

Lambeth Youth Matters

Issue 3 January 2008

For those who work with and care for young people in Lambeth

Young people making a difference

There are many causes for celebration as we look forward to a new year. Lambeth's first Youth Mayor (see right) has now taken office and we look forward to seeing him put his priorities into action. Getting the input and involvement from young people on how we deliver services is key if we are going to improve the life chances for all young people in Lambeth.

The excellent X-It programme was justly rewarded with a Guardian Public Service award (see left) for the important work it does in encouraging young people away from gang life and crime, and increasing their confidence to build a better life for themselves.

And two members of the YOF Panel have been appointed to a London-wide panel to award funds for projects tackling sexual health issues (see page two). All of which shows that although there is still much work to do, when given the chance, young people in Lambeth can excel and take responsibility for making a difference to their own lives and the lives of others.

Have a great 2008!



Councillors Sally Prentice and Florence Nosegbe



Cabinet Member and Deputy Cabinet Member for Young People

Lambeth's first Youth Mayor elected



After a tightly fought contest, Lambeth's first ever Youth Mayor was elected on Friday 16 November. Satya Panigrahi, who is 14 and lives in Streatham, (pictured left), has a budget of £25,000 to spend on projects that he feels are of importance to young people.

His priorities are:

- tackling crime
- improving health
- creating an official Lambeth Youth Club.

On his election Satya said: "I am so proud and pleased to be chosen by other young people to represent them. I want to make a positive difference and will do my very best not to let my voters down."

X-It programme scoops top award

Lambeth's X-It gang intervention programme won a prestigious Guardian Public Service award in November. The programme (profiled in the October issue of Youth Matters) was commended for working with hard to reach young people, who were at risk of social exclusion. It won in the children's services category, competing with councils from across the country.

Disclaimer: not all of the services promoted in this newsletter are managed by Lambeth Council, and as such, it is not responsible for their delivery.

Get the low down on youth and play



Third Avenue

A series of leaflets listing youth and play provision in Lambeth by town centre are out now. The leaflets cover a range of council-run and voluntary sector activities, from adventure playgrounds to scout groups, sports clubs to libraries, after school clubs to music projects. For your copies, contact Jenny Lovett on: 020 7926 9343, at: jlovett@lambeth.gov.uk, or see: www.lambeth.gov.uk/Services/EducationLearning/ExtraCurricular/YoungPeopleActivities.htm.

Sexual health information at hand

Information on where young people can get access to sexual health services is now available in a handy information card. The Lambeth Teenage Pregnancy and Parenthood Partnership developed the card, which has details of pharmacies that supply Emergency Hormonal Contraception (morning after pill); sexual health clinics - including ones specifically for young people - and contact details for the Central Booking Service for Termination. For your copy, contact Charlotte Parkes on: 020 7926 4523 or at: caparkes@lambeth.gov.uk.

YOF Panel members success

Two members of the Youth Opportunities Fund Panel (see profile on page three) have been selected to join a grant making project, co-ordinated by the Terence Higgins Trust. Ebenezer Ogunja and Simon Duncan will represent Lambeth, the only project to have two members selected to this small group of 12 from applicants across London. They were selected on the basis of their positive attitudes to issues of sexuality, sexual health and relationships, their motivation to support projects designed by young people, and their outstanding understanding of grant making processes.

In Focus

Breaking Barriers in Brixton

If you were playing in the same football team as someone, would you fight them in the street? If you had to rely on someone to hold 100lbs weights above your head, would you shout them down on the bus or pull a knife on them?

This principle of team work and interdependence is what the Breaking Barriers project at the Marcus Lipton Youth Club was based on. It began in summer 2006, when youth workers at the club actively encouraged young people, who had been excluded from school, exclusion units and who were known to the police, to take part in their summer activities programme.

There was a catch - if you belonged to a gang, you had to leave it at the door, says Renee Okuefuna, who manages the club. "The young people who come here know that it's somewhere they can't take part in any gang activity. They can't show any flags or wear any bandanas belonging to a particular gang."

Youth workers at the club gave the young people activities to do such as weight training and football, where they had to learn to work together, mixing up gangs from different areas.



Working out at the gym on a Breaking Barriers residential

"Because they had learnt to work together in this way," says Renee, "it meant that they were less likely to start fighting when they saw each other on the street. And for the most part, that's what happened." The project was held again in summer 2007, and due to its success, some of the young people who use the club got funding for a Breaking Barriers residential last year.

Although the project has now finished at Marcus Lipton, there are plans to extend it to other areas of Lambeth. For more details, contact Renee Okuefuna at: 020 7737 2841, or email: ROkuefuna@lambeth.gov.uk.

Taking a lead

A motivated group of young people are showing that, when given the chance, they are capable of running, managing and making decisions about their own activities

Lazy, dangerous, ignorant, arrogant – just a few words that are used to describe young people by many in the media and the country as a whole. These people have obviously never met Lambeth's Youth Opportunities Fund (YOF) Panel.

This voluntary panel is a self-motivated and committed group of young people, who live and study in Lambeth. It is given money by the government to assess projects, and decide which will be of most benefit to young people and the community as a whole. The whole process is youth led – with young people in the community writing the funding bids, which are then assessed by the young people on the panel, with support from a council officer.

