

greetsgreen

COMMUNITY MAGAZINE

DECEMBER/JANUARY 2007



CHILDREN'S CENTRE OPENS ITS DOORS

Citizens' Jury Events

Community says
what it thinks



Meet your new
Neighbourhood Reps
see page 17

Issue 27

Front cover: The new Children's Centre in Greets Green is now open and already being enjoyed by lots of local families with children aged under five.

The Greets Green magazine is distributed to every household in the New Deal for Communities area, and to other NDCs nationally. If you live in the Greets Green NDC area and do not receive a copy then please call us on **freephone 0800 953 0215**.

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এ তথ্যাদি অনুবাদে আপনার সাহায্যের প্রয়োজন হলে, দয়া করে ইংরেজী জানেন এমন একজন বন্ধু বা আত্মীয়কে আমাদেরকে 0800 953 0215 এ নাম্বারে ফোন করতে বলুন।

આ માહિતીના ભાષાંતરમાં જો તમને મદદ જોઈતી હોય, તો કૃપા કરીને અંગ્રેજી બોલતા કોઈ સિત્ર કે કુટુંબીજનને કહો કે અમને 0800 953 0215 ઉપર ફોન કરે..

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਦਾ ਤਰਜਮਾ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕਰਨੀ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਅੰਗ੍ਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਬੋਲਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੋਸਤ ਜਾਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਦੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਮੈਂਬਰ ਨੂੰ 0800 953 0215 ਤੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਕਹੋ।

اگر ان معلومات کے ترجمے میں آپ کو مدد درکار ہو تو انگریزی بولنے والے کسی دوست یا گھر کے کسی فرد سے کہیں کہ وہ ہم سے 0800 953 0215 پر بات کرے۔

ان رغبتہم بالحصول علی مساعدة علی ترجمہ هذه المعلومات یرجی ان تطلبوا من صديق أو من أحد أفراد الأسرة ممن يتحدثون اللغة الإنجليزية الاتصال بنا علی الهاتف 0800 953 0215 .

welcome

to issue 27 of the Greets Green Magazine.

Have you had your say about how Greets Green is changing? Greets Green Partnership held two high profile events recently to let residents vote on the difference it's been making over the past few years. Read all about them on the centre pages – and if you missed the events, but still want to air your views, give the Partnership a call!

As you can see from our front page, the brand new Children's Centre at Ryders Green Primary School is already benefiting lots of local families with children aged under five. It's packed with a wide range of family services all under one roof and it's right on your doorstep. Why not call in and find out about everything it offers? Everyone's welcome.

As usual, there's lots happening across Greets Green including a brand new Active Lifestyles programme to help you get more fit and healthy, and a new Safer & Cleaner Environment Charter so you know exactly what standards of service you can expect to receive. Find out more about these and so much more that's taking off in your neighbourhood by turning the pages of this issue.

Happy reading!

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Getting

Be happy and healthy!

Are you gambling with more than just your money?

Many of us enjoy a game of bingo or buying a lottery ticket – but when it comes to your health rather than your wealth, do you really want to roll the dice? Enjoying a healthy and happy future isn't just down to luck – so don't let your number be up too soon!

To help you live a longer and healthier life, Greetings Green Partnership is now funding two new key workers in a joint initiative with the Primary Care Trust and Sandwell Aquarius – Active Lifestyles Co-ordinator, Nathan Moore and Community Alcohol Worker, Wendy Hooker.

As the new Active Lifestyles Co-ordinator for Greetings Green, Nathan Moore (pictured right) is hoping to get more people moving, to help them feel fitter and healthier.

A key aim of Greetings Green Partnership is to improve health in the community and Nathan's job is to look at the provision for activities, exercise and sports, and help residents become more active.

The Active Lifestyles programme was launched at the Greetings Green Christmas Festival on Saturday 9th December at the Memorial Gardens.

Different activities took place throughout the day, including displays

Eyes Down

Here are a few key figures for a brighter future, alongside keeping your fingers crossed for a lottery win!

2 servings of fish a week, especially if one is an oily fish such as salmon, herring or sardines, cuts your risk of stroke and heart disease.

3 square meals a day will maintain the right blood-sugar levels and reduce snacking. If you eat breakfast, you're more likely to live longer than those who don't.

5 portions of fruit and veg a day reduces the risk of heart disease and cancer.

6 grams of salt (about a level teaspoon) is the limit each day to avoid high blood pressure. Avoid processed foods such as tinned soup, ready meals and Chinese takeaways.

8 glasses of water a day will help your kidneys fight off infections and aid concentration.

9 hours of sleep a night will prevent children and teenagers being tired and moody during the day and improve their chances of success at school.

30 minutes of moderate to intense activity five times a week protects against heart disease.

87 per cent of your recommended daily allowance of vitamin B12 can come from eating just one egg – great for a healthy nervous system and encouraging youngsters to grow.

active in Greet's Green

by dance and yoga groups. The England Badminton Association attended the event to encourage people of all ages to have a go as local people had said badminton is something they're interested in.

Nathan's work will include raising awareness about existing activities, helping community groups and sports clubs to stay in good shape for the future, and creating new opportunities for sports and fitness.

Nathan, who is based at George Salter High School, said: "We all know the benefits of exercise and being active, yet the way in which you want to keep fit and healthy might not be currently provided in the Greet's Green area.

"This is where I come in!

If you have any comments or suggestions on how to improve or build on services, or ideas for new ones that could be set up in the Greet's Green area, then let me know. I hope to see you out there keeping fit and healthy soon!"

i Nathan can be contacted on 07817 009062 or by emailing nathan.moore@sandwell-pct.nhs.uk Alternatively write to: Nathan Moore, Active Lifestyles Co-ordinator, George Salter High School, Claypit Lane, West Bromwich B70 9UW.

Nathan's 5 Top Tips for Fitness

Guidelines state we should participate in moderate to intense activities for at least 30 minutes a day, five times a week. It might seem a lot, but Nathan has five tips which show there are ways of reaching the target without even setting foot in a sports venue!

- 1** Walk more! On short journeys walk instead of drive; get off the bus a stop early; use the stairs; walk the dog!
- 2** Get gardening. Vigorous gardening can be as good for your heart rate as step aerobics.
- 3** Enjoy your housework. It may be a chore but it's a fantastic way to be active.
- 4** Do you have an exercise bike or hand weights gathering dust? You can exercise in front of the TV.
- 5** Turn a weekend morning into a family activity session such as swimming, bike riding or walking - it's good to spend quality time together.

