



Mayor hails launch of new civic service programme for young people in Southwark

The Mayor of London, Boris Johnson last night celebrated the launch of a new civic service programme, The Challenge, that inspires young people from diverse backgrounds to come together and serve their community.

The programme, trialed this summer with 160 16-year olds in Southwark and North Hammersmith, plans to grow to work with 50,000 young people by 2015.

“The Challenge is a fantastic civic service programme. To see such diverse teams of young people serving their community together is inspiring. I would like to see The Challenge made available to young people across London”, said The Mayor.

Craig Morley, Chief Executive of The Challenge Network that delivers the programme said, ‘The Challenge is a civic service programme like no other. We take young people from diverse backgrounds and throw them in at the deep end. They take on teamwork and leadership challenges that prepare them to design and deliver a project of their own that will bring their community together.’

The Mayor words were spoken at the graduation event for the young people who had successfully completed the pilot programme. One of the graduates commented, "This has been an amazing experience – I really changed the way I think about myself and other people and made me realize how much I can actually achieve”.

A parent commented, “I've already told my friends that you have to send your child on The Challenge as it's giving something back to the community. It makes them a more rounded person and it's such a brilliant experience”.

Photographs of event and activities attached.

Ends

For further information please call Craig Morley, Chief Executive, The Challenge Network, on 020 7921 4203 or 0797 7007734.

Notes to editors:

- Examples of events that the teams delivered in communities across Southwark include:
 - o ‘A Way Out’ were concerned about the sensitive issue of domestic abuse. Working with national charity Tender, they designed a series of workshops for younger children using sports to teach them about healthy relationships. They took part in a national conference, where they were described as an inspiration.
 - o ‘Stars in the Making’ wanted to do something to change the way people think about the homeless. Together they volunteered at three homeless shelters and are creating resources that they can use to show other people what it is like to be homeless.
 - o ‘Sex is Not a Fashion’ designed workshops for 14-15 year olds about sexual health. Their programme is now being rolled out to other schools following their success in raising funding from The Terence Higgins Trust.
- The Challenge programme is open to all Year 11 students who attend school in Southwark or

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live in the borough. There are 360 places available for the 2010 programmes that start in July 2010. Applications can be made via school or The Challenge website from mid January. The Challenge programmes also run in Hammersmith & Fulham and Birmingham.

- The Challenge Network is an independent, registered charity established in April 2009, with headquarters in Lambeth.
- The charity is funded by a variety of private philanthropists, trusts and foundations, including the V Match Fund
- The Challenge Network partners with a wide variety of organizations to deliver The Challenge, including Envision, Outward Bound Trust, the BBC, The Prince's Trust, London Youth.

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