

Stanleys is a registered charity set up by local people to meet the needs of its community and provides a variety of sessions and opportunities for its community and members.

Working alongside a wide range of volunteers, Stanleys uses an asset-based approach to develop sessions in which community members are able to achieve the five ways to wellbeing. Here Robyn Thomas, Manager at Stanleys Community Centre tells us more.



### What services does your organisation offer?

Robyn said: "I took over community ownership of the centre in 2018 and we gained charitable status in 2019. We are a community hub and our doors are always open to anyone.

"We understand that people's health and wellbeing is determined by a variety of factors including where you live, who you speak to, connections you have and wider determinates of health. We work closely with a variety of organisations including Bay Integrated Care Community (ICC) and Primary Care Network to maximise what we can offer and further reach and raise awareness amongst health care colleagues who do not have an overview of what community organisations do."

Robyn added: "At Stanleys, we offer a range of community services including open access to use Wi-Fi or the telephone, supporting Job search and CV writing, a weekly food club, volunteering opportunities and access to sessions and other organisations aimed at improving health and wellbeing.

"Stanleys offers youth sessions which provide a safe space for young people to gain experience and opportunities while building friendship and knowledge to help them make better choices. We offer weekly group sessions and bookable one-to-one mental health and wellbeing sessions. During the Summer holidays, we offer provisions for ages 12 to 17. For the future, we want to expand our groups and sessions to enable us to support as many young people as we can."

### What are the aims of Stanleys?

Robyn said: "Stanleys aims are to improve the mental health and wellbeing of young people and adults. As part of our youth work, we held a series of five difficult conversations with our young people that have focused on topics such as anxiety and depression, suicide and self-harm. We haven't seen sessions like this held as successfully with young people before. Our young people have opened up to us because we have built that trust with them and offered them a safe platform to air their thoughts and views. The feedback from these sessions will help us to build on our services and the support offered to young people in Morecambe."

Robyn added: "We strive to build the aspirations of young people to achieve things that they didn't think were possible. Working with Lancaster Youth Challenge, we are supporting our young people to take part in a triathlon, 11-mile swim relay at Salt Ayre Leisure Centre swimming pool and a cycle ride from Walney Island to Morecambe.

"We have lower educational attainment in some of our wards so we are doing everything we can to help support our young people. The COVID pandemic has had a big impact on the majority of young people, so we wanted to offer them additional support. We set up a homework club for the summer which will be led by a local teacher and youth staff."



## Who are the Young Leaders and Young Ambassadors?

Robyn said: “The Centre works with 15 Young Leaders who offer support to peers and help to design and run youth sessions at Stanleys for younger people. Our Young Leaders are normally between 13 and 14 years old.”

Robyn added: “In 2021/2022, Stanleys was awarded funds from Bay ICC’s local investment fund to support 12 Young Ambassadors. Our Young Ambassadors are working closely with partners and have joined local panels and engagement events to air their views about youth provision and how local money should be used to support it.

“We are working closely with Lancaster District Youth Foundation and are hoping to run a project over the next year which will see our Young Ambassadors visiting different community centres and organisations across Morecambe, The Marsh and The Ridge in Lancaster to gain views of young people – this will help to set a standard of youth provision across the area, which is really exciting. It’s really important that our young people who are in the Young Ambassador and Young Leader roles have the opportunity to have their say around different services, help design, support and deliver them.”

## How many people are currently using the service?

Robyn said: “Hundreds of people are now using the centre since we took over in 2018. Before COVID we had 10-12 young people coming along to our youth sessions and this has grown to nearly 40.”

## Feedback from people using the service:

MB attended sessions at Stanleys from the age of eight. He struggled making friendships and at school he didn’t receive the support he needed. Stanleys helped him find focus and stopped him getting in trouble with the police. MB’s confidence grew and he found an interest in politics and social action. He was fortunate to have a one-to-one meeting with Jeremy Corbyn who visited Morecambe.

MB is a champion of local causes and has assisted a number of groups creating videos, photography, and advertising. We are very proud that MB has become such an amazing caring young man who will always be part of our extended family/community.

## How can I get involved and find out more?

Robyn said: “Young people who are interested in attending our youth sessions or becoming a Young Ambassador or Young Leader can contact Stanleys by emailing the following email address [stanleyscommunitycentre.info@gmail.com](mailto:stanleyscommunitycentre.info@gmail.com) or calling the following number 01524410076. You can find out more about Stanleys [here](#) or by following us on our Twitter [@stanleys\\_cc](#).”