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**FORUM MEETING MINUTES**

**Faiths Response: Positive Activities for Young People**

**Location:** Café Hall, St Hilda’s East Community Centre, 18 Club Row

Shoreditch, London E2 7E

**Date:** Monday 14 March 2022

**Emma Achurch**, Spear Bethnal Green, St Peter’s Church

* Project is aimed at 16-24 year olds.
* Runs for six weeks – coaching young people, releasing the potential of young people, raising awareness of barriers and equipping them to take ownership and action to change.
* They are then assigned a coach for the whole year, and 80% of participants progress to a job.
* Coaching helps with preparing CVs, applications and interview skills. People are referred by job centers, charities and council.
* The project is open to all faiths and none. A Christian charity, and the doors of St Peters are always open.
* So far the project has helped 24 cohorts, with 12-15 people in each cohort, which works out to around 600 young people.
* Anyone interested can pop along to St Peters, or offer to sit on a panel, answer questions about the world of work and share experiences with the young people.

*Tips for faith groups*: Hear the struggles of the young person, if you promise to support them then follow it through, bring them hope and trust. If young people have a lack of direction, show young people that they can be trusted – take a leap of faith and motivation. Consistency is key.

**Q&A**

*Q – How does faith fit into the work?*

A – The trust are made up by people that go to the church, and also the congregation get involved by helping with mock interviews etc.

*Q – How do young people get recruited*?

A – In addition to referrals from charities and job center, the project is quite active on social media, using Instagram adverts. People also hear through word of mouth. It is very effective, as usually the cohorts are full up.

Q – What do you do if a young person has other needs, e.g. mental health?

A – Spear works in partnership with other organisations and refers the young person to their service if they need it.

Q – Do you find out what sort of jobs the young people are interested in?

A – We always ask them what they would like their next step to be, but also encourage them to take on a first job that might not necessarily be in that field. We work with local companies and offer people a guaranteed interview. Experience during covid? Lots of jobs have been created through kickstart opportunities – especially in creative industries.

Q – What sort of skills do the young people gain?

A – We point out where strengths lie and identify what are industries are hiring at the moment? What skills does the job require? We run mock interviews with panels and run workshops. People also form friendships that extend outside of the project, which is also nice to see.

Q – Do you measure the impact of your work by following up with people?

A- Yes, we have Spear ambassadors that help shape the curriculum and get involved in mock interviews etc. They are success stories that inspire others and are good mentors.

Mayflower School rep: Concerns around mental health during after covid and the transitions from year 6 to 7.

Youth Council rep: Youth Council are also concerned about mental health, and this is one of their project areas. Other areas are youth violence, mental health, youth homelessness and career opportunities. There is sometimes a taboo over mental health in certain cultures, and acceptance from parents is important. Deprivation causes anger and may exacerbate youth violence.

THAI boxing academy rep: Young people need consistency and sometimes parents are part of the problem. Boxing academy are now working with young people within a structured programme - helps to build mental wellbeing, builds confidence and make a change to persona. Parents tend to be more the problem. Working in conjunction with Mind and GP surgeries – they refer people in.

**Rev Alan Green: Work** **of the Forum at the present**

Building upon work during pandemic, where opportunities grew with faith communities and other statutory organisations.

Benefit to the borough that they have seen what faith groups can do.

Work of social commitment is often seen as an extension of worshipping – at a recent meeting of mosque leaders, one of the elders recognised there was a need for youth provision and youth group blossomed out of that. Never sought funding or broadcast what they are doing, no need for outcomes other than success. Often under the radar.

Building relationships has been crucial, for example, Barts health community engagement team, a cross borough response to the pandemic – this has been vital and has moved on beyond the pandemic now; management of the health trust are often involved.

Structure of forum reflects how it began – no rules, no list of acceptable faiths or not, we try to be really open forum.

**Met Police Hate Crime Update**

Hate crime figures for last quarter:

October to December, 176 race hate crime, 49 homophobic crimes, 32 faith and religion based crimes, 9 transphobic crimes, 8 disability related crimes and 7 vulnerability related crimes.

Of the 32 faith hate crimes, 16 were classed as antisemitic. The belief is that these crimes are largely the work of one person with mental health issues, who has already been to court once.

There is a high sanction detection rate – this describes if the the process by the police has been completed – the work by Met and hate crime team is excellent.

THIFF is a trusted place for disclosing any faith hate related experiences if people do not want to officially report.