

Children's Ministry Report

Submitted by Chantal O'Laughlin

The past year has been a more eventful one for our church and children's ministry programs.

Our nursery program has seen tremendous growth over the past few months. We have had a good turnout of young families with infants and toddlers who require care during Sunday services. Our team of volunteers has worked hard to create a safe, child-friendly environment that meets the needs of the children and their parents. The growth in this program is evidence that our church is attracting young families who want to grow in their faith and be part of a supportive community.

Our Sunday morning children's ministry has seen a consistent growth in attendance, and many children have expressed a willingness to learn more about God's love. We have an amazing team of volunteers who commit their time and resources to create a loving, nurturing, and engaging environment for the children every Sunday.

Our church hosted two summer camps, which were very successful. The camps were attended by over 80 children who enjoyed engaging activities, made new friends, and grew in their faith. We received numerous positive feedback from parents who were pleased with the camp and the impact it had on their children.

Family Nights has been a success story for our church. We started the program in Sept 2022, and it has grown in attendance to over 85 people/month. The program features family-oriented activities, games, and discussions that promote family and community bonding. We have seen many families in our neighborhood attend the events, and we hope to continue growing the initiative into the coming year.

We recognize that there are opportunities for improvement, and we shall continue to work hard in the coming year to enhance our programs and make a more significant impact in our community.



Elders Report

submitted by Darlene Mullin on behalf of the Grace Chapel Elders

The Elders are responsible for the spiritual direction of congregational life and all ministries of Grace Chapel are ultimately accountable to the board. The primary concern of the Elders is spiritual oversight & responsibility for the spiritual direction of the church ministry. The Elders also function as the Grace Chapel Board of Directors being responsible for management & administrative affairs of the Church.

It is good to be reporting once again on a more 'normal' year. Gathering to worship both in person and on-line is encouraging, events that were on hold due to covid have returned and a buzz of activity is evident in the hallways. The need to go virtual for the pandemic has prepared us to implement on-line meetings more quickly...no need to shut down for a Sunday winter storm, we can 'log-on' for worship. Travelling? You can still attend Grace Chapel services and even some meetings. Our community has learned helpful new skills.

As part of these adjustments and growth we note the work of our staff at Grace Chapel and deeply appreciate their leadership and care. We know many hours go into their ministry and we are thankful for Ross, Pelham and Chantal as well as their families. In the latter part of 2022 Grace Kinyua served as Youth Pastor during Pelham's sabbatical. We are thankful for Grace's excellent ministry leading our youth. We have an awesome team serving together, please keep them in your prayers.

In June two new elders were welcomed to the leadership team – Kelly Moffatt and Trevor McPhee. They arrived in time to join the leadership retreat held at the Seton Spirituality Center. Our time together was valuable

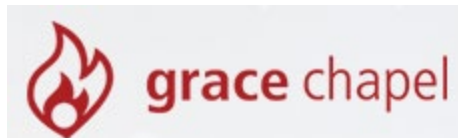
and through it God gave us the vision we have been sharing since that time of ...**Connect – Grow – Serve – Thrive**. We trust God will be leading all of us in embracing this for our community in the days ahead. Our thanks and prayers go with Menen Teferra who is stepping down as an elder. We are thankful for her faithful service and appreciate all she has contributed.

As mentioned, this building is being flooded with people and activities throughout the week. We are thankful to Charlie and Sharon Glover who provide custodian services for us and keep things tidy for the ministry that happens here. John Forsythe is also very much appreciated for his work as Treasurer.

There are new initiatives happening - Women's Ministry, Men's Ministry and Badminton, seminars like Danny Zacharias speaking on Loving our Indigenous Neighbours, folks near and far worshipping with us on-line and fun events like the Fall Retreat and welcoming surprise guests for supper. Family Nights, Small Groups, Men's Breakfast, Youth Group, Senior's Suppers, **12+** kids in the nursery (wow), English Classes, prayer gatherings and MORE. That buzz of activity is real, and God is in the middle of it.

On behalf of the elders, I want to ask you to be praying with us as God opens new opportunities to minister in our Grace community and outside our doors, to seek His blessing and help us be attentive as the Spirit leads. Please know that the elders are available to meet with anyone for prayer or other concerns. We welcome you to be in touch with us if you would like us to visit.

