



Preparing young people for adult and working life

Parent/Carer News Winter 2011

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Welcome

This is our first newsletter for parents/carers of our mentees and we hope you will find it helpful. We would like parents/carers to know more about the work we do, the support we offer young people and to feel better informed and supported by our organisation.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact us by either emailing Victoria, our parent/carer coordinator at victoria@myvoicelondon.org.uk or calling us on 020 8545 2131

The Mentoring Team

There are five members in the mentoring team, Terri Trinder, Head of 14 – 19 Development, Tope Hunter our Project Manager, and Mary Morrison and Victoria Arneil, our mentoring coordinators. The team is supported by Dana Acharya, our mentoring assistant.

We have a team of 53 volunteer mentors, selected and fully-trained by us, who support young people for an hour a week in school. Mentors help young people through the challenges they may be facing by offering one to one support and guidance

and being there for them to talk to. Our mentors are as diverse as our mentees, and they share a common goal - a deep desire to support and help motivate young people to reach their full potential.

We are an independent charity and our advice is confidential and impartial. We can support parents and carers with a home visit or talk to you on the phone. We can also help you to access support from other agencies.

Our work, goals & results

The Youth Start mentoring project was first established in Merton in 2000 and now operates in all south London boroughs, working with young people between the ages of 10 and 17.

In the last year we provided support for 60 young people who were matched with mentors. In total, our 53 volunteer mentors provided 4680 hours of mentoring support.

One teacher has said of a young person engaged in our mentoring project: "This has had an enormous impact on the child's life here at school – we do believe that she would not have completed her GCSEs without the help of her mentor's weekly visits."

Exam stress

With the summer term nearing, coursework and exams are

looming which can inevitably add to the pressure and stress young people may be experiencing. Below is some information taken from the children & young people website www.cypnow.co.uk, on health advice relating to stress.

There are two main ways young people can be helped to reduce the problems caused by stress. One is to address the cause itself, and the second is to find better ways to live with the situation and reduce the anxiety it causes. Sometimes, the cause of stress is not obvious and the source of stress cannot be dealt with directly. Techniques need to be found to help manage the stress - for example, exams themselves cannot usually be avoided.

A great way for young people to reduce their stress levels is to learn how to manage their time and plan ahead. A revision timetable, for instance, can stop workloads from reaching crisis point, and give them the confidence that comes from feeling in control. www.bbc.co.uk/schools/bitesize is a great resource taking young people from KS1 right through to GCSEs.

Exercise is also fantastic for improving mental health. Not only does it have important physical effects on the body that help to reduce anxiety and improve sleep, it also provides opportunities for a young person to get away from stressful situations, socialise and interrupt the negative thinking that can accompany difficult times.

Holiday activities

A number of local authorities run activities for young people in the holidays, some of which are free.

Check out their websites for up to date information:

Croydon:

www.croydon.gov.uk/leisure/libraries/febhalfterm

Kingston: www.younglivin.org.uk

Lambeth: www.netmums.com/lambeth

Merton: www.merton.gov.uk/youngpeople

Richmond: www.richmond.gov.uk

Sutton: www.suttonyouth.org/site

Wandsworth: www.wandsworth.gov.uk

Parent/Carer Information

For any parents interested in further opportunities, many boroughs offer parenting courses. Merton is also offering free employability skills training for Merton residents. The course starts on Monday 7 March, and will run every Monday and Thursday 12.30 – 3.30pm for 3 Weeks. Please contact Victoria for more information about either of the above.

Useful websites

We have listed below further websites which you may find useful:

www.youngminds.org.uk provides information for young people about emotional well-being.

www.familylives.org.uk offers advice and support for parents and carers.

www.mychoicelondon.co.uk and www.connexions-direct.com offer courses and careers advice for young people.

Our Thanks

Thank you for taking the time to read this, we would really appreciate your comments. If you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact a member of our team.

Best wishes from The Mentoring Team.