

# Team Brief

## Learners' activity afternoon a success



*Caring for Children learner member Molly painting with two delighted participants*



**L**earner members enrolled on our Foundation Learning programmes in Caring for Children and Health & Social Care have successfully organised an activity afternoon for youngsters at our centre on Forman Street in Derby.

As part of their training requirements the learners are required to work together as a team to plan and provide a safe environment for children aged under three incorporating creative activities. This year 15 learners were involved in organising the event on 23rd February, which was attended by 13 children together with their parents.

Rebecca Elliott, the programme coordinator who oversees the learners throughout their programmes, was

delighted by what the learners achieved. "It proved to be a great success," she said, "because the learners used it as a positive learning experience and utilised the skills and knowledge gained during the programme in a practical and valuable way.

"The learners were absolutely thrilled with the event and loved every minute of it. It was great to watch them all interact with the children and gain valuable experience for their future careers.

"The greatest challenge was making the room a safe place for young children, but the learners resolved this in advance so it was not a problem. They all gained a greater understanding of the demands and rewards of a career in childcare or health and social care."

### School pupils gain valuable insights

Year 9 pupils at Heanor Gate Science College have paid a visit to The Campus to learn about homelessness from those who have experienced it.

The pupils, who have been reading the novel *Stone Cold* about a young man experiencing homelessness, wanted to gain a clearer perspective on what it can be like to be without a home.

Residential members Matt (whose story is on page 3) and Daniel shared their experiences, and teacher Amy Ford wrote to say that they had all found the stories "effective, hard hitting, and at times emotional".

# A message from the Chief Executive

It has become something of a cliché to say that we live in financially challenging times, but the extent and implications of government cuts to deal with the budget deficit are only now becoming clear and almost no organisation is immune.

While this is an uncertain time, it is clear that YMCA Derbyshire has an excellent local reputation for the reliable delivery of services and contracts, and our values base sets us apart from other providers. The services we offer are distinctive and highly regarded and we will use this fact to position the organisation as strongly as possible in the coming months.

It is also true that difficult times can open up new opportunities. To quote former US President Calvin Coolidge, "If I had permitted my failures, or what seemed to me at the time a lack of success, to discourage me I cannot see any way in which I would ever have made progress."

I don't believe that anyone could experience the drive, enthusiasm and dedication of our team, even in the face of adversity, and not realise that we are more than just a reliable deliverer of contracts or a provider of services. We are an organisation with a proud history, a vision for every one of our service user members and a clear set of values. In short, we have a heart.

Of course, our values could be simply words, and our vision just a paragraph in a business plan – but it's quite clear to me that we are living our values and vision every day across the whole team. This is why we are having such a positive impact on so many people. We never simply 'go through the motions' but strive to make a real difference because we genuinely care about what we do.

We are also continually striving to learn, to grow and to serve our local communities more effectively because, fundamentally, we are not in it for ourselves. This is what makes our team so special.

*Gillian Sewell*

## Passport Plus learners organise two leisure days to develop skills



Learners on the six-week Passport Plus programme in Derby have spent two days, including a day out, taking part in leisure activities as part of the 'My Home' and 'My Health' modules.

The learners included both our own residential members and also other individuals who live in the Derby City area. Each learner took on an individual role in organising the leisure activities over the full two days.

The group decided to take part in a table tennis tournament between themselves at The Campus on the first day, and on the following morning they each used their 'Recreational Pass to Leisure' to play badminton. These passes have been provided to each learner on the programme and can be used over the next year to access free leisure activities run by Derby City Council. This will help to promote healthy living and give the learners an opportunity to access local leisure facilities.

On the second afternoon the learners organised a trip to Riley's where they used their personal budget (given to each learner to cover the cost of activities, petrol and parking) to purchase a yearly pass and then took part in both pool and snooker.

A fun two days was had by all, and each learner was given an opportunity to develop team working skills while producing evidence from their individual roles to demonstrate their progress.

*Hayley Moran*

## Funding received for gangs project

We have successfully received a grant of £3000 from the Prince's Trust Ben Kinsella Fund for a new project to encourage residents away from involvement in gangs.

Y-H.O.O.D. will be a six-week programme for residents that will involve workshops and a residential trip to Cumbria. The aim will be to warn residents about the dangers of becoming involved in gangs, and give them information and advice on how to leave gangs if they are already involved.

The project is being supported



by Enthusiasm – a local charity working with young people at risk of offending and social exclusion – as well as by the Derbyshire Constabulary which is keen to add its support to a second six-week programme.

The Ben Kinsella Fund has given us extra funding to make a promotional DVD to publicise the initiative.

## Furniture Project changing lives



Members of the North Derbyshire Furniture Project in Chesterfield have been working hard to secure long-term financial sustainability, and the service is now taking in just under £1000 per week thanks to the hard work and energy of Retail Manager Gil Bowles and the team.

The Project has now provided 734 families and individuals with low cost furniture and electrical items. It has dispatched 200 emergency furniture packs to people in need as well as providing valuable experience to 80 volunteers and practical training to 40 local people.

## Matt's tale of homelessness survival

I got kicked out of my mother's house after my relationship with her husband broke down. I 'sofa-surfed' for a while, but finally found myself without anywhere to go. As an act of desperation I ended up sleeping in a tent in the middle of the woods – it was either that or sleeping in a doorway.

