselves and to respect each other. Parents would tell us their young people grew as people because of those trips.



We had core values and stuck to them. Young people cooked, tidied, and learned independence. During Summer Programmes, we went swimming nearly every day – Greystones, the trains, the piers – we had no bus, no wetsuits, but we made it work. That's community and youth work. And we developed leaders. Our peer leadership projects produced young people who became role models for others.

Developing social skills was essential. We sat down together for meals, talked, learned to communicate as a group. They loved it – even the ones who resisted at first. They always came back and hounded us for the next residential.

So much has happened over the years. What do you think has been LYCS's biggest impact?

The fact that LYCS is still here, still true to its values, is huge. The Unspoken Truths project stands out – it was a powerful piece of work. Local women took part and many went on to become community workers across the city. That's a massive impact.

The exhibitions and showcases were also important – they brought the organisation's work into the public eye and celebrated local talent and effort.

Most of all, LYCS has a voice. And I hope that continues to grow. We can't be afraid to rock the boat – to challenge each other and the funders. When we do that, the community benefits. That's how life improves for everyone.



40 Years in LYCS

Part II

1993	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Funding approved for LYCS to join the new national Community Development Programme (CDP)
1994	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ ‘Unspoken Truths’ Visual Arts project in partnership with St Michael’s Resource Centre, Inchicore, opens in the Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA) ▶ A 17 minute film produced by film maker Joe Lee documented journey of 32 women who created 14 artworks that relate to stories of their lives https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zVnTwOePnA0 ▶ Chairperson of LYCS – Ailbhe Murphy
1995	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ New CEO Sarah Kelleher appointed ▶ LYCS staff team numbers twelve
1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Outcomes of the comprehensive strategic planning process enacted ▶ New Jobs Initiative community based project The Employment Network (TEN) was set up supplying LYCS with 5 permanent local workers to carry out much needed administration & security roles.
1997	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ President Mary Robinson visited LYCS to launch the new CDP ▶ North East Inner City Rejuvenation Plan commences ▶ 2nd NOW training programme for women commences ▶ New Advisory Groups with local volunteers set up for each programme in LYCS



1998	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ LYCS staff team increases from 12 to 25 members ▶ New childcare funding secured for the first time ▶ Significant influx of refugees and asylum seekers into the NEIC ▶ 80% of CTC learners accessed employment – while nine babies were born to participants ▶ Youth leadership training delivered to local volunteers ▶ Introduction of European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) programme in LYCS ▶ Literacy Tutor Training Scheme completed for all staff ▶ Development Education programme rolled out. Issues of difference between younger and older women explored.
1999	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Dublin Corporation launch its Integrated Area Plan with a new purpose built building for LYCS to open in 2001 ▶ Crèche opens with 18 children ▶ Some CTC learners were also on a drug maintenance programme ▶ Introduction to Development Education for local Community Organisations programme rolled out ▶ April, International Exchange to inner city Lisbon ▶ August, the group from Lisbon travelled to Dublin ▶ Youth groups set up in local housing complexes
2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Design produced for a new purpose built community centre for LYCS which it is hoped will be built by 2003 at an estimated cost of £3.5 million ▶ John Farrelly chairperson of LYCS
2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Group of CTC learners sail on the Asgard from Cork to Wales and back again ▶ LYCS worked with the Education and Outreach Department of the Abbey Theatre ▶ One World Week 2001- the Adult Education Programme hosted a Community Forum at which the media representation of inner city communities, drug users and refugees and asylum seekers was explored



Interview with Bernie Walsh

– participant, Member Board of Director, local resident

Thanks so much for meeting with me, Bernie. You have a long history with LYCS: as a participant, someone with a real passion for environmental issues, and now as an active Board member. Maybe we will start with your early days.

I lived in Lourdes House Flats and then came to Richmond cottages. Lourdes was wonderful, but there was a big drug problem, and I really wanted to find a home for me and my three kids. Getting a mortgage was not easy, but it was great to get the house. When I moved into Richmond cottages I met Sharon. A neighbour. She was part of the women's group in LYCS with Anne Rafferty and Jean Clifford. They both lived on this street.

I worked fulltime in the Higher Education Authority on Fitzwilliams Square. I liked the work, but I had no outlet outside the home. My youngest was 5 or 6 and I wanted to be doing something other than work, home, work, home. The Women's Group was perfect for me. I joined and never looked back. We sat down every 6 or 8 weeks and decided what we would focus on. Aileen Foran was wonderful. She would suggest things and help us to organise them. We could be learning to change plugs one week and something completely different the next. I remember we had a group of traveller women in for a few weeks to speak about their experiences. We did Arts Project, such as the Unspoken Truths. It opened our eyes and lit a creative streak. It was and still is one of the best experiences ever.

We also went away for a weekend twice every year. I had never gone away with women before, and it was brilliant. It was a break from the children. But it was also a space for women to get to know each other and hear each other. We developed as a group. The Partnerships were being formed at the time, and I was put forward. I was shocked: "Me!" Helen White said: "You'd be great, you're well able to talk." I didn't see it in myself,



but I went on. Myself and Mick Rafferty were the first reps on the Dublin inner city partnership.

The Partnership put forward a Diploma on Community Leadership and Development. They were looking for people to go on it. I was working fulltime, but the manager approached me and said that I should be doing that. I had left school two weeks before my 14th birthday. I had never done an exam. I didn't realise that my interests and my desire to understand and get involved in community things was anything special. I thought everyone was like that. I didn't realise that I was political just that I was steeped in social justice from my upbringing and that not everyone was.

The Women's Group just kept saying: you better do it, you better do it. I was backed into it in many ways, but that pressure was coming from the best place.

Going out to Maynooth and starting a course like that must have been daunting. It took some courage?

Yeah. I thought I'd be lost. I thought I wouldn't have a clue what I was doing. 25 people started and most of them were inner city, 5 of us from the Northeast Innercity. I really enjoyed it. And what I understood very quickly was that we were telling the academics as much as they were telling us. We had the information from the ground. We had the listening to us. Interested in what the issues were and what could be implemented on the ground. Being involved in the Women's Group changed the trajectory of my life. It started me on this incredible journey.

I was still going to the group every Tuesday. It was brilliant to have this group as support, and I always told them when things were happening. If there was a conference on women's issues or other things that they might be interested in. They often went. So, we all benefitted.