Volunteer Elders' Team – Dennis Kebaya, Jonathan McMullen, Trevor McPhee, Kelly Moffatt, Darlene Mullin, Samm Musoke, J.B. Robertson



English Classes at Grace Chapel

Report submitted by Darlene Mullin

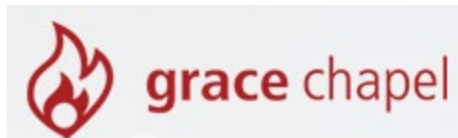
English Classes aim to provide an opportunity for people to develop their English skills, and along the way build new friendships and make connections. Wednesday mornings students and teachers gather for coffee/ tea before classes helping form these new connections. It's a good way to begin our time together.

Word of mouth is the most frequent way new students find their way to us, though some have been referred by the Halifax Refugee Clinic. There is growing need for English classes in our city. In the last 12 months we have welcomed students from China, Iran, Afghanistan, India, Rwanda, Ukraine, Columbia, Mexico, Russia, Brazil, Korea, Sudan and more. Some students join briefly before settling into work or full-time language classes...still others have been attending for a few years! Often when moving on students request to be invited to special events keeping connections in place. Many students and their families have attended regular services at Grace and/or Family Night.

At Christmas a couple students shared that it was the first time they heard the story of Jesus' birth. We are pleased to be able to share God's love and care and our faith stories. Still others have struggled to find work, housing or have health questions and we offer help and come alongside as we are able.

Volunteer teachers make this ministry of Grace Chapel possible. As in previous years I want to say a big thank-you to everyone involved – Lorie Robertson, Sylvia Musoke, Ruth Streight, Chantal Boucher, Gary Myatt, Hazel Churchill, Marion Grant, Tim Stephens and Donna Davenport ...along with substitute teacher Pat MacDonald. These folks are greatly appreciated!

If you enjoy connecting with new-comers and have questions about volunteering in this ministry, please ask about opportunities. Teaching experience isn't required 😊



Grace Chapel Facility Update

Submitted by Darlene Mullin

Facility Team: Paul Yeo, Ron Stuart, Jonathan McMullen,
Darlene Mullin

Grace Chapel was constructed in 1986 and the building is showing it's age in various places. The number one area to address is the roof and there have been updates given over the past few months. It is expected the roof replacement will begin by the end of March. Careful consideration has been given and the decision was made to install a metal roof - we hope it will provide many years of shelter! (Estimated cost \$137,500).

Three broken windows have been replaced facing on to Farnham Gate Road. Two new baseboard heaters have been installed in the gym. A wider assessment of the structure is needed to inform future areas to focus on. As always, this team will endeavour to communicate clearly the plans as they unfold.

Many thanks to those who work behind the scenes doing repair work, replacing bulbs etc. We appreciate your help in this way.



Lead Pastor Report

submitted by Ross Macdonald

For several years we have been using the following to describe ourselves here at Grace Chapel:

**Grace Chapel is a diverse community united by the love of Christ
and called to embody that love in our neighbourhood.**

Coming out of a very important leadership retreat in June of 2022 the Elders and Staff were led together to these 4 words:

Connect, Grow, Serve, & Thrive

*That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season
and whose leaf does not wither – whatever they do prospers.*

Psalm 1:3

These four simple words give us a framework to use to evaluate how Grace Chapel is developing as a local church. Each one of them needs to be evidenced in the things that we are doing.

Certainly, one of the highlights this past year was our Chapel Retreat at Bayside Camp. It was very well attended, and we were gifted with a beautiful weekend weather-wise in early November. It was wonderful seeing people connecting with others. After a long season of Covid it was so good to be having fun together. The weekend provided an opportunity to unpack together what it is to Connect, Grow, Thrive and Serve.

Hearing the stories of other people helped us appreciate the work that God is doing in our lives as individuals and also together. We are grateful to all those who shared their stories with grace and vulnerability.

Our Sunday morning teaching themes of “Alive Together in Christ” from Colossians, “Living Faith” from James, and “Humble Fearless Living” from the book of Daniel, were all helpful in growing us as people of faith.

I am very thankful for the “Preaching Ideas Development Team” who help me to structure our preaching and teaching throughout the year. Our commitment to reading and understanding the Bible is clear each Sunday.