On my first night in the tent, all I had was a sleeping bag and three sets of clothes. I managed to get a job as a bar tender in Matlock and managed to buy a stove and heater. My colleagues and family had no idea where I was living.

I slept out in the tent every night for two months. Eventually my mother found out and told my grandparents, who helped me find information about options available for homeless people. I went to Milestone House and was directed to the YMCA. Thankfully I was able to move in the same day.

When I first arrived at The Campus, the first thing I did was just lie on my bed – the first time I'd been able to do that for ages. I then had a warm dinner, did some ironing for the first time in a



long while and had a shower. These are things most people take for granted, but I appreciated them in a new way after being homeless for so long.

After three months living at the YMCA, I now feel more confident in myself, better at being around people and more hopeful for the future.

If you live here at the YMCA you're part of a community rather than just another cog in a wheel. You get to know the support workers and other members of staff and you realise that they have our best interests at heart in what they do. For me, being here has sorted my life out really.

## National brand recognition

The YMCA has been included in the Charity Brand Index for the first time, and the results have shown considerable respect for what we represent.

The survey involved asking a cross-section of the UK public about their awareness and impression of various charities to arrive at a top 125.

The YMCA came in at number 67 overall, scoring highly on both trust and awareness. We were second to Shelter among housing charities, second to the Prince's Trust among charities involved in education and skills, and third behind the Salvation Army and Christian Aid among Christian faith-based charities.

## Recycling results

The drive to recycle paper at The Campus has been so successful that nine trees were saved from destruction in the last three months of 2010, according to a certificate from the company that collects the paper. Well done to everyone.

## Supporting ADS

YMCA Derbyshire is supporting ADS (Addiction Dependency Solutions) in its drive to encourage Derby residents to seek support if they are concerned about their drinking habits.

ADS provides support to anyone aged over 18 who needs support to address alcohol concerns, and a freephone number for self-referrals: 0800 0515857.

## Marketing and Communications

An important aspect of the marketing role is to empower team members to tell the YMCA Derbyshire story. Part of this is knowing our history, and seeing our work today in the context of 164 uninterrupted years of service to our local community.

To this end, two large posters detailing our history from 1847 will soon be installed in the reception area at The Campus and also made available to our other centres. Let me know if you would like any further information.

*Dominic Baster*

## Extra funding allows Y-Play to make a real difference



Arjan enjoys having his face painted at Y-Play



James has fun on his day trip to a soft play centre

Additional funding secured from the Disabled Children's Access to Childcare (DCATCH) pilot scheme and Aiming High enabled us to provide extra support to children with disabilities during our February Y-Play Playscheme, as well as training for staff and new toys and equipment. So far, we have been able to purchase new board games, sensory toys, a Nintendo Wii package and arts and crafts materials.

Aiming High have also purchased a portable hoist for us which means that we can now accept more physically disabled children on to the Playschemes.

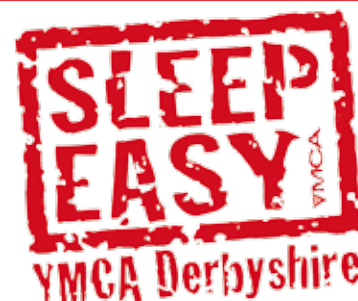
The additional funding meant that we could take the disabled children on trips during half term to ten pin bowling, soft play, Rollerworld and 'Paint a Pot' at

Markeaton Park – which all the children really enjoyed.

I attended a specialist training event at the beginning of March to celebrate the achievements of the DCATCH pilot scheme, through which the Council has placed some 90 disabled children in childcare since September 2010, exceeding their target of 50. It's great that Y-Play has been a part of this success.

Although the DCATCH pilot scheme has now come to an end, funding through Aiming High is continuing which means that we are still able to provide a valuable service to parents and support our existing disabled children at Y-Play, as well as being able to accept new referrals in the future.

**Amy Allen**



A confirmed total of over £4,300 has now been raised as a result of our Sleep Easy event at the end of January, which is a great achievement by all those involved.

There were 43 participants in all, and 304 individual donations. The money will go towards our work to prevent youth homelessness.

## Teacher training course is launched

We are launching a new 12-week teacher training programme running on Thursday evenings from 31st March at The Campus.

The programme will allow participants to take their first step towards achieving QTLS (Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills) status while studying for the City & Guilds PTLTS (Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector) qualification.

The programme is aimed at those who have gained career experience and would now like to share their knowledge and experience with young people. Learners will study in small groups and benefit from the expertise of our tutors who combine considerable teaching and industry experience. Email support will also be provided throughout the week.

The programme represents an exciting new venture for the Learning and Development team, and many enquiries have already been received. For more details, please contact Julia Hodder by emailing [learning@ymcaderbyshire.org.uk](mailto:learning@ymcaderbyshire.org.uk)



## Reflection of the month

God of love,  
the true sun of the world,  
eternally risen  
and never going down;

in your mercy shine into our hearts,  
that the night of sin and the mists  
of error being banished,  
we may, this day and all our life,  
walk without stumbling  
along the way which  
you have set before us.

*Desiderius Erasmus  
(1466-1536)*