Drink sensibly

New Community Alcohol Worker, Wendy Hooker (pictured right) is aiming to make a real difference to people living in Greet's Green.

Wendy is based at Sandwell Aquarius alcohol advice centre, which offers a range of services including information, advice and counselling to people concerned about their own or someone else's drinking.

Wendy said: "I'll be working with local communities, groups, GP surgeries, adults, young people and other agencies to highlight problems caused by the misuse of alcohol. I'll identify needs and provide training and information."

The aim is to raise awareness of the potential harms of alcohol misuse and seek ways to reduce these such as through group work, drop in sessions, short term counselling, skills-building sessions and confidence building.

I Sandwell Aquarius is based at Asden House, 1-5 Victoria Street, West Bromwich and is open Monday to Friday. All the services are free. Wendy will also be doing evening and weekend work and can be contacted by calling 0121 525 9292 or emailing aquarius.6@zoom.co.uk.



Wendy's Five Top Tips for Sensible Drinking

- 1** Try not to drink as a way of coping or to avoid problems – alcohol is a depressant and will only make things worse.
- 2** If you are worried your drink may have been spiked - report it! Don't accept drinks from people you don't know.
- 3** Drink within safe limits - women 2-3 units per day, men 3-4 units per day – but not every day. Try to have at least two alcohol free days a week.
- 4** Avoid mixing alcohol with other drugs or medication.
- 5** If you feel hungover after drinking don't be tempted to take alcohol to help you feel better. Take lots of non-alcoholic fluids, rest, and stay off alcohol for 48 hours

Celebrating **Black History Month**



Black History Month was celebrated in a healthy way in Greet's Green when families got together at Wood Lane Community Centre to swing their hips and try to grasp the quick steps of salsa dancing at an event run by Greet's Green African Caribbean Steering Group.

Development Officer, Rachel McFee, said: "Salsa is a fun way to get fit, but we also used it as a taster to see if people want to continue classes. If there's enough interest, we hope it can become a regular event."

A Diversity and Wellbeing event was also held at the same venue, with guest speakers and stalls, and fun sessions on Indian head massage and aromatherapy.

Community Development Worker, Joyce Hays, explained: "The aim was to improve health and wellbeing and to change attitudes towards mental health."

I A new six-week salsa programme started on Tuesday 7th November at Wood Lane Community Centre. The sessions start at 8.00pm and cost £2.00 each. For more information call Development Officer Rachel McFee on 0121 553 7737 or Wood Lane Community Centre on 0121 525 2772.



All go for the Children's Centre!



Families are now being welcomed through the doors at Greet's Green's superb new Children's Centre.

Managers and staff moved into the purpose-built facility at Ryders Green Primary School in Claypit Lane at the end of August and it was officially handed over to them in mid-October. Shortly afterwards, they were able to start inviting families with children aged five and under to see the sparkling new facilities.

The first regular activity to start in the Centre was an Early Steps Stay and Play class which runs three times a week. Parents bring along children aged from birth to five years and stay there while the tots have a good time.

Health visitors have moved their baby clinics from the Lyng Centre to the Children's Centre, which aims to bring family-centred activities together under one roof.

Children and Families Programme Manager, Jenny Mahimbo, said: "The Centre will offer individual support for families with young children.

"Our maternity support worker is already providing services from the Centre so anyone who is pregnant, or has just had a child, can benefit.

"The day nursery will be opening at the Centre in January and we'll also be offering volunteering opportunities for local people who want to gain experience in child care."

The three areas the Children's Centre is concentrating on are family health, family learning and family support. Help sessions will be set up, along with individual support and group activities.

Parents are also being encouraged to help shape what services are provided at the Centre in the future. The Children's Centre can be contacted on a new number: **0121 612 5131**, or you can email the Centre on greetsgreen@btconnect.com





"We all know that laughter is the best medicine so why not come along and try it out!"

Get involved

People living in Greets Green are being invited to get more involved in their health care by setting up or attending a Patient Participation Group (PPG).

The groups are part of ongoing NHS health reforms which aim to give patients a real choice in where and how services are provided. 16 residents attended the first meeting at Oakwood Surgery PPG and even more local people, especially younger people, are being encouraged to get involved at other GP practices.

PPGs provide a forum for patients to share their experiences of health services, and enable their issues and concerns to be addressed. Patients will be able to play an active role in influencing the decision making process and shaping health care services within local GP practices.

Greets Green Community Development Worker, Joyce Hays, said: "The residents who've come along know what they want but need support in accessing services. Guest speakers come along and we discuss what's going on nationally as well as locally."

If you're registered at a GP practice in the Greets Green area and want to find out more about setting up a PPG, contact Joyce Hays on 0121 525 4708.

Laughter & dance in Greets Green!

Women in Greets Green are enjoying laughter yoga and Egyptian dancing and it's all down to two organisations receiving a grant from the Healthy Minds Community Fund.

The Healthy Minds Community Fund was set up by Greets Green Partnership's health team in conjunction with Sandwell PCT to provide funding of up to £500 for mental health projects across Greets Green.

The Sandwell Women's Agency Network (SWAN) was awarded over £400 to run an eight-week course of laughter yoga for women across Greets Green.

Wendy James, SWAN's Development Officer for women with mental health and health issues, explains: "When I heard about these classes I thought it would benefit lots of women with mental health issues, aches and pains or high blood pressure. As it combines yoga with stimulated laughter it also helps people to build confidence and let go of any stress.

IThe course runs from 9.30am – 11.30am on Tuesdays until 16th January 2007 at SWAN, Phoenix Street, West Bromwich. For more information, contact Wendy on 0121 553 7074.

The Yemeni Community Association (YCA) has used its £500 grant to offer Egyptian dancing classes for black and minority ethnic women in the Greets Green area. Saba Muffi, Health Development Officer, says: "We decided to run this course as it will not only help women to improve their spiritual and physical wellbeing, but will also allow them to express themselves through a low impact, high energy aerobic workout.

"Women will be able to improve their self-esteem and lower stress levels, as well as make new friends."

IThe classes cost 50p for YCA members and £1 for non-members, 6.00pm - 7.00pm, at the YCA on Wednesdays until 7th March. For further details, contact Saba or Afrah on 0121 525 3909.

FOOTY TEAM LOOKS TO THE

An 'international' football team based in Greets Green is looking to build on its success after winning promotion.

Real West Brom football team is based at the Yemeni Community Association, which has helped with resources and provided

£500 towards kit and costs. It represents various communities and includes Yemeni, Pakistani, African Caribbean and Bangladeshi players.

