

# THE KIDS ARE ALRIGHT

## EFFORD YOUTH MAKE A DIFFERENCE

**This month's award from The Kids Are Alright campaign goes to members of the Efford Youth Forum, who were nominated by Senior Youth Support Worker Kirsty Harris.**

"I nominated this group as they have worked very hard over the last few months in preparation for a community event in Efford - the Happy Valley Day" said Kirsty.

"The entire group took part in working the event and had a fantastic time meeting other community members and groups. The group dedicated approximately 25 hours towards this event and managed to raise funds for their chosen charity the NSPCC."

Efford Youth Forum is a group of between 5 and 8 young people aged 13 - 19, meeting every week at Efford Youth Centre. The Forum is represented at meetings of local community groups such as 'Friends of the Valley' and 'Heart of Efford Community Partnership'.

"The Forum is a way for young people to have a voice in their community about things that they think need to happen or change for the better, working with the help of other local community groups," explained Kirsty. "The community groups also know that the Forum will be there and they can give them information of how they would like youth to be involved in local issues, which the Forum members bring back to the Youth Centre."

"It's about helping and improving the local community" added Shannon.

Over the last 12 months, the Youth Forum has been involved in two 'Happy Valley Days', and they have raised funds both times for NSPCC.

But it is much more than just fundraising. For the first event in March this year, the Forum members (Pictured Right) had to organise a stall selling food and drink, as well as a raffle. They were given a budget which they had to manage, and they were also tasked with preparing and distributing posters to promote the event. Forum members wrote letters to local businesses explaining the fundraising objectives and asking for donations for raffle prizes. They also completed a huge cookery task, producing 400 rice krispie cakes at the Youth Centre to sell on the day.

"They gave up their own time to do all this," explained Kirsty. "If they hadn't done it, then it wouldn't have happened. They did really well from start to finish."

A popular feature of the food and drink stall was a selection of 'mocktails' - non-alcoholic cocktails designed by the young people.

On the day, they raised £213.76, and later presented a cheque to Alison Armer of the NSPCC.



Left to right: Shannon Peters, Amy Hatrey and Kirsty Harris pictured at the Efford Youth Centre.



Left to right: Sonia Hooper (Volunteer); Sharon Heard (Youth Support Worker); Shannon Peters (Efford Youth Forum); Alison Armer (Community Fundraising Manager NSPCC); Amy Hatrey (Efford Youth Forum); Jodine Bunker (Efford Youth Forum); Kirsty Harris (Senior Youth Support Worker).

But that was just the start for Shannon Peters and Amy Hatrey. "When we met Alison she explained about the work of the NSPCC, and that it costs 40 pence just to have a call connected and handled. That made us want to raise more money for them."

And so, with just two weeks notice, the girls got going again, this time for the July 'Happy Valley Day' under the umbrella of Efford FM, a one-day radio station that broadcast to the local community from the event in the valley.

Heart of Efford Community Partnership donated money for raffle prizes, and Amy and Shannon bought the prizes, contacted businesses for donations and in the end raised another £120.75 for the NSPCC.

They also presented a two hour radio show at the end of the day, helped by Darren Essery and Jodine Baker. During the show they profiled all the activities at the Efford Youth Centre, as well as the Summer Activities Programme, giving much needed publicity reaching young people who would later use the Youth Centre's services.

Shannon and Amy, both 18, are currently studying Childcare and Youthwork respectively at Lipson Community College, and they are both aiming for places at Marjon next year on the Youth and Community Work degree course.

"Kirsty and the team of Youth Workers here have really inspired us for this," said Shannon. "Some people think that Youthwork does not achieve much, but it obviously does as you can see from our experiences."

"It's helped us loads, and given us loads of experience" added Amy. "We've learned new skills, like organisation, budgeting money, people skills."

"The Forum members also sit on panels helping to decide on PAYP bid awards," added Kirsty.

As well as college and Uni, Kirsty sees a good future for Shannon and Amy. "These girls are now going to be the leaders of the Efford Youth Forum, planning and programming events and activities, acting as peer mentors encouraging 14/15 year olds to get involved. They'll lead it, with my help, not the other way round."

"Youthwork opens up lots of doors and opportunities, you meet so many people and the job is really varied, every day is different," she added.

For Shannon and Amy, their time working on the Youth Forum has inspired them to believe in their ability to make a difference, and to aim high for their futures - they more than deserve the TKAA award for this month.

The last word goes to the girls, "We just want to say THANK YOU! to Kirsty, she's been great."

### Take our Survey and you could win £50 worth of M&S vouchers!

Your views are really important to the Kids Are Alright campaign, and this is a great opportunity for you to let us know how you feel about young people in Plymouth.

The Kids Are Alright survey has been designed with assistance from the Office for Criminal Justice Reform, a cross-departmental govern-

ment organisation reporting to the Ministry of Justice, the Home Office and the Attorney General's office.

It is designed to measure perceptions of young people in Plymouth before and after the campaign. There is a prize draw where you have the chance to win £50 worth of M&S vouchers, so make sure you fill out the online survey as soon as you can to be in with a chance of winning!

#### Nominate a young person

You can also nominate a young person for the

monthly award - if you know a young person who is making a positive contribution to their community, go to [www.tkaa.co.uk](http://www.tkaa.co.uk) and tell us why - they could be our monthly winner, receive £50 worthy of vouchers but more importantly be recognized and encouraged for the work they are doing!

Visit [www.tkaa.co.uk](http://www.tkaa.co.uk) to take the survey, nominate a young person and find out more about The Kids Are Alright campaign.

For more information on The Kids Are Alright campaign, or to nominate a young person for a kids are alright award please visit

[www.tkaa.co.uk](http://www.tkaa.co.uk)