After that, you became interested in social enterprise. In a business run by people with a different model to the one we mostly see.

Yeah. Me and Jean, and another woman, Jan, founded the Cleaning Coop, what we called Precious Time Cleaning. It operated for 10 years. We hired another few women. It was great, but we eventually wanted the women who worked for the company to take it over. They weren't willing, they wanted a boss. Unfortunately, the man who took it over changed all the staff within 3 months. We paid more than the average. Because we were a Coop.

The idea of Sunflower had come from the Diploma and we had started Sunflower Recycling at that time. Carol Bolger and I had both lived abroad, in Holland and Denmark, and we both had recycled from our home. We wanted to set up a home recycling initiative. We used the Sunflower idea for our project in Maynooth.

Sunflower gave women in the area a chance, through CE, a chance to do something. It wasn't much, but the women who got involved were able to make a bit of extra money and, when their two years was up, often went on to get jobs. The experience of working with Sunflower was a start. We had three sisters working for us. They had never been outside Ireland, and while in Sunflower they all went off to Liverpool. There was extra payment as we had EU funding at the time. It doesn't seem like much now, but that was huge at the time. Getting a job like we offered in Sunflower was life changing.

What makes things work properly, become successful, is we have local people and local organisations working in their own community. It's very important that we stick to this because that is how community development works and works well.

40 Years in LYCS Part III

2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Summer programmes delivered for 10 – 21 year olds. ▶ Large number of learners were lone parents who struggled to access employment without affordable childcare. ▶ Tosach CDP Support Agency established. ▶ Radio Monto community radio programme started.
2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ “Hanging Around “ Research report on the needs of local young people published and circulated by LYCS. ▶ LYCS carried out door to door visits to promote programmes locally.
2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ FAS first mentions the possibility of merging LYCS and the North Centre City Community Action Project (NCCCAP), both of which delivered services for early school leavers in their individual CTCs.
2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ LYCS 21st Anniversary celebration event held in the Gresham Hotel. ▶ Publication of Development Education handbook: ‘Connecting Communities: A Practical Guide to Development Education in Community Settings’ researched and written by Helena McNeill LYCS resource for facilitators or tutors working with groups in Community Education and Community Development contexts. ▶ Junior Leadership Volunteer Programme delivered for 10 local young people aged 13 – 16 years.
2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ In partnership with Cairde, LYCS delivered an innovative ‘Women as Leaders’ programme for over 30 local and minority ethnic women. ▶ Crèche providing childcare to 39 children. ▶ New website www.lycs.ie launched by Taoiseach Bertie Ahern TD. ▶ LYCS staff attended ICON Conference in Kilkenny. ▶ 80% of LYCS early school leavers progress onto education and/or employment. ▶ Young People involved in the Junior Leadership Volunteer Programme becoming leaders and role models in their local areas and communities.
2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ President Mary McAleese presented certificates to 30 local and minority ethnic women from LYCS and Cairde who had participated in the two-year Women as Leaders Programme. ▶ Samhain Story-Telling Event. ▶ Development Education Practice Course: Workshops delivered on Drugs, The International Development Context; Learning about Refugees and Migrants and Power. ▶ New after-schools service commences in LYCS.
2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ New LYCS / NCCCAP Community Centre announced. To open in 2011. ▶ New Community Childcare Subvention Scheme commences. ▶ Participant Bernie Dunne, travelled to Tanzania as part of the Banulacht Exchange Programme. ▶ LYCS mentoring of local organisations in Development Education commences. ▶ 33 children in the LYCS crèche. ▶ NEIC Youth Arts Festival is held with LYCS youth work programme centrally involved.

Interview with John Farrelly

– from the NEIC, ex-staff member
and former Chairperson of LYCS

John, you were around in the prehistory of LYCS. You were there when it was formed and you have supported its development over many years. Would you talk about the early days and the process that led to the creation of LYCS?

I was involved in community activities in the North Wall area in the late 1970's and I also coordinated the Summer Projects for the NCCCAP in the early 1980's.

LYCS officially started in April 1984. At the time I was working in the north inner city, delivering an ANCO funded training programme, having recently graduated from UCD. A job became available in LYCS for a part-time evaluator for the Community Service Project (CSP), I applied for the position and was successful. The CSP was a local youth service which had been running prior to the establishment of LYCS, and it merged into the new organisation. In time I became the assistant project leader of the CSP. I worked in LYCS for the first 3 years of its operation. At the initial stages there was a team of 16 or 17 staff. In early 1984 we all spent two weeks together in a house in Ballybough teasing out the organisation's philosophy and principles. The first Director of LYCS, Dave O'Brien, organised various inputs to help staff develop the core values, goals and objectives of the organisation.

There was a significant mix of people in the staff team. Many had been previously involved in local projects and initiatives while others were newly recruited into LYCS. The mix of staff ensured that previous local initiatives were respected while it also facilitated an openness to new ideas and developments. Through staff interaction and cooperation, a space for collective decision making was created and this became key to the ethos of LYCS.

Michael Casey and Mary Whelan were central to the securing of the initial funding for LYCS from the Youth Employment Agency (YEA). From the outset they both withdrew from any hands-on part in the operation or management of the organisation. This was a brave decision. They stepped back and allowed the staff group and management board to define and create the organisation's identity.

Could you speak about that identity a bit. What were the core ideas and principles?

LYCS had clear principles from the beginning. We were a community organisation with a core emphasis on education. We were there to provide opportunities for local people to develop, and to involve the community in the direction of the organisation. LYCS provided services, but the approach was not just one of being a service provider. Both the management board and staff took a community development approach to the work of the organisation. On Occasion, at the initial stages, LYCS inputted into broader policy issues, but the main focus was the development of the local community and its people.

The YEA funding was for an initial two-year period from 1984 to 1986. It was a pilot period and built into it was a review process based on an independent evaluation of LYCS. As the end of the pilot period approached it became clear that the funding for LYCS might



also come to an end. Therefore, the management board and staff organised a large campaign to lobby the relevant authorities to enter positive discussions regarding the future of LYCS. We lobbied politicians and garnered great support in the local community; we even picketed the head offices of the YEA. As a result of our successful campaign the CEO of the YEA agreed to a number of meetings.