In 2005 the team joined the prestigious Shapla Football League, which brings



Stay healthy in Greets Green

A new project has been set up by Greets Green Partnership and Sandwell PCT to raise awareness about how to treat minor ailments, stay healthy and prevent serious illnesses.

The Greets Green Neighbourhood Health Management Team has arranged for a local community pharmacist to go out to community groups throughout 2007 to deliver a series of minor ailments, self care awareness and health information sessions.

Gursharan Kaur, Community Health Development Worker, explains: "Our aim is to help people take better care of themselves and others, and to reduce the amount of inappropriate visits to GPs and Accident and Emergency departments."

If you would like a session delivered to your group, contact Gursharan Kaur on 0121 532 6959.

FUTURE

together the best footballing talent within ethnic minorities from across the West Midlands. Real West Brom started off in Division 2 but after finishing last season in second place, won promotion into Division 1 for the current season – a huge success as it usually takes teams three or four years to get promoted.

Manager Abdul Kahar said: "It was better than we hoped for the first season and we had quite a few achievements all round. The aim now is to build a stronger team and secure more funding and better resources. We want to get more people involved and build community cohesion."

Real West Brom is for young people aged 16 up to 30, and has an average age of 21. The team is currently continuing its goal-scoring success of last season in the top half of Division 1, and is also working to launch a side for youngsters aged 11 to 16.

Anyone interested in helping Real West Brom with sponsorship or funding can contact Abdul on 07940 433 688.

Watch out & stay safe

Edith Street made the news for all the wrong reasons at the end of October. There was a huge gas explosion which is believed to have been caused when burglars, trying to remove piping and a boiler from an empty property, cut through a gas pipe.

Four houses in Edith Street, which is in one of the clearance areas in Greets Green, were so badly damaged they had to be demolished immediately, and Police said it was a miracle no one was killed. This incident illustrates that dangers could lurk in empty houses, although generally all fittings including piping and boilers will have been removed to make the properties safe.

If you have any suspicions that people may be breaking into empty houses in your area, or if they are being used by local children, youths or homeless people, please contact the Police immediately on 0845 113 5000 – an explosion like the Edith Street blast could well prove fatal.



Lots of options for new homes

Plans for new homes in several areas of Greets Green are moving forward.

40 firms showed an interest in developing housing schemes in the area following our Developers' Day in the Summer and eight have now been interviewed. The Council has written to the successful developers, and an announcement about who they are will be made soon.

They will form the new developer panel and will be able to bid for the opportunity to build homes in Claypit Lane and Wattle Road. The bids will be assessed in the New Year.

Other sites in the area may also be added to the project to bring more opportunities for residents to move to better homes in the future.

Getting developers involved early means they can have direct contact with local residents when working on ideas about what will actually go on the sites.

In Coppice Street there will be exciting opportunities to become involved in a self-build project and the Council and Greets Green Partnership are currently looking at the options available to involve local people and move the project forward as soon as possible. A range of ideas are also being considered for the former Meadows site.

Greets Green Partnership is working closely with the Council in moving forward with the Housing Plan.

For more details, call the Housing Team on freephone 0800 073 0798.

If you would like your community group to be featured on this page, contact Communications Officer, Brian McKinstry, at Greets Green Partnership on Freephone 0800 953 0215 or email brian_mckinstry@sandwell.gov.uk



Chapter House provides lifeline to homeless

Chapter House on Phoenix Street is a purpose-built two storey supported housing project consisting of 19 flats and one emergency flat.

It specialises in providing a wide range of housing and support services to young, single, homeless people aged between 18 and 30 years. The aim is to provide opportunities for these young people to improve their skills and gain independence.

Everyone living at Chapter House receives a full needs assessment and staff then work with them to create a detailed personal plan, highlighting what support is needed and setting out goals for the future.

Staff provide advice and support across a range of areas, including independent living, education and training, finance, parenting skills, health and nutrition, move-on options and help with housing and grant applications.

Shahidur Rahman, Support & Resettlement Worker, said: "It's very rewarding – people are desperate when they come here and it's nice to see

them move on to independent living and get their feet back on the ground."

Chapter House is part of Accord housing association and works with various agencies, including Greets Green Partnership, which has provided grants to support its work, including funding a computer for residents to use in the common room.

Other initiatives have included working with the local Hat-Trick Community Football Project, which is funded by the Football Association, Greets Green Partnership and West Bromwich Albion, and provides soccer and training opportunities while addressing issues such as health and education.

Stepping stone for residents

Among the residents is 20-year-old Lee Norton, who hopes that gaining a place at Chapter House will be a stepping stone to independent living and finding a job.

"Without Chapter House I would be homeless," said Lee. "It's a good opportunity for me here. It's a good

fact file

Chapter House caters for young, single, homeless people aged 18-30 who have support needs and have a connection to Sandwell.

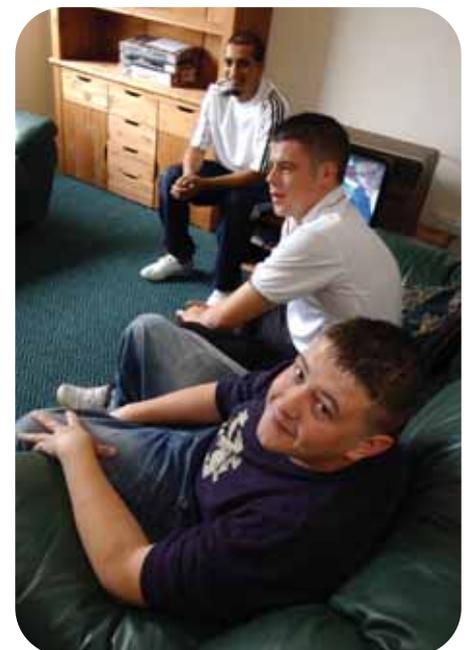
It offers Assured Shorthold Tenancies, with residents staying from six months to two years. There is a non exclusion policy, with no automatic exclusions, and service users undergo a risk assessment.

Self referrals are not accepted. All referrals must be made via an agency. There is a waiting list with priority depending on support needs.

Chapter House, Phoenix Street, West Bromwich B70 0AJ
Telephone: 0121 500 6490
Email: chapterh@accordha.org.uk
Web: www.accordha.org.uk

place and the staff support you as well. It's all coming together now for me."

Fellow resident Jordon Pratley, aged 19, added: "There's a lot of support here. I'm dyslexic and I get help with filling in forms and writing letters. The flats are nice and the staff are all helping me and I am on a waiting list for a house. I want to go back to college and do my NVQ level 3 in catering."