A couple of highlights for me this past year have been the Sunday services that took place on Christmas Day, and New Year’s Day. Both of these services were very well attended. I am thinking that moving forward a Christmas Day service might be a good option for us at Grace Chapel. I would appreciate hearing your feedback. We had two families that came to Grace Chapel for their first time to attend the Christmas Day service.

The New Year’s Day service took place in English, Amharic, and Arabic. The worship and teaching were multi-lingual as well. The diversity in that service is an indicator of where God is bringing us as a fellowship of Christians. The pot-luck afterwards was great.

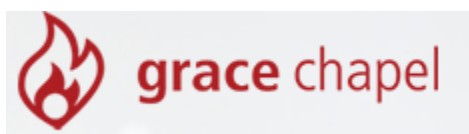
This continues to be a difficult year for a number of people who are dealing with some serious illnesses. We need to continue to pray for each other, and look for practical way to care.

2022-23 was a year of coming back together, gradually introducing new or old things to our experience as a congregation. We’ve seen many people return to the in-person gatherings, many new faces, some continue to join with us online, and some have found other places of worship, or have moved away.

The Breaking of Bread service has returned, the monthly “Three Score and More” (Second Thursday of the Month) is back, our men’s and women’s ministries are offering different ways to meet, and the monthly “Family Nights” (Third Thursday of the Month) are very well attended and greatly appreciated.

These things bring new ways God can and will be working in our midst; new areas to serve in, new friendships to be formed, new ideas for worship, connecting, growing, serving, and thriving.

I am very thankful for the loving community that Grace continues to be. We can anticipate an exciting year ahead as we follow Jesus together.



Library Report

Submitted by Marilyn MacGowan

We are so blessed to be a Church with a library. You will find many resources on our shelves for what ever is of interest to you.

Our library continues to support spiritual growth, nurture, and inspire faith.

There are many books in the fiction category you will find for easy reading.

We have many lovely selections for the younger member of our community, and we would welcome them and their parents to drop in to choose a book of interest to their children.

Our hours are from 10:15am to 10:30m and after the main service at 11:45am.



Men's Ministry Report

Submitted by Brian Forbes

The purpose of Men of Grace is to:

- Enable men to find their true identity in the real Man of Grace, Jesus Christ (Col 1:10-12)
- Connect and engage men in fellowship, activity and discipleship (Heb 10:24-25)
- Seek opportunity to compassionately serve; at Grace Chapel, in our community and the world (1 Peter 4:11)

How God has used this ministry this past year to bless, encourage, edify or enlighten the people involved in it.

- A Fellowship outreach breakfast with Dr. Strang, CHMO (NS) spoke of faith in times of crisis. It was attended by ~70 men, with 30% outreach, allowing men to gather and speak to concerns.
- Four impactful discipleship studies; in James, Hebrews, Sermon on the Mount and Kingdom Divided resulted in men preparing, contributing, sharing and blessing one another through application.
- Several Meetups have been well attended and drawn men into fellowship and activity together in an informal and unstructured way.

Struggles/difficulties this past year?

- Restart of ministry post-COVID takes time to build
- Reaching across generations has been a challenge
- Technology issues

Team's vision or goal

- Thriving community of men who support one another relationally and spiritually
- An in-depth discipleship group with outreach into our extended community
- 1-2 engaging service opportunities that give God glory



Missions Ministry Report

Submitted by Christian Yeadon

- The ministry of Grace Chapel missions is partnering with local and international Churches and missionaries to fulfill the church's responsibility/commitment to preach the gospel and plant churches, helping new Christians to grow and mature in faith and to go out and evangelize the world.
- Foster and encourage mission for all sectors of the church. To assess the ministries supported by the Chapel and ensure it is aligned with where the Lord is leading Grace Chapel
- To provide guidance and spiritual support to short term missions volunteers.

How God has used this ministry this past year to bless, encourage, edify or enlighten the people involved in it.

- Continued to support Chinlap Lee in Sikkim. The passion and love continued to strengthen the ties between our church and the boys' home.
- We were able to minimally impact the support to our partners with an overall decrease to the budget.
- We were able to finalize the updates to the Missions Committee Policy, last updated in 2001
- Our support of Mike and Bonita Dirk enabled Bonita to lead a retreat to Mount Sinai for 48 people. 40 were Sudanese students at Nuba Bible Institute. Mike was able to be involved with engineering work for a hospital in Niger.
- Our support of Open Door Centre has enabled a couple to start to rebuild a marriage being torn apart by addictions and a young couple to go forward with an unplanned pregnancy.

