

The Tom ap Rhys Pryce Memorial Trust

Newsletter – April 2008.

Since last August we have made several new contacts amongst charities working with children and young people, and we have learnt so much more about the work that is being done and the many organisations trying to make a difference in this charity sector. We have also seen two of our projects come to fruition, the SHINE programme for refugee children in Southall, and the Skilltrain 'Rapagram' project in Wandsworth. The 'Rap' team produced a CD with a message of non-violence and tolerance, and then went on to write, design and produce a short video on the history of Hip-Hop, with the help of Swiss, a member of So Solid Crew.

We were greatly impressed by IntoUniversity, a charity whose vision is to provide a national network of local learning centres, where anyone between the ages of 8 and 18 will be encouraged to achieve their potential. There is a structured programme designed to support children from disadvantaged backgrounds to attain either a place at University or other chosen aspiration. The Trust is helping to fund the setting up of a new centre at Kensal Green close to where Tom used to live. Development of the centre is currently in hand and is due to open on 2nd June. (For more information go to www.intouniversity.org)

Another really dynamic organisation is the Southside Young Leaders Academy, located in Camberwell. This programme is based on the highly successful 'Eastside Young Leaders Academy' (www.eyla.org.uk) which was established in 2002. The SYLA encourages boys who are at risk of exclusion from school to develop their leadership skills in a positive way, and ultimately to become leaders in society. Tom's Trust is helping to pay for the tutors and mentors needed to run the Academy.

The Trust has also given support to a project in Birmingham, where children are encouraged to develop their musical talents. For the last seven years the City of Birmingham Symphony orchestra has worked with the Aston Performing Arts Academy to deliver creative musical projects for students aged 5 to 19. Many of the children involved have never seen some of the instruments, let alone played them. Doors are opened and talents discovered, indeed music has a huge influence on young people and can be of enormous benefit if channelled in the right direction.

The total amount that Tom's Trust has funded or pledged to date amounts to over £250,000, but the need for money is still a challenge. There are so many really worthwhile organisations in London that are doing tremendously good work on a shoe-string budget, who could do so much more, given the funding. The Trust has the ability to create links between these organisations to develop positive synergy and cross-fertilisation of ideas. In spite of all the problems we read about in the press, we believe the Trust is making a difference to some of the children and young people in the deprived parts of London who otherwise lack the opportunities to develop their natural talents. Given time, we are sure that society can turn the corner, and instead of being 'Broken Britain' can become 'Mended Britain'.

April 2008

The Trustees.