LACE helps youngsters succeed

Greets Green youngsters who don't live with their families are getting extra help to support them through school.

The Looked After Children in Education project (LACE) was created to provide 'looked after' children – Greets Green children who are in care, or children from outside the area who live in foster homes in Greets Green – with opportunities to do better in their education.

The aim is to stop children in care from losing out because of their circumstances. They often perform worse at school because of their difficult home life and miss out on lots of out-of-school activities because of lack of transport.

The LACE Virtual School has been helping to overcome some of these barriers. The results speak for themselves as for two

years running, the youngsters have gained some excellent GCSE grades. A wide range of help has been given through the project, such as home tuition and a Study Zone away from other distractions. Residential activities have also been arranged for children in care.

Greets Green Partnership has given £19,000 to help support the LACE initiative, which included providing 11 lap top computers on loan to young people, particularly those in Years 10 and 11, who were completing course work towards GCSEs.

More basic resources, such as reading books, pens, exercise books and pencil cases were also provided for more than 20

looked after children in the Greets Green area who might otherwise have not been able to afford them. LACE has given lots of support to local youngsters including:

- 24 young people living in eight homes are benefiting from tutors who deliver individual support in parents' or carers' homes
- 10 young people attended the Study Zone each week to get help in the run up to their GCSEs
- 15 young girls took part in a residential programme around the theme of health and relationships
- 25 young people are taking part in the LACE Postman scheme where they will receive three parcels of books and resources to encourage pleasure in reading
- All schools with looked after children in Greets Green were visited to develop a scheme to improve literacy and numeracy levels

LACE Virtual School Co-ordinator, Kathy Ross (pictured above with Greets Green Partnership's Education & Lifelong Learning Theme Leader, Roger Cunningham) said: "At least 40 young people from the Greets Green area have received support from the project.

"Feedback from young people has been positive, particularly from the Study Zone and residential activity."

For more information about LACE, contact Kathy Ross on 0121 588 8337.

Making a real difference

The example of one young boy shows the difference the LACE Virtual School project can make.

The boy had been in care for 10 years and when he started working with the project two years ago, he was close to being permanently excluded from school and was on a reduced timetable.

His school described him as being capable but likely to leave without GCSEs because he would not complete his work. Through the LACE project he was given support on a weekly basis and at out-of-school activities. He was loaned a lap top computer and attended the Study Zone.

This Summer he achieved 10 GCSEs, with eight of them at grade C. The project enabled him to completely turn his life around.

Community says **w**

Residents from across Greet Green were quick to take up the opportunity to say what they think when Greet Green Partnership staged two high profile 'Citizens' Jury' events at the end of October.

In true 'Who wants to be a Millionaire?' style, the Partnership 'asked the audience' how well residents think its 10-year regeneration programme is progressing.

"The events were all about making our community consultations a bit more fun," said Ally Allerson, Executive Director of Greet Green Partnership. "When the Government asks us how we're doing, we want to be able to tell them what the people of Greet Green think and the best way to do that is to involve people."

"We've gained a lot of valuable feedback on how we're doing and have proved that it's possible to have a bit of fun doing it too!"

Residents who came along to the Citizens' Jury events in the afternoon on 26th October at George Salter High School and in the evening on 30th October at Guns Village Primary School, were each given a special handset. They were asked to vote on various questions about the changes that have been taking place in the area as a result of the work of Greet Green Partnership.

"I thought it was very good – they should do this more often."

Peter Jones from Dilliers Walk



What it thinks

"I thought it went well," said Ena Barr from Bromford Lane after the 26th October event. "I'm glad I came and I would do again!"

Lynn Richards from Phoenix Street added: "By doing this, people feel more involved. It's a good idea for residents and you need to get the views of local businesses too."



The results from the Citizens' Jury events will be available in the next issue of the magazine. To share your views, give the Partnership a call on freephone 0800 953 0215.



Winners!

Everyone who gave up their time to take part in the Citizens' Jury events were entered into a prize draw as a thank you for attending.

A number of cash prizes were up for grabs and the lucky winners were:
I. D. Rollason, Miss Eileen Jevon, Miss Shelly Pritchard, Susan Green, John Willets, Asia Khatun, Adel Saeed, Chantell Ebanks, Jean Evans, Joyce Truby, Peter Jones, Lynn Richards, Mrs Ena E. Barr, Frances Green, Badr Yafai, Isabel Scott, Zubaida Bibi, Joynab Khatoon.



BLIND DAVE IS A HERO

A dedicated fundraiser and ambassador for the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association has become Greets Green Partnership's latest Community Hero.

supportive," says Dave of everyone who has backed his work for the charity. And as for his Community Hero award, he adds: "It's a very pleasant surprise. I'm well chuffed!"

If you'd like to nominate someone you know for the Community Hero award please call Greets Green Partnership on freephone 0800 953 0215.

Dave Heeley started fundraising a decade ago and has raised more than £100,000 for the charity by pounding the streets and organising sporting and community events.

Dave was born with retinitis pigmentose and lost his sight in his teens. "Getting my first Guide Dog changed my life for the better in such a dramatic way and my way of saying thank you is to raise as much awareness and funds as I can," says Dave from Oak Road.

This year – which is the charity's 75th anniversary – Dave has completed his 5th London Marathon and 5th Great North Run, and his 2nd Great South Run and 2nd Great Manchester Run, finishing with his first New York Marathon on 5th November.

His other fundraising events included a celebrity cricket match in the Summer and at a variety evening in November he presented a cheque to the charity from all his 2006 fundraising efforts.

Dave also does all he can to encourage people to support the charity, including giving talks to groups, colleges and schools. "People have been so

New centre for Pakistani



The Pakistani community in Greets Green now has a new central office space where people can drop in for information and activities.

The Jamia Community Association office has opened next door to the Jamia Mosque on Dartmouth Street. The project is among several to have benefited from Greets Green Partnership's Community Fund, which awards grants of up to £1,000.

The grant allowed a room to be converted for office space, advice surgeries and meetings, and helped towards the costs of decorating, furniture, cabinets and carpets.

Greets Green Partnership's Pakistani Women's Development Officer, Faiza Mirza, and Pakistani Men's Development Officer, Imran Khan, are both based there.

Faiza is there on Mondays and Thursdays, while Imran is there on

OUTSTANDING WOMEN RECOGNISED



Left to right: Pauline Marshall, Sandy Bahat, Amy Bahat, Afrah Muflihi, Rukhsana Hussain, Reena Patel and Fajli Bibi.