- You can learn about other work by reading letters posted in the foyer. You can request such letters be forwarded to you if you would like to be more involved in prayer for these ministries.

Struggles this past year

- We are continued to be challenged to arrange a better way to transfer funds to Chinlap Lee, and in December the boys home was shut down by the government.
- Budget changes and uncertainty

Team's vision or goal for next year

- Engage Grace Chapel in praying for and connecting with a mission partner. Teach about why giving to missions is so important
- Identify a short-term mission opportunity and promote it to the Grace community.
- Bring the partners we support to share their vision and mission to church members
- Look for local and international opportunities to support
- Support the Youth Group in Tidal Impact



Prayer Chain Ministry Report

Submitted by Maurice Nanton

The Prayer Chain is a group of sixty-one people who are part of Grace Chapel and who are willing to pray for needs that are received by the group. The prayer needs are sent to maurice.nanton3@gmail.com, and are then forwarded to the group. There are a small number of people who receive the prayer requests by 'phone. These requests are sent through Judy Nickerson who receives them either directly or via the email group.

There are many people who have said that they were aware that they were being prayed for and were encouraged by that knowledge in their particular situations.

It is always encouraging and helpful to receive updates on the prayer requests so that prayer can be focused on the need/s of that particular situation.

The goal of the team is to continue to be an available resource to share prayer requests with those who pray so that those needing prayer will have the need met.



SMALL GROUP MINISTRY

submitted by Robin Mullin

The objective of Small Group Ministry is to encourage people to meet regularly as an intimate community desiring to follow Jesus more. This involves sharing our lives together by studying the Bible, praying together, and caring for one another both within and outside of the group.

Over the past year gathering in small groups has been a steady connection for many in our community as we transitioned out of COVID restrictions. We met in 8 groups with 13 leaders in spring 2022, 9 groups with 14 leaders in fall 2022, and currently have 7 groups with 11 leaders. We are encouraged to see the blossoming of additional gatherings in the Women's and Men's Ministry areas. Groups have been following the Sunday teaching series with two special topic groups studying The Way of Discipleship led by JB Robertson and the Identity Journey series led by Graeme Higgs. Incorporating online and in person members in a hybrid group is an ongoing challenge. We piloted a Family Focused online group in the fall. The variability of life for young families resulted in the group coming to a close. We are always looking to try new ways to connect.

Going forward we will seek to find opportunities for new groups and to grow our leadership base. Special thanks to Hazel Churchill who has shared the responsibility for small group coordination this past year. If you are not in a group, there is room for you.



Sunday Suppers Report – 2023

Submitted by Elaine Churchill

Thank you for your continued support of the Sunday Suppers. We are now in our 38th year.

1. Purpose

The purpose of the Sunday Suppers is to host a weekly meal, for marginalized individuals, in HRM. A hot meal, fresh fruit and extra snacks, (such as nuts, granola bars, beverages and baking) is given to any guest who comes to the Suppers. Additional items are provided if needed. These include toiletries, blankets, tents, jackets, hats, gloves, socks, sanitary supplies, instant coffee, tea bags, sugar and toilet paper. The Sunday Suppers also provides opportunities for volunteers to be a part of this special community.

2. God in action

The Suppers is a place where Jesus' parable from Luke 14: 12-14 is put into action.

This year has seen an increase in the number of people impacted by poverty and food insecurity. God has continued to bless the Sunday Suppers with an amazing, consistent volunteer base and adequate donations of food and money, that allow for provision of generous food packages and other items that are most needed by our community.

At Christmas, we were able to return to offering a dine-in option to our guests. This had been missed since the beginning of the Covid crisis.

Slowly, the numbers of people feeling comfortable to eat in has increased to 70+. The take-out service was moved to inside the gym so that people no longer need to stand out in the elements, while waiting to be served. This number is 130+.

Our guests often stop to thank the volunteers for their service. They are thankful that the Suppers is able to provide a warm, safe and respectful place for them to come weekly.