The YEA conceded much of what LYCS required. Statutory funding streams were found for the continuance of the various programmes within LYCS to secure the future of what had been created. There

was a great sense in LYCS that the organisation had rights and needs. And that both management and staff had the right to assert such rights and needs.

I worked in LYCS for three years, leaving to undertake a research study for the Voluntary and Statutory Bodies (V&S) with local young people involved in crime. Subsequent to that I went to work in Focus Point/Ireland. In the early 1990's I took on the role of chairperson of the management board of LYCS. With the funding streams secured for the various LYCS programmes there was security for the organisation but it still depended on annual funding applications and reviews. As time progressed LYCS made connections with various statutory bodies. Relationships of trust were built whereby funders were confident that LYCS would deliver on what it said it was going to do. This was vital. LYCS, had in effect, established a clear identity and a positive track record regarding its work.

It seems to me, John, that a strong part of the LYCS DNA is the ability to develop relationships with funders, statutory bodies and other organisations. LYCS negotiates and talks things through. That remains part of its identity? Do you agree?

I do. But there are two sides to that coin. We knew when to negotiate, but also when to push back and say no. There was a point in time when a particular programme came under threat, when a funder simply said "it was done, it was over". And we said no. It doesn't work like that. We lobbied and campaigned and successfully secured the continuance of the programme.

The approach of LYCS was to work with anyone, but we would not be bullied. We knew what we were doing worked and we were very committed to it. I remember a senior official from one of our funders visited the School on Stilts. Following the visit, he wrote to say that a key staff member his organisation was funding was required to report directly to a separate committee and not to the management board of LYCS. According to the official, the staff member's reporting line was contrary to the criteria of the funded programme. We met the official and said "we believe you have a difficulty with the reporting requirements, and we are happy to work with you to come to a workable solution". At the time, central government was promoting the concept of integrated service delivery structures. We believed that LYCS was a model of such an approach. Despite this, the funding for this particular programme was withheld. We had to initiate an intensive lobbying campaign with prominent politicians and senior statutory officials in order that the withholding of the funding be reversed. Due to our pressure and lobbying the funding for the programme was re-instated. We believed we did the right thing, and that any

third party looking at the situation would have agreed. That was always my test for such situations. What would an impartial observer think if they assessed your actions during such a difficulty. We believed we acted correctly and this was borne out in the end.

That's your history with LYCS, John. What do you think is important about the organisation over the last 40 years? What it stood for and what is vital about it?

LYCS is a community development organisation and at its core it is about people. The organisation had and has expectations of what people can achieve if they are given the right opportunities and support. It is an organisation that supports people to develop and assert their rights.

In the DNA of LYCS is the consistent attempt to build trust and work together with others whether they are statutory bodies or other community organisations. This doesn't mean that LYCS does not promote its own view of things. But it does mean trying to understand other parties' views and positions and helping them understand yours. We can achieve things if we work together and LYCS has always tried, I believe, to further that approach.

There may be times when you have to make a stand or walk away if something comes down the line that you cannot accept. Knowing when to do this is so important. "I am willing to go the extra mile with you if you will go the extra mile with me." That must be the philosophy of partnership.

Organisations like LYCS are stabilisers in a community, I believe. They are a foundational piece of the community. The real test would be, if you took LYCS away what would this community lose. I believe it would lose a lot.



40 Years in LYCS

Part IV

2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Planning permission approved for new LYCS building on Sean McDermott St. ▶ First participant on the youth programme trained as a Lifeguard. ▶ Soccer Sisters programme started for girls. ▶ New Development Education programme started to include: themed trainings for practitioners and activists including: Zero Waste Educator Training, Women of the World; Healthy Eating without Costing the Earth; Migration; Transforming our World through Music; and Facilitation Skills which built their capacity to engage others in this kind of learning.
2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Sponsored Hill Walk in Wicklow. ▶ 'The World in Your Backyard': Local & Global Development Education programme developed by LYCS.
2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Census shows that the population of NEIC increased by over 10,000 since 1991 ▶ New Development Education Programmes initiated <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Waste Issue Resources – Resources developed/adapted by LYCS for use in our workshops o Zero Waste – How to reduce your waste o Sustainable Food – Resources developed/adapted by LYCS for use in our workshops, videos etc.
2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ First participant's Forum started. ▶ Voter Education programmes began. ▶ Public debate on the financial crisis held in conjunction with ICON chaired by Vincent Browne. ▶ Publication of the good news paper "The Champion" which was compiled and written by young people in the LYCS Youth Programme. The Champion profiled the achievements and successes of young people from across the north inner city. ▶ 'Hanging Around' 2nd edition of report into the needs of teenagers in the NEIC. Research was carried out by young people on the Youth Work Programme who were trained in basic research skills.
2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Rutland Street School first identified as a potential new premises for LYCS.
2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Over 600 individual people registered to vote for the first time following an intensive voter education campaign. ▶ NEIC Community Workers Christmas lunch held in LYCS. ▶ 'Mind the Gap' Workshop on Global Inequality facilitated by LYCS Development Education Programme. ▶ LYCS joins 12 other community organisations to form Dublin Inner City Community Coop ▶ The national Community Development Programme ceases to exist.

Interview with Siobhan Byrne

– ex CTC Learner. Student in Trinity College Dublin

When did you first hear about LYCS?

I was born and bred in the inner city. I heard about LYCS from my Mam. She had worked in LYCS as a youth worker. I had left school early and Mam enquired about getting me into LYCS and advised me to go and see them.

I went into the CTC, and I remember one of the staff did the entry assessment with me to check things like spelling, I finished it really quickly and he was surprised at how fast I was. The reality was that I had no struggles with what was placed in front of me. I went to the CTC and did Childcare and some other pieces. I did the QQI Level 3 and then I spoke to the guidance counsellor. I wanted to stay another year because the environment was chilled and for the first time, I was able to learn and have fun. But they wouldn't let me stay another year! They told me that by keeping me they would actually be holding me back.