A group of outstanding Greet Green women made a special trip to London for a reception at the House of Commons to mark Black History Month.

Greet Green Partnership was asked by the Government Office West Midlands to nominate women from minority ethnic communities who had made an outstanding contribution to the community on a voluntary basis.

- **Pauline Marshall** - African Caribbean Centre Point and Steering Group
- **Sandy and Amy Bahat** - Sikh Young Women's Group, Guru Nanak Community Centre and Greet Green Youth Forum
- **Fajli Bibi** - Confederation of Bangladeshi Organisations
- **Rukhsana Hussain** - Pakistani Women's Steering Group
- **Reena Patel** - Krishna Community Forum

It's always difficult to pick out individuals when there are so many people doing great things through voluntary work in Greet Green. However, this event was focusing on the minority ethnic community.

Rukhsana Hussain said: "It was really worthwhile going. The event was all about Black History Month and it was a celebration of women. There was a workshop in the afternoon where they talked about enterprise in the community.

It was felt that the women nominated stood out within their organisations, except in the Sikh community where it was impossible to choose between two sisters, so we nominated them both! The Partnership provided transport for all seven women to attend the reception and meet MP Ruth Kelly, Secretary of State for the Department for Communities and Local Government, and Minister for Women.

"In the evening we went to the House of Commons and met Ruth Kelly. There were a lot of women from all the different communities who had made a contribution locally. I think we gave Sandwell a good name!"

They were:

- **Afrah Muflihi** - Yemeni Community Association

An evening to celebrate

Greet Green residents met up with other people from across the area at a Celebrating Each Other event at West Bromwich Town Hall.

Greet Green Diversity Officer, Ruphsana Nahar-Qayyum, said: "The event brought people from different backgrounds together and we enjoyed the opportunity to learn more about some of the cultures and traditions celebrated across Greet Green." Organised with Sandwell Together, the event included Bhangra dancing and the All Nations steel band. There was also a youth orchestra and cookery demonstrations.

community

Tuesdays and Fridays, and both are there on Wednesdays. The aim is to make the office as accessible as possible to both men and women in the Pakistani community.

"We want it to be a drop-in centre and point of contact for members of the Pakistani community," said Faiza. "The aim is to make our services and work more accessible to the community."

The office is open weekdays 9.00am - 5.00pm and there are plans for it to include regular surgeries by organisations such as the Citizens Advice Bureau, and to provide other activities such as Islamic talks, coffee mornings, a homework club, CV workshops, smoking cessation and health awareness sessions which will be open to all Greet Green residents.

For further information call Greet Green Partnership's Pakistani Women's Development Officer, Faiza on 07970 318032 or Pakistani Men's Development Officer Imran on 07973 370490.



HELP CUT CRIME

Problems logged

The Greets Green Neighbourhood Wardens have been busy mapping problems throughout the area with the help of cutting-edge Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) equipment!

These hand-held personal computers had been loaded with accurate maps of the entire Sandwell Borough, broken down into squares. They also contain a camera, phone, e-mail, Bluetooth, GPS and GPRS remote data transfer, and are at the forefront of technology.

The Wardens audited each of the squares, noting and grading any problems such as fly posting, fly-tipping, derelict or empty housing, graffiti, litter and overgrown bushes. Other issues including out of tax vehicles and vehicles causing an obstruction, were also logged.

All this information was uploaded to a central computer to be analysed so that it can be used to improve the local area. Future audits are now planned to monitor improvements and areas of concern.

i To contact the Wardens, call 0121 580 4481.

Calling all crime-conscious people in Greets Green - your neighbourhood needs you!

There's only one Neighbourhood Watch group in Greets Green, but Helene Elder,

Community Partnerships Officer, is aiming to change that.

Neighbourhood Watch groups are made up of local residents who get together, in partnership with the Police, to help beat local crime. They also aim to encourage neighbourliness and closer communities.

Usually Neighbourhood Watch groups are set up when several residents approach the Police and say they want to establish one. But officers are now being more proactive to try to establish more groups in the area.

Helene Elder said: "We're trying a new approach which is to write to people who've shown some community interest in the past and ask them if they're willing to start a scheme.

"Neighbourhood Watch groups have a proven effect on crime levels and they get people talking to one another in the community."

Neighbourhood Watch schemes can involve just a small number of homes, or large parts of an estate, depending on what local residents want. Each scheme is generally led by a volunteer co-ordinator who gets people working together.

i If you're interested in becoming involved in a Neighbourhood Watch scheme, contact Helene Elder on 0845 113 5000.

REPORTED & SORTED

While on patrol in Jervoise Street, the Greets Green Neighbourhood Wardens noticed that a street sign was obscured by a nearby bush.

They took action there and then by speaking to the Manager of Talbot Court as the bush was on the care home's land. Within a couple of days the branches had been cut back revealing the street sign once more.

i If you have an issue you'd like the Wardens to tackle, call them on 0121 580 4481.



Representing you!

Meet your new Neighbourhood Representatives who have put themselves forward, and been elected, to support you.

This year, elections were held in West Bromwich Central, Swan Village, Carters Green, Greets Green, Oak House South and Hamblett's South.

The position of Greets Green is currently vacant and is being temporarily covered by Janet Sayce. Oak House South is also vacant and is being covered on a temporary basis by Ann Coll. The Hamblett's South Rep continues to be Jessica Ferguson and the Carters Green Rep is Amy Bahat who previously held the position of Deputy Youth Rep on the Greets Green Partnership Board.

Two new residents were elected as Neighbourhood Reps in West Bromwich Central and Swan Village. Here they tell us more about themselves.

i If you'd like to contact your Neighbourhood Rep, call Jackie Owen at Greets Green Partnership on freephone 0800 953 0215.

Laurie Spencer

West Bromwich Central

"We didn't have a Neighbourhood Rep in West Bromwich Central last year. I'd already become involved in Greets Green Partnership through the Community Funding Panel so I decided to stand to become our Neighbourhood Rep.

"The Funding Panel gave me an insight into lots of different projects and I wanted to do more with the Partnership. I retired last year so I've got more time on my hands now. I'm interested in health and education which are both huge topics.

"I've got a very open mind and am keen to discuss issues. Residents can come along to the Neighbourhood Forum and talk about issues and I'll take them to the Partnership Board. Our area's been quite quiet recently so it'll be good for us to have a Neighbourhood Rep again. I was born and bred in London but have lived in West Bromwich for the last 17 years so I know the issues."