3. Struggles and challenges

As with most ministries, Covid restrictions and concerns posed many challenges over the past year. The ever-changing restrictions led to many revisions of the preparation and serving processes. Things continue to change and evolve. Frequent evaluation of processes and service structure were (and are) required. This was time consuming and tiring at times. We seem to be entering a more stable time now, thankfully.

There are many variables that come into play each week unknown number of guests, number of volunteers, number of casseroles that get delivered, temperament of the guests. These can create a variety of challenges that need to be sorted out quickly and fairly. The strength of the core volunteer group makes it possible to work through all these variables with relative smoothness.

Needs continue to increase within the marginalized community, as housing and grocery costs rise. This has led to increased number of guests over the past year. This has often presented the challenge of finding additional casseroles each week, to ensure that every guest gets a hot meal included in their food package. We now freeze any leftover casseroles to be reheated, when we know that there will be a gap in the number of casseroles that can be provided on any given week. This means finding freezer space and additional ovens to reheat as needed (often on short notice). Often, the number of casseroles that a group will be able to provide is not known until Wednesday or Thursday. This can mean a bit of scrambling is needed to ensure that we get enough reheated to fill the gap.

4. Plans for moving forward

The overarching goal continues to be to provide a safe place for guests and volunteers to come together each week, for the provision of a meal and a supportive community.

The leadership of the Suppers plan to have regular reviews of the service provided and the systems that are in place. We will continue to adapt and make changes as necessary.

We plan to document policies and procedures.

We hope to have additional volunteers complete the Food Handling certification.

We plan to move forward with having individuals drop in to volunteer. Groups are being welcomed as well. Groups are asked to contact the Sunday Suppers team via the St. Andrew's United Church website, to arrange a suitable date for helping out.

We plan to continue to build community at the Suppers.



Women's Ministry

Submitted by Joanne Lopez Valerio

Esther 4 Women's Ministry seeks to encourage, uplift, and challenge women in their walk with Christ. This is accomplished through in-person and virtual fellowship and bible studies.

Esther 4 Women's Ministry came under the Grace Chapel umbrella in the spring of 2022 and kicked off with a series on being Women of Worship. Throughout each of the series in 2022 (women of worship, women who play together, and women in the word), the various activities, and the virtual zooms God rebuilt an in-person and virtual community of women being iron that sharpens iron which had been sorely missed by all through the pandemic. God raised up different women to step into leadership opportunities and challenged us to all always be ready to lead one another in deepening our relationship with the Lord.

On Tuesday mornings and in our monthly Saturday Zooms God challenged us to be active participants in worship, community, and in the word. We learned that worship is a weapon and that our worship should always be focused on God and that we can worship through song as well as everyday tasks. We were challenged to explore what gets in the way of authentic worship. We explored the book of John using the inductive method which is a fancy way of saying using the Bible to study the Bible. We learned how interpretation of passages is accessible to us and that God wants us to know His word for ourselves not just the word previously digested through the interpretation of someone else. We learned the importance of feed ourselves spiritually so that we can help others learn to feed themselves. One of my favorite activities was looking at what different chapters told us about God in small groups and then sharing all together. We were able to see firsthand how the passages taught each of us some unique and some similar things about God according to the different things that God was working on within us individually.

For many people change is a challenge. What God called us to in 2022 was very different from what women had been accustomed to in the past. I am encouraged by that because when God stretches us we grow. And we definitely grew! Simultaneously we were challenged with illness. As we came out of distancing and children played together and we connected more I wound up getting sick quite frequently in 2022 getting COVID twice and the nasty flu that came through as well as typical colds just wiping me out. But that opened the opportunity for other women to step up and lead

which was God's plan from the beginning! I love how He orchestrated multiple women taking the helm.

At the end of 2022 we expanded in leadership to establish a more sustainable ministry model. The plan that God put on my heart in the summer of 2022 was to prepare and raise up women to continuously lead the various aspects of the women's ministry so that as God calls different women at Grace to different places, locally and beyond, the ministry continues to thrive and meet our spiritual, emotional, and social needs. There are now in 2023 4 ministry opportunities for connecting with other women. We have the Tuesday morning bible study from September through the end of May(10am), the Thursday evening zoom (7pm) that will go year-round, the Coffee and Connect (10am) on the 1st and 3rd Saturday of each month, and the Saturday evening Zoom (7pm) the last Saturday of each month.

