

2018 Edinburgh International Book Festival – helped by young people from Craigmillar

Director of Children's and Education Programme, Janet Smyth, is excited about the part of the Book Festival agenda devoted to young people. The chosen theme of Freedom also affects that part of the scheduling, and she feels it is entirely appropriate.

She also told us about the new project for this year, Codename F which involves 10 young people from Craigmillar, including Castlebrae Community High School, St Francis CE Primary School, Niddrie Primary School and Holyrood Secondary School. This group were introduced to the Book Festival either by their school librarians or through Lyra Theatre.

Codename F is supported by the Year of Young People 2018 Event Fund and managed by EventScotland. The group chose their own name and they explored a wide variety of topics from which they chose writers to appear at nine events in Edinburgh.



Janet Smyth Director of the Children's and Education Programme Edinburgh International Book Festival

Janet told us more about the theme and how the young people interacted with it : “I think it’s quite pertinent to a lot of children’s books and writing which at the very core of them is often about freedom, about pushing boundaries, finding one’s identity and quite a lot of the time there’s a quest where a person has to fall back on their own resilience.

“But this year we have been working with a group of young programmers for the Year of Young People and they have completely embraced this idea of Freedom. They have called themselves Codename F and they have put together nine events across the whole programme looking at sorts of different areas of freedom.

“They have invited Michael Morpurgo and the French illustrator Barroux to talk about their new book In the Mouth of the Wolf which is about the Resistance movement in France during the Second World War.

“They have asked Julia Donaldson because picture books quite often explore that idea of young people exploring the world. Her picture book which is the latest – The Girl The Bear and the Dancing Shoes – is about a little girl trying to escape and gain her freedom. They also looked at other writers who perhaps are less well known like Christopher Edge and Helena Duggan who have adventure stories where young people use their own resilience and self-reliance to find a way out of challenging situations.

“The young people all came from four schools in Craigmillar – two secondary and two primary schools. They are aged between 8 and 14 and they are the most amazing switched on fascinating challenging talkative youngsters that I have encountered. They are from Scotland, Oman, Indonesia and Poland.

“They all have an incredible sense of the world and their place in the world. They understand environment, politics, gender and religion is really very impressive.”

There will be a drop in day of free activities all under the banner Freedom to be Heard when they will challenge perceptions about the way that children and young adults engage with society.

Paul Bush OBE, Director of Events at VisitScotland said: “We are delighted to be supporting Codename F at the Edinburgh International Book Festival as part of the Year of Young People celebrations. The young programmers have come up with an incredible line up of events and it is great to see genuine co-design and collaboration at work with one of Edinburgh’s major festivals. Events such as this further reinforce Scotland as the perfect stage for events whilst also allowing the next generation to showcase their unique talents and have their voices heard.”

The Year of Young People 2018 is a year-long programme of events and activities that will give young people in Scotland the opportunity to show the world what they are made of. The Book Festival’s Young Co-Programmers are Atika Al-azari, Bruce Banner, India Cierpikowska, Laeticia Danica, Martyna Gorska, Joe Johnson, Ahmed Nalbant, Laurence Philpot, Unmol Singh and Jonathan Watton.

The Edinburgh International Book Festival will take place from 11-27 August in Charlotte Square Gardens and in the first part of George Street as far as Castle Street. There the newly named Spark Theatre will be situated to celebrate the centenary of Dame Muriel Spark’s birth. There will also be a drop in space and a café, signing tents in the Book Festival Village.

Tickets for all Book Festival events go on sale on 26 June 2018 at 8.30am. Entry to the gardens is free and all of the venues are accessible.

You can book online [here](#)

Book by telephone 0345 373 5888

Book in person on 26 June only at Edinburgh International Conference Centre or thereafter at The Hub, Castlehill.