



Birmingham City Council

Leaps and bounds

The Leaps and Bounds project: is aimed at improving the lives of young people, their families and communities. The programme combines the proven Coaching for Communities model, which has been devised by Youth at Risk, with a community ballet production of 'Romeo and Juliet' facilitated as part of the education programme at the Birmingham Royal Ballet. Participants will be targeted and referred to the programme, by youth work professionals ie, trailblazers working in a range of settings relevant to young people at risk. The programme enables young participants to identify barriers to their future success, and provides them with access to one-to-one support, which is aimed at helping them to tackle their issues.

Partners

The project is being designed and delivered by a partnership, which includes: the Birmingham Royal Ballet; Youth at Risk; the Learning and Skills Council; the City Council's Arts; the Youth Service; Social Care; and Health divisions. The Dudley, Wolverhampton and Sandwell Councils and Black Country Connexions are also involved. Fundraising for the project is ongoing. The local authorities involved have confirmed £300,000 in total with applications to the Arts Council England, the Big Lottery Fund and the Learning and Skills Council.

Participants

During the 18 months of the project, 300 young people will be recruited. They will be drawn from those considered 'at risk' for a variety of factors, such as poor school attendance, record of offending, substance abuse, family breakdown, low self-esteem and poverty. In addition to intensive training from Youth at Risk, each young participant will be paired with a trained life coach, recruited from the corporate sector.

Programme

Phase one: this phase includes the planning of evaluation and monitoring, recruitment and intensive training of participants and finalising of budgets. Trailblazers and life coaches develop awareness of careers options within the arts sector. Young participants and life coaches work together to identify personal goals.

Phase two: follow-through of weekly meetings between coaches and young people, monthly meetings and workshops for the whole group and networks of coaches for young people.

Phase three: ballet workshops and rehearsals, to enable young people, trailblazers and life coaches to perform in 'Romeo and Juliet' on the main stage, at Birmingham's Hippodrome Theatre.

Young people's learning and achievement through the programme will be recognised through Youth Arts Award or the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (Asdan) accreditation.

Strategic fit with local authority plans

Birmingham City Council's priorities include, a focus on Improving Services for Children and Young People. The council is currently developing its first Strategy for Children, Young People and the Arts and is also negotiating a Local Public Service Agreement for raising young people's aspirations through participation in arts activities.

Profile

Objectives include demonstrating the value of the arts in transforming young people's lives, influencing the business community, to support arts-based initiatives, and identifying opportunities for employment in the sector. The project is currently being filmed by Diverse Productions for broadcast on Channel 4 Television.

Minimum outputs

- A total of 300 young participants aged 15 to 17, undergo programme
- nearly 2,000 individual life coaching sessions
- six workshop days with whole cohort
- one large-scale community ballet performance of 'Romeo and Juliet'

Anticipated outcomes

For young people:

- improved quality of life through raised levels of self-confidence and aspirations for achievement across a wide range of lifestyle, education and employment issues
- heightened understanding of and an interest in the arts
- improved skills across a range of disciplines – dependent on individual needs and aspirations
- reduction in risk of offending or being a victim of crime

For trailblazers:

- heightened understanding of and an interest in the arts both personally and as a means for engaging and developing young people
- improved professional practice resulting from opportunities for sharing experiences with peers and from training and delivery of the life coaching model

For life coaches:

- heightened understanding of and an interest in the arts

- improved professional performance resulting from life coaching training
- increased awareness of young people's issues and of the agencies that support them
- peer support through life coaches network

For Birmingham City Council arts division

- improved multi-agency practice and a clearer understanding of partnership agendas
- improved levels of expertise in working with young people at risk
- assumptions of the Children and Young People's Arts Strategy tested
- new internal working partnerships established that improve perception of the value of the arts across a range of indicators
- new partnerships with business sector established with potential for development of business support to the arts in the city

For further information please contact:

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