Pam Jackson

Swan Village

"I already do a lot of things in Swan Village and I thought it was time I got more involved in Greets Green Partnership. I do a lot for the elderly and run a breakfast club and organise outings. We're going to take 31 elderly people on holiday next year! I like to make sure they're OK.

"People can come and talk about any issues they have and I will pass on their views and concerns.

There used to be problems in our area such as drugs and anti-social behaviour, but it's getting a bit better now. It's important we keep working to make things better still."



ANDREW LEADS THE WAY

Welcome to Andrew Rainsford who is the new Chief Executive of Greets Green Community Enterprises, the organisation which in the future will carry on some of the work started by Greets Green Partnership.

Ally Allerson, Executive Director of Greets Green Partnership, leads the team as it continues its 10 year regeneration programme which runs until 2010. And there's still plenty to do! But when the Partnership comes to an end, it's important that work doesn't stop in the area, so Greets Green Community Enterprises will continue to promote the regeneration of the area to make a lasting difference.

The aim is for the new organisation to encourage community ownership and leadership by enabling local people to play a key role in their neighbourhood. This can't happen overnight, so Greets Green Community Enterprises is already getting started and Andrew is gearing up to the challenges ahead.

i Until Greets Green Community Enterprises move into their own offices Andrew will be based at Court House. Contact Andrew on 0121 533 5061.

Stay out of debt this Christmas

Christmas is nearly here and with it one of the most difficult times to stick to a budget.

It's so easy to go overboard on gifts for those you love, but it's worth taking stock before you run up debts to give you the New Year blues.

If you decide you need to borrow to pay for Christmas, make sure you know how much it will cost you. If you haven't got a bank account and are on a low income, it's easy to fall prey to the seemingly enticing offers of loan sharks.

What seems to be a cheap loan, especially one you may get offered on your doorstep, may in the long run cost you twice as much as you thought.

If you need to borrow money to help afford Christmas think about:

- Can you afford the repayments?
- How much will you have to pay back in total?
- How many repayments do you have to make?
- What happens if you miss a repayment?
- Is there a penalty if you repay early?

The 6 Towns Credit Union in Greet's Green can help. It is a financial co-operative owned and controlled by its members. Membership is open to anyone living or working in Sandwell, and Greet's Green residents are entitled to a special £5 bonus when they open an account.

The Credit Union offers saving products and affordable loans and there are no

hidden charges or early repayment penalties.

■ For more information about how the Credit Union can help you and your family have a Happy Christmas and stress free New Year, call into the office at 382 High Street, telephone 0121 553 3110 and select option 1, or visit www.sixtowns.co.uk

BEWARE

Are you tempted to swim with the sharks to pay for Christmas?

Stay out of the water and come and see SAM first!

Sandwell Advice and Moneylink can offer a cheaper alternative to loans. Find out more about joining the 6 Towns Credit Union by calling 0121 553 3110.

Don't start the New Year drowning in debt.



Dale's here to help

A new member of staff is greeting visitors at the BECOME offices in the High Street. Dale Roberts has been taken on as an admin worker and receptionist after being unemployed for some time.

Any clients coming to the BECOME project to get help with their careers are greeted by Dale. The project supports local people in looking at their abilities and aspirations, finding what's stopping them getting where they want to be, and identifying learning and work opportunities.

BECOME also has conference rooms to rent at its premises in the High Street. Choose from a larger conference room for up to 16 people or a small room for four-five people.

■ To arrange a booking, or to find out more about BECOME, call 0121 525 5478.

Local builder scoops national award

Local builder, Sean Fay, is celebrating after winning the 2006 Youth Builder UK / NHBC National Young Builder of the Year award.

Sean, from Hilltop, was nominated for the award by the Greets Green Building Skills for the Community project after completing his foundation construction award in brickwork.

Sean said: "The award is something I am very proud of – to beat everyone from across the country is a great achievement."

Shane Stevens, Building Skills for the Community Project Officer, who mentored Sean throughout his course, explained: "Sean has overcome a lot of difficulties to complete the programme and this award is recognition of all his hard work and commitment."

"He's an inspiration to other young people and we're delighted that he will now be offering support and advice to new trainees."

The Building Skills for the Community project was featured on the front page of the February / March edition of the Greets Green magazine. It's a joint initiative between Greets Green Partnership and the Young Builders Trust, and works closely with a number of local training providers.



Since it began in February 2005, 58 young people from across the Greets Green area have enrolled onto the programme, gaining vital skills to help them gain full-time work in the construction industry. Sean is now employed by Redrow Homes and is currently working on its new development in Great Barr.

For more information about the project, contact Chris Nightingale on 0121 421 5514 or Shane Stephens on 07919 327545.

PARTNERSHIP NEWS Neighbourhood Management

CHARTER LAYS DOWN PROMISES

All residents in Greets Green should look out for their copy of the new Safer & Cleaner Environment Charter which is being delivered to all homes in the Partnership area.

Created by Greets Green Partnership, West Midlands Police and Groundcare Services (Sandwell Council), the Charter outlines the standards of service you can expect to help improve your neighbourhood. It explains how crime and litter

will be tackled – the two big issues which affect the quality of life of local people.

The Charter was drawn up following discussions with local people at Neighbourhood Forums and the Forums will now be used to monitor its progress. Residents are being urged to go along to their local Forum and give their views on whether the promises made in the Charter are being kept.

Rohit Mistry, Neighbourhood Management Theme Leader, explained: "The aim of the Charter is to raise people's awareness of what they can expect from the Council and the Police. When they say 'it's always messy down our road and we never see anybody there', they can look at the Charter and see how often services should be provided.

"It also means that local service providers and residents can discuss how well they feel the services are being carried out and how they could be improved in the future."

Survey shapes future

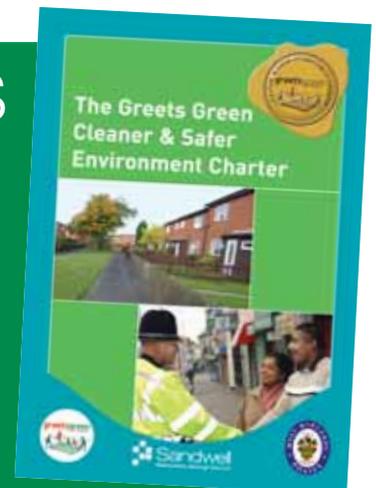
The Neighbourhood Support Team has been knocking on more than 1,200 doors across Greets Green throughout November to carry out a survey of every resident's views.

It's the first major survey to be carried out in the area and is much bigger than the Mori poll of about 400 residents which is completed every two years. This latest survey aims to fill in gaps about the make-up of the area and to discover residents' views about Greets Green Partnership's plans across all its theme areas.