The panel has a very clear idea about what it wants from a project. "We are looking for something new and unique" says Rashidat Lawar, 19, from Tooting, who is the chair of the panel, "and a good budget breakdown," adds Shahnaz Biggs, 16, from West Norwood. "We prefer an itemised budget," says Rashidat. "It's good for us and good for the project to think about exactly how they will spend their funding. We aren't looking for anything fancy, just something clear, and a statement of how it will benefit young people."

"It also has to say how it will be beneficial to the community as a whole, not just the people applying and their friends," adds Ebenezer Ogunja, 18, from Brixton. "And the equal opportunities part of the form has to be filled in." says Shahnaz.

"The panel and the Youth Opportunities Fund as a whole gives young people a voice – and not just the chance to speak, but the chance to practically show what they can do." Shahnaz Biggs, panel member

Charlotte Wiig



YOF Panel members at their weekly meeting

The panel split into groups to consider the applications. Each person in the group gives their opinion and then the project is given a high, medium or low priority. The panel will then discuss the projects as a whole, and come to a decision about which projects to fund. All the panel members go on training to help them develop the skills to assess the bids, on project management, monitoring and grant assessment. They are also all working towards a Youth Achievement Award.

Rashidat is clear about the benefits the panel brings. "We show that young people can have a voice, and if they have an opportunity they can do something beneficial for the community. When given the chance to lead, and the responsibility, young people can really achieve something. That makes us proud."

Shahnaz adds: "the panel and the Youth Opportunities Fund as a whole gives young people a voice – and not just the chance to speak, but the chance to practically show what they can do. They can show their capabilities through activities."

All panel members agree they benefit from being a part of it. Princess Bernard, 16, from Brixton says: "I've met new people, faced lots of new challenges and gained new skills." Victoria Bakare, 14, from West Norwood adds: "I've gained more confidence and learnt how to work as part of a team." Other benefits include: leadership skills, confidence building, gaining new experiences, building up a CV and logical thinking.

Ebenezer adds that it is a brilliant training ground for the responsibilities of the adult world, and trains young people for the time when they will

be running organisations themselves. "It shows that young people are ready to take leadership and control of their lives."

The YOF Panel is holding the launch of its 2008/09 funding on 29 January at the Assembly Hall of the town hall in Brixton, from 6– 8.15pm. For more information please contact: Anne Rathbone on: 07939 574 899, or email: anne.rathbone@a-r-a.com.

What's on

February's Fusion Festival for families



Third Avenue

Lambeth Libraries launches its first ever cultural festival for families, children and young people this February. The Fusion Festival introduces the National Year of Reading in Lambeth - a national campaign to promote the enjoyment of reading.

The Lambeth Fusion Festival offers a diverse range of events and activities including: literature, visual arts, debates and music. Through the events organised, families and young people will be able to develop their own creativity and be introduced to new books and authors. All events and courses are **free**, however places need to be booked in advance to avoid disappointment. Please contact: 020 7926 1104, or email: fusionfestival@lambeth.gov.uk.

Extra hours of sexual health advice

Due to the success of the sexual health information service at the Marcus Lipton Youth Club this year, the service in 2008 will run for an extra hour – from 5-8pm on Thursdays.

The club has been piloting this service since April 2007, in partnership with the Lambeth Primary Care Trust. Specialist nurse Judith Sherlock provides confidential support and advice, as well

as condoms, pregnancy testing, chlamydia and gonorrhoea screening, emergency and hormonal contraception. Judith sees on average 10 young people per week, mainly young boys. The figures for Marcus Lipton have been outstanding and exceeded all expectations.

Supporting workers to make a difference

The looked after children educational achievement team (LACEAT) has developed a training film to support the work of practitioners. It highlights key issues that affect educational outcomes for looked after children. 'Care to Make a Difference?' features several current and former looked after children, as well as a range of professionals including: teachers, social workers, foster carers and senior council officers. It also highlights good practice in Lambeth. Training materials to accompany the DVD are also available - contact LACEAT on 020 7926 9252.

V for volunteer at Citizen's Advice

The v project at Citizen's Advice is looking for young people from a range of backgrounds in south London to commit to 30 hours a week voluntary work for six to nine months. Volunteers will receive free training and have the opportunity to gain up to 20 AQA units in various different topic areas, including: communication and presenting skills, IT and administration.

All volunteers will have their travel and lunch expenses covered. This will not affect any benefits they receive. If volunteers have specific needs such as child care or if they have a disability, the bureaus will be able to help. Volunteers do not need any qualifications, but they do need to be keen to learn and able to read and write basic English. For more details, contact Laura Jenner on: 07726 901 150 or email: laura.jenner@citizensadvice.org.uk.

In the next issue: launch of the Youth Assurance Hotline.....the Youth Charter and what it will mean for young people in Lambeth.....the young editors at LIVE magazine in profile.....young refugees tell us how they are making a life for themselves

If you have any comments or questions or would like to contribute to this newsletter, please contact: Lorna Wilamowski by email: lwilamowski@lambeth.gov.uk, or write to: 7th Floor, International House, Canterbury Crescent, Brixton, London SW9 7QE