So, they supported me in getting the Back to Education Allowance and helped me apply for the Level 5 in Childcare. I got into the Level 5 in Marino College and did the year there. But after that I decided that childcare wasn't for me, so I got a job in Dealz. I used to see the staff from LYCS coming in all the time and we always chatted and stayed in contact. After I had my daughter, I was at home for 18 months and then I applied for a job in Marks & Spencers as a Christmas temp. And again, I went back to LYCS to get a reference. They gave me the reference, and I got the job. I used to walk past Trinity College to get to M&S on Grafton Street. I used to see the students coming in for coffee. I was envious of all the hustle and bustle they had. I used to love listening to them chatting about what they were learning in their law courses.

As my daughter was getting older, I was conscious of how important school and education was going to be for her. And I started to ask myself, ***“do I really want to be in a job where I'm not really making a difference?”*** I liked the work and I liked the people, but I was embarrassed about not having a Junior Cert or Leaving Cert. So, I felt I needed to pull up my boots and think about my future. I had always enjoyed law, and I loved Judge Judy. I was intrigued by crime shows and legal shows from a young age. But also, growing up in the inner city and seeing the injustice in how people from different areas were treated differently, whether on the streets or in court. I was very aware that poverty was what led most people into things like drug dealing and shop lifting. I've always been the type of person that if something doesn't sit right with me, I'll say it. I believe in speaking up for injustice.

What difference did LYCS make to your life?

If LYCS hadn't been in my life I wouldn't have gone back to education. I wouldn't be where I am today if not for all the support they have given me over the years. They treated me as me. They didn't stereotype me as someone from the inner city. Who you are as a person was the key thing.

I didn't enjoy mainstream education. I don't think the teachers liked me in all honesty. I guess they viewed me as cheeky, but the reality is I challenged them on things that didn't

sit right with me. I think if they had bothered to take into account all of the pain and trauma I was dealing with, they may have viewed me differently. It wasn't all bad though, there was one teacher who believed in me and seen my potential.

LYCS was the polar opposite, there, everyone believed in me and seen my potential. Coming to LYCS, I was treated as a person, not a problem, not an issue. They knew if I was having a bad day and gave me the space to unwind. Having the support system in LYCS in a non-judgmental environment was so important. They really cared about you, they noticed if you were tired and checked in with you. Honestly, I loved LYCS.

So what happened next in your life?

I made an appointment to go back to talk to staff in LYCS. I wanted to go to college, so the guidance counsellor pulled up the various courses. I said I'd like to study law in Trinity. The guidance counsellor suggested that I should do a PLC in law to see if I liked it. He helped me with the application, and I got into the PLC in Blackrock. I kept in touch with the guidance counsellor and he supported me with my college work. I got back in contact with the guidance counsellor when it was time to complete the CAO and the personal statement and as before he helped me. I applied to all of the colleges. The guidance counsellor prepped me for the interviews as I was extremely nervous. To my surprise I got offered a place in all of the colleges I applied to. But what I really wanted was Trinity. I did the interview for Trinity, but I didn't think that it went well. The morning acceptance letters were due to be posted online was nerve wrecking. I remember logging in and reading the letter and being so confused, all these words I'd never heard of and couldn't pronounce. I rang the LYCS in a panic and asked to speak to the guidance counselor, I read the letter out to him and I remember being like what does that mean – did I get in or not? And his response still makes me tear up, he said “you’ve done it, I never you doubted you, I’m so proud of you”. It was a very emotional moment for both of us. So now I’m in my final year in law in Trinity and even now I still turn to LYCS. They are great for providing support for past learners and are always happy to help whenever they can.

If it wasn't for LYCS I wouldn't be where I am now. Whatever I end up doing, whether that's practicing law, working in prison reform or for an NGO, I want to do something that makes a difference, not just for society as a whole, but for my little community. They need to have someone in their corner for them. I want to inspire the younger kids in the area. I had the supports around me to help me get to where I wanted. I think if more people like me were given a chance, they could achieve their dreams. All you need is just one person in your corner, and you can excel. LYCS helped me to excel.



40 Years in LYCS Part V

2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Crèche moved out of Rutland St School to Hardwicke St due to serious issues with the building. ▶ Launch of the first Big Scream Halloween Festival. ▶ Visit from An Taoiseach Enda Kenny TD and local Minister for Transport Tourism & Sport Paschal Donohoe TD to discuss the need for new premises for LYCS.
2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Hosted first Youth Exchange for young people from the inner city of Lisbon. ▶ Launch of the new North Inner City Community Coalition. ▶ NEIC Initiative established by government and engagement of external consultant Kieran Mulvey. ▶ LYCS participated in the review of CDETB funded services in the north inner city and participated in the steering group overseeing the review. ▶ New NEIC Initiative (Task Force) launched. ▶ Jackie Lawlor elected chairperson of LYCS.
2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Confirmation that Rutland Street School will be refurbished. ▶ BallyMacSherriff Halloween Festival piloted in 2017. ▶ Publication and launch of the Mulvey Report “Creating a Better Future”. ▶ Launch of the report From Patchwork to Network – Process of research and review of specific CDETB funded Services and Projects in the north inner city of Dublin, written by John Farrelly and published by CDETB.
2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Merger of NCCCAP with LYCS following many years of consultation and negotiation with state agencies and the development of new accredited programmes meeting the new needs of early school leavers. ▶ LYCS researches and publishes ‘Securing Roots’ report on the Integration of Minority Ethnic People into Local Community Services. ▶ Will Peter elected chairperson of LYCS.
2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ LYCS moved out of the School on Stilts to Beaver St due to serious construction issues with the building. ▶ New Minority Ethnic Community (MEC) Steering Committee founded.
2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ LYCS has staff team of 50 employees inclusive of Community Employment (CE) participants ▶ New funding from Irish Aid to develop a comprehensive Global Citizenship Education programme ▶ Covid19 pandemic saw LYCS close its doors for first time in thirty-six years. Many services were delivered online ▶ 75 children attended the crèche ▶ “Connected through Creativity” exhibition and celebration of the work of Adult learners attending classes in LYCS and Henrietta Adult and Community Education (HACE) ▶ Youth Work Programme funding source changed from Special Projects for Youth to UBU-your place your space, administered through City of Dublin Youth Services/CDETB ▶ Nesson Vaughan elected chairperson of LYCS
2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ CTC Learners completed 100 QQI Level 3 & 4 Modules. ▶ 238 local people participated in LYCS Global Citizenship Education programmes. ▶ Revision of LYCS governance and policy documents to ensure they reflect full commitment to global citizenship education. ▶ 85 individual young people participated in youth work programmes.

