

GETTING OUT THERE...



Youth worker Laura with cool security guard Carl

The last six months has seen a dramatic impact on the number of young people attending our weekly Venue drop-in sessions. This can be attributed to a whole host of reactions from young people across the town. The sad tragedy of Ozell Pemberton last May, coupled with the leaving of our youth worker Rob (and his wife, Adele) over last Summer as well as other minor local issues resulted in our regular young people no longer 'chilling' with us. This resulted in us closing Venue up except for Fridays and doing more 'outreach' to youngsters in the town (see *below*). This initiative has reaped results with the young people and we have now restarted our Monday sessions and are looking to reopen on Wednesdays very soon.

Our **OUT THERE** street work, which began in the last few months of 2018, has had a renewed impetus courtesy of new youth worker, Laura who, along with volunteer, Christine have been building relationships with new young people as well as rekindling ones with former visitors. As well as reopening our weekly sessions at the Venue we have decided to keep up our street work, mainly centered around McDonalds, as it aids us in focusing on what is happening in the town as far as young people are concerned. It also allows us to cement stronger relationships with various key people and giving the gap* a bit of 'street profile'... if you see us around, be sure to say hi!

youthvision
[linking youth work in Sutton Coldfield]

During the last couple of months we took advantage of the Street work to conduct a small survey about young people in the town. One was conducted specifically for young people, the other was aimed at adults. The findings were summarized in a specially arranged event entitled 'Youth Vision – linking Youth work in Sutton Coldfield' held at the Venue at the end of January 2019. This event was attended by a mix of folk with various links to young people and included representatives of Clifton Road Youth Centre, the Police, Sutton Town Council, Birmingham Church of England, local church youth workers, scouts/brigades and the gap*. The discussions were positive, encouraging and, hopefully are going to lead to more partnership working where the young people are concerned.

As featured on our main story, the Venue has been only temporarily in action these past 6 or months (the only time in 10 years that this has happened!). We are, however, pleased to say that it is now open at least twice a week (currently Mondays and Fridays) for young people to drop by... with all the usual on offer, a free hot chocolate mountain, Xbox One, Pool, Table football, chill area etc. There has been the return of a few 'old faces' but there is also a growing number of newer young people attending....



MIND THE GAP

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS TRAINING DAY

Following our last Mental Health awareness training day held in March 2018, another is planned for Saturday March 30th this year. The venue will be dependent on the number of people expressing an interest in attending, so will be announced later but it will be in Sutton Coldfield town centre. Though the day is described as Mental Health Awareness, the sessions will cover Autism, suicide/self-harm, eating disorders, anxiety and depression and will have guest speakers discussing the roles they play. Anybody looking to work in these areas or upgrade their knowledge would be welcome to book a place. Contact Zabrina on zabrinawolfe.gap@gmail.com or **07599 912670**

Prayer Evening

The evening of 11th Feb was our first Prayer event of the year, we endeavor to hold about 4 of these each year. This particular one was very significant for the gap* as there seemed to be a clear focus that drew on biblical scriptures that had been part of our development over the years.



This was leading us to hone in on how God wants to build (and even rebuild) on what the gap* currently is and that part of that building was linked to our unity within the local community. It was great to have a healthy amount of people attend and we pray that God clearly envisions us towards the future development of this ministry.

LAURA MAY'S MISSION

Our ultra-enthusiastic youth worker, Laura begins her first personal Blog via The gap* website www.thegap*suttoncoldfield.org. Entitled Laura May's Mission, this periodic portrayal of the thoughts and trials of being a young(ish) person in today's urban environment will hopefully provide some wit, warmth and viewpoints on some of the issues young people find they have to deal with.

GREAT MIDLANDS FUN RUN

ROYAL SUTTON COLDFIELD Walk, Jog or Run



Staff members Zabrina and Laura plus one of our Trustees have already signed up

to take part in the Great Midland Fun Run for June 2019 and are currently in 'deep training' (which probably means they are jogging to the Dessert Shop!). If you would like to join them in supporting the work we do then get in quick-time as last day for registration is March 25th.

On Screen

The gap* has been invited to be part of a recording for a news item to be aired on Channel 4 news at a future date. Laura and Zabrina are interviewed briefly over a virtual reality project initiated by Birmingham creative arts organization Round Midnight. It will involve pupils and teachers from Plantsbrook School as well as other community representatives and uses a VR setting that works around choices young people can make and the consequences of those choices. In this current climate of knife crime and gang culture, we feel privileged to be part of any project that helps young people have a clearer understanding of the decisions they may choose to make.



FUNDING

As with most Charities, we are heavily reliant on funding to sustain the ongoing work we have established.

We are always extremely grateful to those individuals and churches who support us in finance and prayer. We are also grateful to external funders who are sought out by our 'fundraiser in residence' Mr. Bob Candlin (pictured). Bob has a long history and background in working with all types of charities, social enterprises and community groups and has been instrumental in obtaining funding for the various projects the gap* currently runs as well as helping sustain the organisation. We are indebted to the following Trusts and funders for their financial provision over the last few months:



Fairfax School, Edgar Lawley Foundation, The Missionary Friends Trust and Goodenough Charitable Trust