"We want to get a feeling for how far residents think we've come since the Partnership started back in 2000 and hopefully fine tune our thinking for the final three years," said Neighbourhood Management Theme Leader, Rohit Mistry.

If you'd like to contact the Neighbourhood Support Team, you can call them on 0121 533 5058 / 5059.

For more details, call Rohit Mistry, Neighbourhood Management Theme Leader, on 0121 533 1866.



If you have any news get in touch.
Call Barbryn on T: 01564 741847,
E: susan@barbryn.co.uk or the Greets
Green Partnership on T: 0800 953 0215,
E: brian_mckinstrie@sandwell.gov.uk

Space at Lyng Primary

Lyng Primary School is hiring out its new Community Access Point facilities to local groups and businesses.

The building is based in the school grounds on Horton Street and includes an IT suite, a large function room, a fully equipped kitchen, toilets and disabled facilities.

The IT suite has 16 computers and a meeting area, while the function room can accommodate up to 50 people and can be set out as required.

Kerry Knight from Lyng Primary School said: "Thanks to Greets Green Partnership we're able to provide these facilities for local people, and a mother and toddler group and the YMCA are already meeting here.

"We want everyone in the community to use them. We can accommodate small classes, computer groups, pensioner groups, clubs and societies or a large meeting of up to 50 people."

i Room hire costs £15 an hour but discounts apply for regular bookings. Refreshments can also be provided. For more information, contact Kerry on 0121 553 1480.

Party time!

Sandwell Women's Agency Network (SWAN) is hosting a free Christmas Party on 20th December and all local residents are invited to attend.

The party will take place from 5.00-7.00pm at the STA Building on Phoenix Street when local children will be performing a pantomime.

i For further details, contact Manager, Sue Morgan, on 0121 553 7074.

Celebrating Eid together

Members of many different communities in Greets Green came together for a day's celebration to mark the end of Ramadan.

The Healthy Eid Event was held at George Salter High School. Promotional flyers were sent out on behalf of the Bangladeshi, Yemeni and Pakistani communities to invite everyone along for a day of fun activities. Residents sampled Indian head massage, Mendhi and beauty therapy, and there was face painting, games and gifts of goodie bags for the children.



Everyone also enjoyed free food and a raffle, plus drama and comedy sketches, and Quranic recitation and prayers.

The event had a healthy theme too. Under the banner, "Keeping Healthy, Keeping Warm Over Winter", stalls gave out a variety of healthy living information.

FAMILY LEARNING WEEK FUN

Families across Greets Green had fun taking part in a host of free activities to celebrate Family Learning Week from 7th-14th October.

Taking the theme 'Healthy Lifestyles', the action-packed week had mums, dads and kids enjoying everything from football and digital photography to make-up and keep fit.



In total there were over 15 activities on offer at 10 learning and community centres across West Bromwich.

Marcia Roberts-Grey, Community Development and Marketing Officer at the Greets Green Adult and Community Learning Project, said: "Every year Family Learning Week aims to promote learning to all family members and friends and bring together all ages and backgrounds."





Falcons' success

Well done to the Lyng Falcons Under 15s football club who have won the Bilston League and Divisional Cup double for the second season running.

i The team has now been promoted to the premier league and is looking for sponsors. If you can help, call Manager Mark Garrity on 0121 557 4728.

Top score for day out

Sixty pupils and 12 teaching staff from two Greets Green primary schools had a great Hat Trick day out when they attended a morning's coaching session followed by a West Bromwich Albion game against Leeds.

And with West Brom winning 4-2, it was certainly a day to remember for the youngsters from Guns Village and Ryders Green Primary Schools.

Ryders Green head teacher, Ian Wright, said: "The way the pupils are engaged by football is a very positive thing. It gets

them to focus on something which can improve them in very different ways and this was a great example of how the Hat Trick project is benefiting the school and the children of Greets Green."

Four volunteers from Greets Green - Solomon Akanji, Nico Ried, Scott Lloyd and Nigel Penney - helped with the coaching as well as visiting the game on 30th September.

i For more information on the Hat Trick project, contact Russ Smith on 08700 662 840 or email russel.smith@wbacp.co.uk

Don't skip the rules

If you're hiring a skip to take away rubbish from a garden or home DIY job there are a few things to remember to stay inside the law.

To put a skip on the road outside your home, your skip provider must have a permit from Sandwell Borough Council. The Council keeps a database of all approved skip suppliers. Only the skip owner can get the permit, but you must ensure it's been obtained.

The skip owner's also responsible for ensuring skips don't obstruct other road users. It mustn't be placed on the footpath or grass verges except where special permission has been obtained from the council.

It must be painted yellow at each end, be fitted with fluorescent reflective markings at each end, have a minimum of three hazard warning cones around it, and be lit during darkness with four lamps.

i To find out more, call Skip Permit Enquiries on 0121 569 4283, or email highwaysdirect@sandwell.gov.uk

Help is just a click away

Parents and carers in Greets Green can now find up-to-the-minute information about services for families and children using a new online directory.

The Sandwell Children's Services Directory has been launched on the internet to help parents and carers access services which can help them, and provide information for professionals working in the field. The directory includes information on a range of local services, including careers and education, child care, counselling and family support, finance and legal affairs, and health services.



It's been produced by the Information Sharing and Assessment Service and Sandwell Childcare Information Service, and will be available in a printed format at a later date.

i Go online at www.childrensservicesdirectory.sandwell.gov.uk or call Sandwell Childcare Information Service on 0121 569 4914 for more details.

Good school report

Congratulations to Lyng Primary School on its successful Ofsted inspection. Keep up the good work!

Flip magazine for 'Young Greets Green'

young greets green

DECEMBER/JANUARY 2007

KICKING OUT RACISM

Albion stars take part in Q & A session at George Salter High School



Have a go at our prize competition, open to all ages see page 23



Albion stars roll out anti-racism message

Albion players, Diomansy Kamara and Ibrahim Sissoko, visited pupils at George Salter High School to kick off a week of half term activities.

They were there for a question and

answer session coinciding with an anti-racism in football week as part of the FA's 'Kick It Out' campaign.

"It was all about giving our youngsters the chance to speak to

people they can identify with and find out how they have dealt with issues about race and culture," said Greets Green Hat Trick Football Development Officer, Russ Smith.

Pupils were able to quiz the players about the realities of being a professional footballer. All of the pupils involved were from the Greets Green area, including Boris NonoNgmie who used his French speaking skills to act as a translator for the Albion stars' visit.