I want to take a moment to thank Bev and Kelly and Sandra and Kathleen for jumping in when I was ill in 2022, preparing other women to be flexible and willing to lead. I also want to thank each of the women who are dedicating time to make all of these connections possible, to Bev and Janet and others for faithfully upholding us in prayer, to Heidi and Paula for birthing Coffee and Connect, to Sandra and Kathleen for leading in-person Tuesday morning bible study this winter/spring, and to each woman who has shared how this ministry has impacted them.

What we are praying for (SURPRISE!!!):

God has been speaking to me through Kathleen and others about starting in-home women's groups for 2024. So this is something for you to be praying for and something that will take a lot of preparation during 2023. Specifically, I believe that these home groups will be community outreach groups in which women at Grace, who feel called to, will open their homes to other women in their communities for bible study, prayer, and fellowship. The Lord commissioned us in Acts 1:8 to tell the good news locally (our community is our Jerusalem), beyond our immediate borders (our Judea and Samaria), and globally (to the ends of the earth) and this is how I feel He is calling this women's ministry to participate. Thank you in advance for all of your prayers.



Youth Ministry Report

Submitted by Pelham Flowerdew

2022 was my 7th full year of running the youth ministry at Grace, and I remain amazed at the privilege I have to work with so many of the most amazing teens. On Wednesday nights, the building really is abuzz with energy, friendships, games, singing and discussion. There are always new faces being welcomed in by others who have grown up in the youth group. In the winter, we averaged 24 youth in attendance, and 51 different people. We had about 15 regulars from our Sunday morning crowd, and the rest were from the neighbourhood or other churches. I am really encouraged by the invitations I see taking place. We covered topics like pain, doubt, social justice and the book of Jonah. The youth leaders organized theme nights like Olympics, Fancy Night, Island Vibes and Slumber Party. While we did have to start the year off with a number of virtual events (done in partnership with Bedford Baptist), I am so thankful we can be together again – there's nothing like it! Watch a recap of our 2021-22 year [here](#)

We participated in meaningful service projects for our community: Coldest Night of the Year, farming for Common Roots, and making bag lunches for HRM's unhoused. We never forget to have fun either: a snack bracket to determine the best snack, ongoing ping pong tournaments, hikes, canoeing and trip to Africville. We maintain a strong connection to Malagash Bible Camp: 17 youth attended the MudBlast retreat in the spring and more in the fall. Many of our youth volunteered in the summer, and Angel and Christian even got baptized there ([check out the video](#))! Now they and 3 others sing regularly on our Sunday worship team.

An enormous thank you to my leaders: Ethan, Emma, Mark, Isaac, Natasha, Nashon, Daynisha, Sarah, Amy, and Sam. I can't forget our summer students Diana Hazelton and Caity Jacklin who helped us pull off 2 kids camps and our 6th

annual basketball camp with Athletes In Action ([recap video here](#)). These camps keep us well-connected to our community, which bears fruit for years to come.

I wrote last year that I intended to re-start an Alpha program at Halifax West, after trying other approaches for a year or two. With the help of Chelsey Joudrie at Calvin Presbyterian, we did in fact run a student-led Alpha program with about 10 regulars, none of which are people I knew from youth group or Grace. I am just so humbled by the quality of the discussions that took place, but even more so amazed that God allowed me to build trusted relationships with 4 of the teens in particular. I can't express enough gratitude as I think back on this.

It was a breath of fresh air to have a regular Junior High class start up again on Sundays. You may not realise that on any given Sunday there can be up to 18 of us up in that classroom, which they recently painted bubblegum pink! We took more than a year to go through the OneStory curriculum, which detailed the whole narrative of Scripture, an intentional choice to rebuild biblical literacy skills in the young people that grew a bit "rusty" during Covid. My prayers were answered, and I now have a team of 3 teachers who share the load – big thanks to Grace and Heidi! This has allowed me time and space to begin a Senior High Class which started last month. Stay tuned.

Of course, you know I took a sabbatical from August to December 2022 after 7 years of ministry. What a privilege it was! If you haven't yet watched my recap video, [please do so here](#). I owe a debt of thanks to Grace Kinyua who filled my shoes during that time, leading and loving our young people with passion, flexibility and wisdom.

Please join me in praying for these things: for more youth serving on Sunday mornings especially in worship, for a mentorship environment to form, and for more young people able to lead and willing to speak in front of others