



News release – April 2017

## **SYHA partners with Ayrshire College for valuable volunteer experience**

IN January 2017, 20 student volunteers from [Ayrshire College](#)'s HNC in Uniform and Emergency Services took part in a three-day residential stay at Lochranza Youth Hostel on the Isle of Arran.

This was part of [SYHA Hostelling Scotland](#)'s youth and colleges partnership programme, established in 2016.

With units on the course including hillwalking, citizenship through volunteering, team work and event organisation, this volunteer experience took the students into a 'real world' environment to equip them with key skills to assist them with their course, while also supporting SYHA in their essential maintenance of the hostel network.

The students were split into two groups taking it in turns to either carry out maintenance around the youth hostel site, supported by lecturers and SYHA staff, including painting feature walls in bedrooms and preparing fencing for painting; or going on hill walking expeditions in the local area.

From the outset, all the students were very keen.

They realised the opportunities presented to them through taking part in this volunteer opportunity. Some students had never travelled to the Isle of Arran before and many had never been youth hostelling. Their residential stay at Lochranza Youth Hostel also gave them the opportunity to take responsibility for their own food preparation and through this they learned how to rely on one another and how to work together towards achieving a common goal.

Cailean Hargreaves, a student from Ayrshire College's HNC in Uniform and Emergency Services, who attended the residential volunteer programme, said: "I loved the trip to Arran, some of the group had never been there before, and, although I had, I've never stayed at the youth hostel.

"The hostel in Lochranza has great views over the bay and we were really lucky to see seals and deer from the window. The staff were really nice and made us feel very welcome. We all worked together in the hostel one day and went hillwalking the

other day – both days were really fun. The evenings were good too, everyone chipped in to prepare meals and wash up. I'd love to go back!"

SYHA chief executive, Keith Legge, said: "It has been great for our employees at Lochranza Youth Hostel to work with young people on another live project. It has been a valuable experience for all involved and the students were a fantastic support, enthusiastic and dedicated from the off.

"SYHA's youth and volunteering programmes form an integral part of our ongoing commitment to youth development initiatives and we look forward to working with Ayrshire College on similar projects in the longer term.

"Both SYHA and Ayrshire College appreciate the support from Caledonian MacBrayne with this project."

## **ENDS**

SYHA Website – <https://www.syha.org.uk/>

SYHA on Twitter – [@syhahostelling](https://twitter.com/syhahostelling) – #syhadventure

SYHA on Facebook – <https://www.facebook.com/syhahostellingscotland>

For downloadable images of Ayrshire College student volunteers at Lochranza Youth Hostel on the Isle of Arran, got

to: [https://www.dropbox.com/sh/a12kh6ufsvnb4wn/AABj9S9sdPW8RllozfDE\\_Q7ga?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/a12kh6ufsvnb4wn/AABj9S9sdPW8RllozfDE_Q7ga?dl=0)

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## **Notes to editors:**

### **SYHA Hostelling Scotland's Student Engagement Initiatives**

SYHA Hostelling Scotland has been involved in other student engagement initiatives in the last year, including the design of a promotional campaign to attract more young people (18 – 25) to become SYHA Hostelling Scotland members, the creation of mixed media public artwork for Crianlarich Youth Hostel, proposals for eco-accommodation pods at Lochranza Youth Hostel and customer care reports created by HND Admin and IT students and HND Business students.

SYHA's youth projects undertaken throughout 2016 highlight the charity's strong commitment to both youth development and youth tourism, pro-actively aligning its activities and business operation with VisitScotland's themed year of Innovation, Architecture and Design; as well as looking forward to the Year of Young People in 2018.

## **Ayrshire College, The Uniform and Emergency Services course and the Volunteer Residency**

Representatives from SYHA Hostelling Scotland and Ayrshire College put together the volunteer partnership project following a College Development Network event, after which a bespoke, mutually beneficial project was developed specifically for this group of students and their learning outcomes.

The Uniform and Emergency Services course at Ayrshire College is aimed at school pupils looking to work in the Army, Navy, Air Force or Emergency services as well as those looking for a career that involves physical activity, team work, sport, community development and fitness.

**SYHA Hostelling Scotland** is a self-funding charity operating a network of nearly 60 exceptional youth and affiliate hostels for the benefit of all those wishing to learn and experience what Scotland has to offer. Our unique sites provide affordable, comfortable, safe and quality-assured accommodation with a warm friendly welcome, local knowledge, activities and services for guests travelling around Scotland.

Members enjoy a range of exclusive benefits including dual membership of Hostelling International, providing access to more than 4,000 youth hostels in over 90 countries worldwide. Membership and guest overnight income supports our charitable youth programmes and the maintenance of the hostelling network, particularly in rural Scotland.