The event was part of a week of half term activities organised by the Hat Trick project, which is funded by Greets Green Partnership and delivered in partnership with West Bromwich Albion's Community Programme, Sandwell Primary Care Trust and the Football Association.

Russ added: "We have a lot going on in local schools which is great, but the project as a whole gives people of all ages opportunities to get involved in football and learn about coaching and keeping active."

Youth club now open!

Want to make new friends and be part of a fun, developing youth club?

Wood Lane Youth Club is open again for all young people aged 11 - 25.

There's X-Box and pool available each week - and the chance to get involved in drawing up an action plan for future activities. You can say what you want to do!

Don't miss out on future trips including go-karting and Drayton Manor!

Head along to Wood Lane Community Centre any Wednesday from 6.00-8.00pm and have a chat with Senior Youth Worker, Terry Breen.

Half Term Fun

Other half term activities included...

- Fifty youngsters aged 8-11 getting active in football and multi-sports sessions such as trampolining and athletics
- Thirty 11-16 year olds staying on the ball during a football themed week
- 58 boys and girls enjoying activities such as fencing, yoga and aerobics with Active Lifestyles Co-ordinator, Nathan Moore
- The week was rounded off with a trip for everyone to either Manchester United or Drayton Manor

Forum takes first step

Young people have met up for the first time to bring Greets Green's Youth Forum back to life.

The group used to be very active in the area but activities tailed off as young people involved in it moved on. But some youngsters who took part in recent half term activities met up with a few of the former leading lights of the Youth Forum to look at ways it can be revived.

The Youth Service is behind plans to get the Youth Forum going again and to make it better than ever. Senior Youth Worker, Ian Clews, said: "We want the Youth Forum to give young people an opportunity to get involved in local community issues and to start to talk about those issues and have a say in what's going on in their neighbourhoods.

"It won't be all work - there'll be a large element of fun built into it."

To make the Youth Forum work, lots of local young people need to get involved. If you're aged 11-25 and want to have a great time, call Ian Clews on 0121 569 8441 and help get your Youth Forum off the ground.

Drugs awareness

More and more young people are helping to raise drugs awareness amongst other young people.

The Drug Education, Counselling and Confidential Advice team (DECCA) is once again running training classes, which are proving very popular.

Senior peer educator at DECCA, Holly Bailey, said: "We've now started a group with the Guru Nanak Community Centre and are running a course on a Monday evening. It's for young people who want to raise drugs awareness in their community and on the camps they go to regularly."

The course usually lasts three months, and involves 12 hours of sessions. The young people taking it at the Guru Nanak Community Centre are aged from 16 to 21, and will then go out to talk to other youngsters in the Sikh community about drugs. Communication, teaching and listening skills are learnt on the course, to help

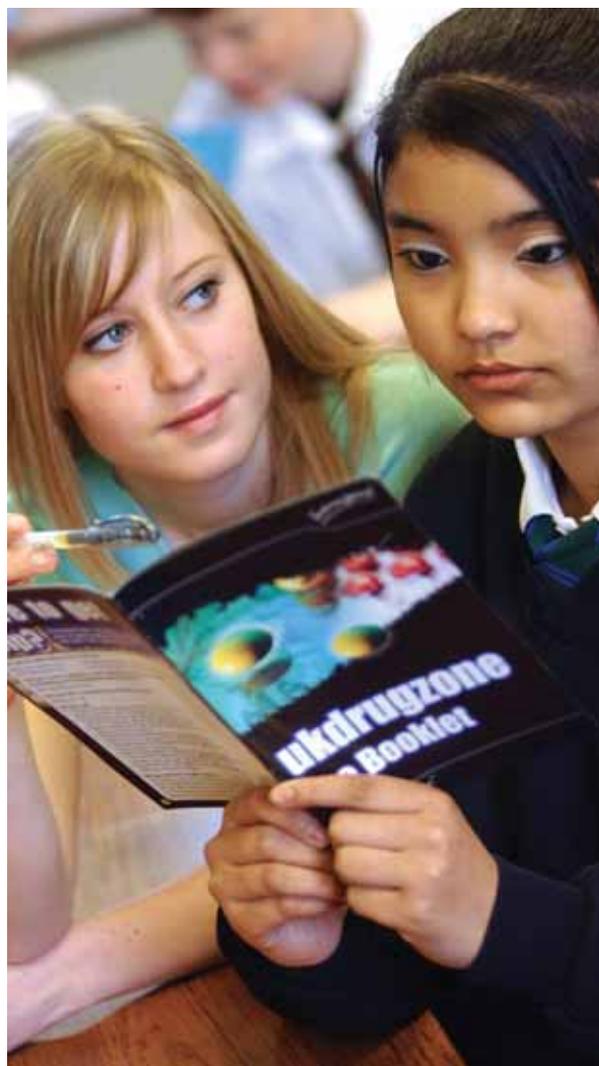
participants get across the information they've learned about how drugs affect young people.

Another group of young people, all aged around 15, who did the training at George Salter High School, are already going out to pass on what they've learned to younger children.

Holly said: "They're going into primary schools and the teachers are really impressed with them. The young people seem to enjoy the sessions and find it easy to talk to others about drugs. They like the responsibility."

DECCA is also working with the Youth Forum to spread the word further and to get other groups involved.

i To find out more, call Holly Bailey on 0845 838 5317.



COMPETITION CORNER

This issue we have 15 words connected with Christmas for you to unscramble. Simply send your entry by 12th January 2007 to: Magazine Competition, FREEPOST GREETSGREEN PARTNERSHIP (no stamp required). The first three correct entries out of the hat will each win a £10 voucher.

Congratulations

to Miss Angela Priest, Miss A Hughes and Mrs S Turley who each won a £10 voucher from the October/November issue crossword.

- | | | | |
|---------------|---------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| MSTTCAESERHIR | — — — — — / — — — — | YKTERU | — — — — — |
| OMETETSLI | — — — — — | EARCSRKC | — — — — — |
| RPODLUH | — — — — — | ANNWSOM | — — — — — |
| ENREDEIR | — — — — — | KOSINGTC | — — — — — |
| ICPNMEEI | — — — — / — — — | RSCITARHCMSAD | — — — — — / — — — — |
| APPWGERNRAPPI | — — — — — / — — — — | TORCEDSOIAN | — — — — — |
| SRPEESNT | — — — — — | OASCRL | — — — — — |
| ITNLES | — — — — — | | |

Name: _____
 Address: _____

 Tel No. _____

This competition is open to all ages