Interview with Monica Brady

– ex-Crèche Supervisor with LYCS

Thanks for speaking with me, Monica. Where did you start in LYCS and what were the early days like.

I was working in a private crèche in the North Circular Road. The private crèche was fine, but it was a private sector model. It was more about the finances, about the money. Crèche's were becoming more like a business than a place focussed on children. A job came up in LYCS, and I decided to go for it. What I liked was that it was different. It was a community; it was what I was looking for.

Bertie Ahern was a TD at the time, and he was pushing for a school in the area. At the time Rutland Street was awful. I used to come in early every morning and wash the steps of the building. The amount of needles and things was awful. The place was run down. Suddenly the corporation appeared and a big clean-up was started. I asked them why. "We have a big visit tomorrow" they told me. I thought this was wrong. Why should it be cleaned. Why should a politician not have to walk through the same environment as the children coming to us every day. That was part of the LYCS way. We were in the community. We didn't want to hide what the children and staff were opposed to. I was just a childcare worker, but I was conscious of our reality being seen for what it was.

At the start, most of the children came from women who were in the Training Centre. I thought it was wonderful. They got this break and could follow their education. The programmes in LYCS always worked well together. We were all connected and felt we were all adding something to the community. The community had good people and we saw it. And LYCS could give them an opportunity to show it. I always put pressure on for more support and financing for the crèche. It was the thing that allowed them to get on.

The Crèche had to change over the years. Regulations and oversight came in. It had to make a profit as ratios became more restrictive. You needed a lot of staff to keep the place open. How did you feel about that transition.

Things did change. The early years sector changed. There was more pressure. I became a supervisor. This was difficult, because I knew the girls so well. But if I needed to pull rank and talk about performance I would. No matter the changes, I had a mantra: it's for the children. No matter the issue, we keep the needs and experience of the children in our minds.

Kids pick up on everything. We were big on staff performance. If staff are talking to each other, they are not talking to the children. We had a good relationship. The staff trusted me and the manager to have the best interests of the children at heart. I learned so much about myself as well. I'll always be grateful to the LYCS for what it gave me. It helped me to learn that everyone did not think like me. I left school when I was 15. My personal circumstances made it impossible for me to stay in school. I always said to the girls working in the crèche: you can do this. Don't make excuses, if you want something, go and get it. That was central to the LYCS. People came to work

in the crèche, and we always wanted them to continue with education and to build a life for themselves. We tried to always deliver a positive message. I had no formal childcare education, but I got what I needed while with LYCS.

What was special about the crèche? What made it, and still makes it, different? Are we just like another early years' service?

There are local people working in the LYCS Crèche and our staff really cared. They worked to meet the needs of the children. I remember a little girl we had with autism. She was unique. For instance, at mealtime, she wanted to be in a low-chair when she was eating. The woman working with her figured out what she needed. We did what the child needed. We did what made that child comfortable and happy. There are sometimes issues. For instance, we had an inspection and the person doing it looked at the child and said she was too old to be in the chair she was in. But we knew she had needs. We knew that her autism made her feel insecure at the table on the bench. The point is, that the one rule for all does not consider the needs of the individual child. They are all different and they all need particular things. We always followed procedures. But we also got to know our children and developed individual care plans for them.

We loved the kids. And this is still the case. That's our job. When the parent leaves their child with us, we stand in for them. The parent needs to feel that their children are well-loved when they are with us. When you go in there you feel the care the staff have for the children. They get care and love in the LYCS Crèche.

I was with LYCS for 20 years! I always did what I thought was best for the children that we cared for. The crèche was not always an easy place to work. The kids had needs and some of the families lived in difficult situations. But we always did our best.

Rutland Street School Refurbishment and Renovation



40 Years in LYCS Part VI

2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ LYCS moved into the Metropolitan Building, James Joyce St. ▶ 'What's Your Issue' Collaborative Arts Programme involving LYCS, SWAN & Belvedere Youth Club. ▶ 30m early school leavers avail of bespoke accredited training.
2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Launch of LYCS Strategic Plan 2023 – 2027. ▶ End of LYCS delivering youth work services after 39 years. Existing programmes and staff integrated into the new Rutland Area Youth Services. ▶ CTC learners - 40% progressed onto employment and 45% progressed onto Further Education. ▶ Refurbishment of Rutland Street School begins. ▶ Aontas Star Award nomination for a Stained Glass project called Solder, which was then exhibited in The Hugh Lane National Gallery.
2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ New Rutland Youth Services formed to include LYCS youth programme, Adventure Sports Project and part of Belvedere Youth Club. ▶ Over 250 local children, young people and adults participated in LYCS education programmes on a weekly basis. ▶ 18 weekly adult education classes are held involving over 100 local adults. ▶ Over 350 local people participated in Global Citizen Education programmes. ▶ 54 children attended LYCS crèche on a daily basis. ▶ 30 early school leavers attended the LYCS CTC on a daily basis. ▶ Our Drama Group won the Aontas Star Award.



Interview with Sarah Kelleher

– CEO LYCS

When did you first hear about LYCS?

I was working in London in 1995, and I saw the job advert for a Director in LYCS in the Irish Times. At that stage I really wanted to come back to live and work in Ireland, so I applied for the job, never expecting to get it. I had gone to England to study Youth & Community Work as there were few such courses in Ireland at the time. Community development was a long-recognised practice in England many years before we started engaging in it on a large scale here. Through my studies I was fortunate to have gained a good understanding of the principles of social justice, equality and positive engagement with communities before I arrived in the north inner city. My work and experience in England were a great training ground. They sharpened my professional practice and gave me a more rounded understanding of people. Being a migrant in London, gave me a great understanding and that sense that you are never really at home in a foreign place. England was a tough place for Irish people at that time, and I knew I would never settle there.

I've been involved in youth and community work virtually all my life, following in my mother's footsteps and learning from her innovative voluntary work in my local village in Cork. She was such a forward-thinking person, constantly coming up with creative solutions to local problems and engaging with people in such a positive and inclusive way. I have a natural curiosity and interest in people, and I love the collectiveness of working together to achieve something. For me, community development is about enabling people to identify their own needs and facilitating them to access the supports required to address those needs.



