



Press release

Release date: 28th March 2007

Street sports help kids keep out of trouble

Some of the city's most disaffected youngsters have been helped to turn their lives around by a project funded by the Birmingham Foundation.

The city charity granted Birmingham Community Venture £7,000 to help more than 70 youngsters aged between eight and 19 from the Winson Green, Edgbaston and Ladywood areas through a programme of street sports.

Many of the participants had either been excluded from school, were young parents, young offenders or at risk of offending, were homeless or part of the care system.

Many had emotional or behavioural problems, special educational needs or problems with substance and alcohol misuse. The grant paid for mountain bikes, BMX bikes, skateboards, protective equipment and all the running costs for a year.

Barket Hussain, who ran the project, said there were a range of benefits not just for those taking part in the project but also to the greater community.

He said: "Our project engaged and continues to engage young people who live in a community of high deprivation. The project offers them access to local physical fun activities for which they would not ordinarily have the means or funds to participate.

"Our project promoted good health and self development amongst its participants but also encouraged other members of the community like parents and volunteers to join us.

“The project raised self esteem and built confidence in those who took part. It undoubtedly helped increase community cohesion between different cultures and races in the local area and improved the family relationships of many of those who took part.”

Derek Inman, chief executive of Birmingham & Black Country Foundation, said: “This is a project with an extremely strong track record for helping young people in some of the most difficult circumstances and helping to reduce anti-social behaviour and crime.

“Since 2004 when this project began hundreds of young people facing an uncertain future have been given new skills and with that hope for a better future.

“It is a project that brings lots of different groups and agencies together and is supported by West Midlands Police, which recognises the crucial role it plays in engaging the disaffected and preventing another life wasted in prison or addicted to drugs.”

Ends

Note to editors

- The Birmingham Foundation is a charitable trust set up in 1995 raising funds from businesses and individuals to promote and support local voluntary / community groups and projects within the area of Greater Birmingham.
- It serves as a conduit between the region's donors and do-ers and provides support through a programme of constructive grant making for people living within deprived and disadvantaged areas of Birmingham and the Black Country, reaching individuals through small grass-roots groups.
- During the last 12 months we have awarded more than £2.6 million in grants to 796 local voluntary and community projects. The average grant was about £3,500 and the quickest award was made in 24 hours from one of our donor advised funds.
- The Birmingham Foundation address is Suite 2A, St Georges Court, 1 Albion Street, Birmingham B1 3AH 0121 214 2080 team@bhamfoundation.co.uk www.bhamfoundation.co.uk