Big celebrations planned as gap* reaches 10 years

Well we almost can’t believe it ourselves as the gap* becomes 10 years old this Summer. We are really quite proud of what we achieved over the years of working with young people in Sutton Coldfield and the surrounding areas. But we know it could have never have got this far without our faithful and committed supporters. We are looking to make a big noise about it and we are arranging a celebration event, ‘the gap*’s BIG 10’ at the Harvest Fields Centre on Friday, 21st September 2018. Invites have already gone out to over 200 people. It promises to be a great evening with live music and dance performances from some of the young people we work with as well as words from friends, and young people, past and present, who have had an impact on or have been impacted by the work of the gap* over the years. It has been, and still is, a great privilege for us to be serving and investing in the lives of young people.

And the Award goes to...

The gap* were very honoured to be nominated in the first ever B’ham Youth Awards organised by the YMCA, Birmingham Youth Services and a number of other sponsors. It meant that Zabrina, David and Rob got to dress up posh(ish) and attend the award ceremony at the Clayton Hotel in Birmingham City Centre. Though they were not the winners they were privileged to be amongst other inspiring youth workers and youth-based projects that are going on in and around the City. It is an increasingly challenging area of work so it is great to be able to meet up with others and celebrate what we are all doing. We want to say a massive thank you to all those lovely people, both young and older, who kindly nominated us for this Award.
**ANNA FREUD PROJECT**

This Mental Health project related to young people has now kicked into gear with students at Walsall Studio School where HeadSpace currently operates. The first phase will be to train the selected young people to become peer supporters to other young people. That will be followed by a preliminary evaluation before the second phase which will see us running a full Peer Support Programme towards the end of the year with a final evaluation being undertaken in Spring 2019.

**THE VENUE NEWS**

The Venue continues to see increased numbers of young people coming through. With more young people dropping-in there are naturally more challenges and issues we have to face and deal with. We still run three weekly sessions but with a drop back in volunteers, we are beginning to have to limit some of the sessions due to Health & Safety/Safeguarding issues.

The gap* Studio has been in recent use. Neil (pictured left) is just one of our regulars and has recorded a number of songs, one which can be currently found on the gap*'s website (www.thegapsuttoncoldfield.org). We have recently received some WMP Active Citizen Award funding to purchase electric guitars and a keyboard to enhance the facilities the studio can offer. Any young people wanting to use this free facility can get in touch with Rob on 07462 306177.

**How we help...**

Hi, my name is James. Growing up I was often bullied by other kids but going to Venue I felt I had found a home that gave me safety and security and knowing I was free to openly share how I was feeling. In time I became a Christian and have been involved with a number of churches over the last few years. I have had a few jobs but never really found what was a best fit for me. This year I had the opportunity of working for a U. S. Christian organisation, Camp America and I am currently in Minnesota on a 3 month project. My main role is as a Lifeguard though I also run activities such as water-polo and water-aerobics. I am really enjoying the work, the people and the place and feel I have come a long way from the life I used to have thanks to my faith in God and by the many ways I have had support, been given opportunities, help and advise from the guys and girls at the gap*.

**Remembering Ozell...**

We were all greatly saddened by the recent tragic and violent death of one of the young people who was becoming a regular visitor to Venue. Our thoughts and prayers are still with his family and friends who are left to live with the sadness and loss. A minute silence was held at the Venue the day after it had happened and we continue to offer a listening ear and support to any of our youngsters affected by this unexpected tragedy.

**GAP* GEARS-UP**

The gap* linked up with Gear-Up, a Social Enterprise based in Hodge Hill, when George was offered some work experience in the bike repair and sales shop. George has proved himself to be a dedicated worker who clearly has a passion for bikes and has impressed the the Gear Up staff and us here at the gap*.

George is pictured on the right with manager Stuart at Gear-Up’s repair shop.

**Great Midlands Fun Run**

Once again the sun shone for the GMFR as our brave entrants (missing in action - Mike) ran, jogged and walked the 8.5 mile course with the sole objective of raising money for the work of the gap*. Also on hand were our great Marshalling team (minus Mick who had to dash off) who cheered them on whilst manning road closure barriers along on the route. Well done team gap*!

**The gap*, Our Place Community Hub, Farthing Lane, Sutton Coldfield, Birmingham B72 1RN**

Contact David on 07565 542976, Zabrina on 07599 912670