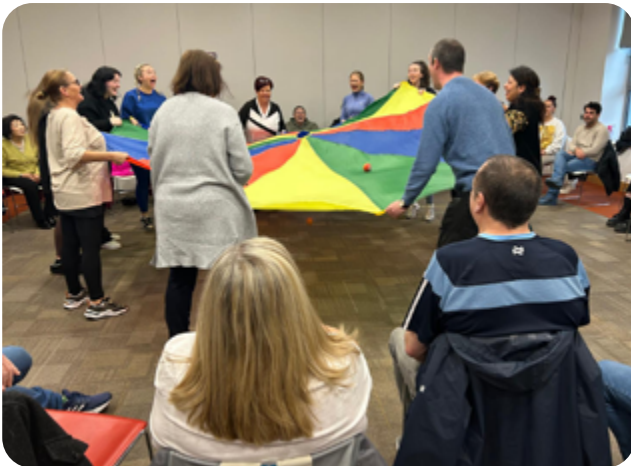
So in the mid-1990s I arrived back in Ireland to a Dublin I hardly knew. But what I found in the north inner city was a warm community of people who were working hard to bring about positive change. When I started working in LYCS, there were 12 staff in the organisation. At the time the Government had established the Community Development Programme and LYCS had secured funding from the programme to employ me as Director. I was lucky to be surrounded by a group of strong and focused people in LYCS who

knew how they wanted things done. The approach very much aligned with the principles of community development, and we have held fast to those principles over the past 40 years. Those principles are at the core of our current strategic plan. One of the main reasons why the organisation has survived and thrived over such a long time is our passionate commitment to recruit people who want to work according to the principles of community development. Our approach is very much about doing things **with** people rather than **for** them.

What are some of the key moments that you recall over your time here?

The issues have changed over the years and there have been many challenges. I remember one week in the '90's when five young people took their own lives. The heroin drug scene was very bad at the time. This was in the pre Celtic Tiger period and there was a high rate of unemployment and poor housing in the area.

When I arrived in LYCS, Development Education was part of the core work, whereby people didn't just focus on local problems, they recognised the global dimensions to issues. There was a real sense of moving from self-blame and victimhood to looking at the wider social and global context, moving from being powerless to being agents of change.



In 1995, a Women's Conference was held in Beijing and two women from LYCS, Maureen Downey and Helen White, attended the conference. They brought back so much knowledge and information, and this helped to embed our commitment to what is now termed Global Citizenship Education. The emphasis in this approach is around people understanding where they fit in the world, recognising that it is not their fault if they are living in poverty, as well as recognising that in terms of solutions

- 'one size does not fit all'. The experience of Maureen and Helen enabled us to think about issues of gender and poverty within a global context. They really inspired us and so began 30 years of LYCS's commitment to Global Citizenship Education. We work with people to discover how the issues affecting their lives also impacts people in other parts of the world. It is important to acknowledge and note that we owe huge thanks to Irish Aid for the ongoing support and funding they have given us over the years.

The crèche had been established when I arrived in LYCS, but it subsequently expanded. We soon realized that you can't get parents into education unless you provide childcare. At that stage, the crèche was very much about 'minding children', progressing to where we are today, where it is about early childhood education.





A major part of the work at the beginning of LYCS revolved around 'FAS trainees' and the running of the community training workshop. Over a thousand local teenagers have returned to education through LYCS. The vast majority of these have progressed into further education and/or employment, especially in recent years. We had a youth club and the trainees ran it. In time this evolved into a distinct youth work programme with its own full time youth workers. Today that same service has now merged into the new Rutland Area Youth Service.

In time we went from having 12 to 50 staff (many on Community Employment). The organisation grew in response to the needs in the local community and the opportunities provided by various funding schemes to employ more staff. I don't mind saying that there have been many challenges over the years but overall, there have been more bright than dark days.

How would you describe the way LYCS works?

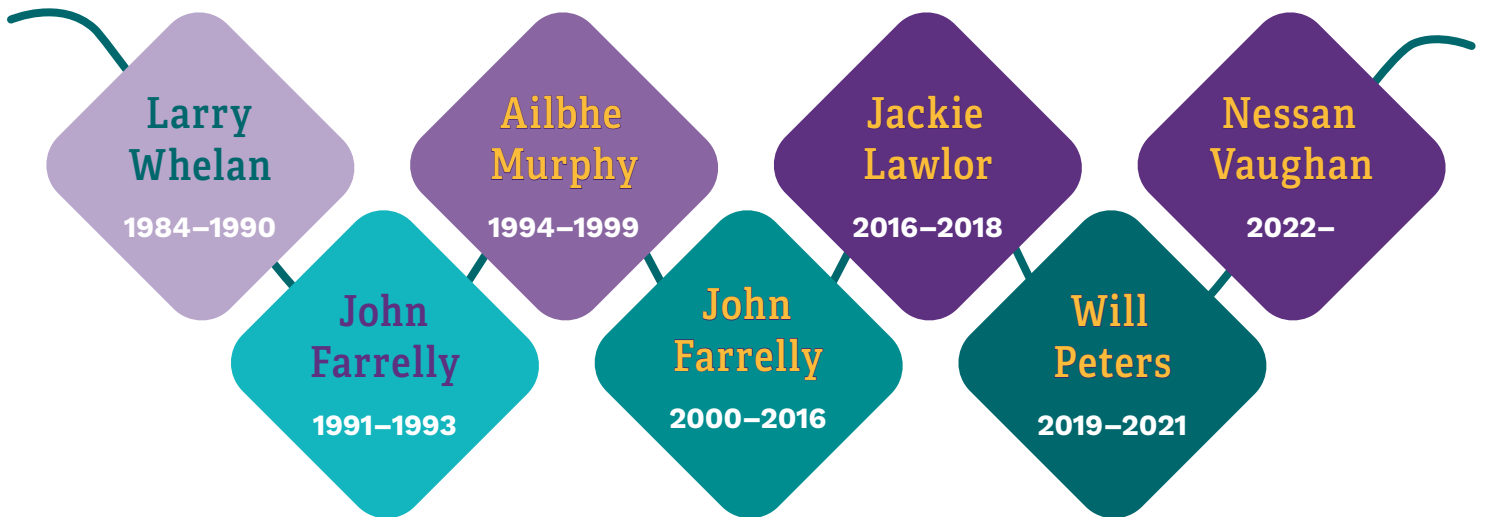
LYCS is not about being charitable. For example, if our job was to feed people, our approach would be to enable and support people to access the resources to feed themselves. We want people to get a career, rather than just a job. There is a huge emphasis now on being outcomes focused, whereas we believe that it is equally important to be process focused. Everything we do is about the development of people and raising their voice, that is enabling people to say what their issues are and gain the personal and social skills to successfully respond to them. We are also conscious not to foster learned helplessness. There is a fine line between providing services and creating dependency and we don't want to do the latter.

We continually ask ourselves ***"what are the needs of the local community and the people who avail of LYCS services"***? In response, we constantly adapt or change what we provide and deliver in order to meet those needs. We also engage in ongoing review processes of everything we do so as to ensure that it is impactful and relevant.

Our belief in local people is phenomenal. We salute their resilience in the face of adversity and ongoing challenges and acknowledge the survival skills they have developed. When these are harnessed in a positive way, anything is possible.



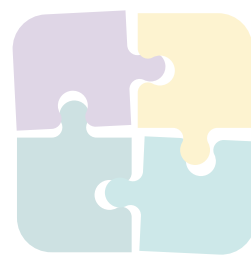
Chairs



Director/CEO



Background to LYCS



Lourdes Youth & Community Services (LYCS) was established in 1984, as part of a broad based community development movement, which emerged in Dublin's north inner city in the late 1970's and 1980s.

LYCS is an integrated community development organisation, providing education, training, social and development opportunities to local people living in the North East Inner City (NEIC) of Dublin. LYCS is concerned with giving participants the opportunity to become involved in their own development and the development of their community, their country and to become active global citizens. The organisation is locally based and participatory. LYCS inspires residents, and the practitioners who provide services to them, to connect and critically engage with local people on global injustice and inequality issues, and to create positive change through taking informed action.

LYCS operates in an area which is characterised by high levels of socio-economic deprivation. Social and economic disadvantage can be understood in terms of a range of difficulties that block life opportunities, and which prevent people from participating fully in society. These include exclusion from financial, material, cultural and social resources. Economic disadvantage leads to individuals and communities excluded and marginalised from participating in activities considered the norm for other people in society. A characteristic of poverty is that it is often intergenerational, resulting in decades of social exclusion and disadvantage which adds significantly to the depth and complexities of social exclusion.

The North East Inner City has a population of over 45,000 (2016 Census) people and has the largest concentration of disadvantaged people across the Dublin inner city area. The area faces many challenges:

- The area is characterised by contrasting pockets of high levels of disadvantage and smaller pockets of affluence.
- There is clear evidence of educational disadvantage within the north inner city. For example, in Dorset Street,



53% of the population have primary education only, while in Dublin 1 only 23% of school leavers progress to Third Level (compared with 99% in Dublin 6). Census 2016.

- The area has one of the largest concentration of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in Ireland. Migrant populations in areas around O'Connell St. and Dorset St. are at over 50% of the population.
- A significant increase in population over the past 20 years.
- The area has been the centre of significant levels of gangland crime and suffers from the consequences of high levels of street drug dealing.



The Mulvey Report (2016) highlighted the challenges and significant levels of deprivation experienced by this community. These include the impact of crime, drugs and unemployment. He described it as 'a community rich in assets which is not reaching its potential'.

In response to this context, LYCS works to equip people at local level with the necessary awareness, knowledge and values to take informed decisions and actions. We strive to equip local people to build the conditions for a more peaceful, fair and sustainable world. We offer education programmes to every age group, which are participatory, and aim to integrate the lived experience of participants within an educational setting.

We aim to enable our participants, who live in the local area, to combat and counter the visible rising incidents of racism (which have included acts of violence) and to help create an integrated community for all, a place where imagination and innovation is celebrated and where future generations can envision an improvement in their lives and community.



Strategic Plan 2023 – 2027

Goals and Objectives



Goal 1: Investing in the Local Community

Ensure the individuals and communities we work with, in particular those most at risk of poverty and disadvantage, have enhanced opportunities to achieve their potential in the areas of social, economic, and cultural life and can contribute to building a better society

Goal 2: Governance and Organisational Development

In acknowledging the trust placed in us by our funders, donors and the communities we serve, we will work to ensure excellence in the areas of governance, transparency and accountability and the management of the resources entrusted to us.

Goal 3: Investment in our Staff.

Ensure our staff have the competencies and resources to deliver on LYCS's vision, mission, values and goals and support them in this.

Goal 4: Interagency work and Collaboration

Continue to work with our community, voluntary, statutory and funding partners to achieve the best possible outcomes for this community and to avoid duplication of service.

Goal 5 Communication

Develop and communicate a consistent message about LYCS to its stakeholders and its purpose, vision and mission.

LYCS Values and Principles



Sustainability

We work to ensure that our interventions bring real benefits to local people over the long term and reflect the knowledge, skills and attitudes of our organisation, in line with our vision, mission, values and goals.

Effectiveness and Results

We use our resources efficiently and effectively, providing value for money and focusing our efforts on achieving positive outcomes.

Equality and Equity

We work to advance equal opportunities to contribute to the creation of a diverse, fair and equitable society.

Human Rights

We work to defend the universal and indivisible nature of human rights, including personal, social, economic and environmental, by promoting and protecting them in all our efforts.

Accountability

We are accountable to our community and our funders and are transparent in all that we do.

Partnership

We believe in the value of partnership which is based on mutual trust and support and brings about improved life chances for individuals, families and communities.

Empowerment & Self-determination

We work to empower individuals and communities and support them to make their own choices and decisions.

Personal Development

We commit to creating opportunities in the areas of person development, lifelong learning, employment, health and well-being, family and community.



LYCS methodologies are influenced by the following practices and principles:

Community Development is a process where community members come together to take collective action and generate solutions to common problems.

Global Citizenship Education (GCE) is a lifelong educational process which aims to increase public knowledge and understanding of the rapidly changing, interdependent and unequal world in which we live. By challenging stereotypes and encouraging independent thinking, global citizenship education helps people to critically explore how global justice issues interlink with their everyday lives.

Participatory Education is a model in which participants are given the opportunity to engage in the process of creating and guiding their educational journey. It incorporates participant's voice into all decision making and promotes involvement in democratic decision-making.

Advantaged Thinking is a practice approach which was developed in 2011 by Colin Falconer. It promotes people's strengths rather than defining them by their deficits. It understands that working towards people's aspirations and dreams is just as important as meeting their immediate needs. An Advantaged Thinking approach is one that creates sustainable solutions and practices, building for the future as well as the here and now. It invests smartly in people's potential.

Who we currently work with

We work with people in the North Inner City throughout their life course, with a particular emphasis on those who are vulnerable, disenfranchised and seldom heard. It is precisely the complexities of reaching and working with people who are living with intergenerational social and economic disadvantage and their consequent multiplicity of impacts that makes this cohort of people 'seldom heard'.



We would like to thank and acknowledge the input and contributions of our all the many individuals who volunteered as Board of Directors, who have consistently and generously given their time to inform and guide the development of LYCS over the past 40 years. We would also like to thank all the people who worked in LYCS for their positive engagement over the years. We have also taken cognisance of developments in the North Inner City area as well as national policy and strategy.

LYCS programmes and activities

To address the diverse needs of the local community, LYCS operates the following programmes:

Early Years Education

Our early years' service provides 70 places for children from 6 months – 5 years each day in our crèche including free Pre-School Places.

Youth Work Programme

1984–2023, when it merged with ASP and Belvedere Youth Club to form the new Rutland Area Youth Service.

The Youth Work Programme offered afternoon, evening and weekend programmes, plus regular trips outside of Dublin for up to 80 young people aged 10–21 years.

Community Training Centre (CTC)

40 Early School Leavers have the opportunity to gain certified training in QQI Levels 3 & 4 in a range of modules, including Sport and Fitness, Job Seeking skills, Digital Media, Personal Development, Communications, Maths.



Adult Education Programme

Provides informal training and education for over 110 local adults, all of whom have little or no history of formal education.

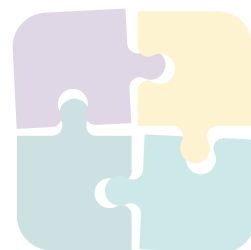
Global Citizenship Education (GCE)

LYCS addresses gaps in GCE provision for over 300 seldom heard individuals by facilitating residents, and the practitioners who provide services to them, to connect and critically engage with local and global injustice and inequality issues, and to create positive change through taking informed action.

Community Employment Scheme (CE)

LYCS operates a CE project with 34 participants some of whom are based in LYCS while others are placed in community projects throughout the north inner city.

LYCS Services



Early Years Education Service

*70 children
6 months – 5yrs
Morning & Afternoon*

- Baby Group
- Toddler Group
- Tweeny Group
- ECCE – Free Preschool Year
- National Childcare Scheme
- AIMS Support
- Support for children with Additional Needs
- Working in partnership with Tusla multi-disciplinary teams
- Parent support groups
- QQI training for staff
- Special occasions celebrated
- Better Start support
- Fully Inclusive service
- Working in partnership with TUSLA, POBAL, Better Start, DCCC & ECI
- Staff undergo regular CPD Training
- QQI level provided

Adult Education Programme

*80 local adults returning to education
Morning, afternoon and evening classes*

- Leadership
- Active Citizenship
- Book Club
- Stained Glass
- Beginners Irish
- Creative Writing
- Guitar
- ESOL
- Computers
- Knitting
- Singing
- Collage & Mixed Media
- Art
- Tai Chi
- Participatory Drama
- Older Persons' Group
- Sign Language (ISL)
- Educational trips

Personal Development is central to all programmes

Global Citizenship Education Programme (GCE)

300 children, young people and adults becoming active global citizens

- This programme works across the whole of LYCS and aims to connect and critically engage children, young people and adults with local and global injustice and inequality issues, and to create positive change through taking informed action.
- GCE builds capacity to develop and deliver an informed model of community education through training and innovative non-formal education programmes.
- We will engage learners living with social and economic disadvantage, with whom we have established connections, in 4 new and innovative GCE programmes:
 1. GCE Leadership Training Programme
 2. Drugs Training Programme for Young People: Examine local-global connections within the drugs trade.
 3. GCE Training programme for Adult Education Practitioners
 4. Theatre of the Oppressed Arts Training Programme



Community Training Centre

40 Early School Leavers

16 – 21 years

Accredited training

- Life Skills
- Employability Skills
- Sport & Recreation Skills
- Digital Literacy
- Communications
- Maths
- Personal Development
- Emergency Psychological Support
- 24 hour support
- Enrichment Programme
- Tracking ex- participants
- Translation supports
- Housing supports
- Healthy meals
- Learner driver course
- Progression support into Education/Employment

Youth Work (up to 2023)

80 young people

10 – 21yr olds

Afternoon, Evening, Weekends

- 5 days per week service
- 6 week summer programme
- 6 weekend residential programmes
- 9 programmes per week for identified target groups including sport, art, music, games, outdoor pursuits, swimming, water safety, CV preparation, interview skills, Communication skills, Confidence and agency, Planning and problem-solving skills, Relationship support
- Programmes promote:
 - Creativity and imagination
 - Resilience and determination
 - Emotional intelligence



Community Employment

*34 work placements for
Long-term unemployed*

- Individual Learning Plan
- Work Placement
- QQI Training
- Job Progression supports
- Education Progression
- Training and Development – QQI Special Purpose Award
- Manual Handling
- GDPR Level 1
- Communications



Funders and Partners



Comhairle Cathrach
Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City Council



An Roinn Forbartha
Tuaithe agus Pobail
Department of Rural and
Community Development



An Roinn Coimirce Sóisialaí
Department of Social Protection



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

LOURDES
YOUTH AND
COMMUNITY
SERVICES



Metropolitan Building
James Joyce Street
Dublin D01 KOY8

LYCS Early Years Service
Rory O'Connor House
Hardwicke Street
Dublin
D01 HK 25

Phone: 01 836 3416
www.lycs.ie

Registered Charity Number: 20013448



LYCSDublin



Lourdes Youth & Community Services



LYCSDublin



@lycsdublin.bsky.social



Lourdes Youth & Community Services



www.lycs.ie