

FUTURE JOBS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Since April 2010, Highfields Community Association through the Future Jobs Fund (FJF) employed 40 new staff who were predominantly but not exclusively from the Highfields & St Matthews area. Two thirds of them have been directly employed at the Centre whilst the others have been placed in partner agencies in the area such as Somali Community Solutions, TREC, Ansaar, Shama and Nirvana. The majority of individuals that have been employed are between 18-25 years old and have been long term unemployed. Future Jobs Fund, has been an initiative run by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) in partnership with the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) and with input from Jobcentre Plus Regional Government Offices in England. The aim is to create jobs, primarily aimed at 18-24 year olds who have been out of work for 6 – 12 months and claiming Jobseeker Allowance. The Future Jobs Fund is a part of the Young Person's Guarantee. The Highfields Multi Access Centre worked on this programme to recruit 18 – 24 year olds living within the "hotspot" area of Leicester and assisting individuals with employment (lasting at least 6 months), work experience, and training opportunities.



Induction session for new Future Jobs Fund employees at Highfields Centre.

Additionally, staff have received specialist training depending in what area they have been employed, so we have had individuals complete level 2 gym instructor courses and Apple Logic music production training. All FJF staff have been recruited on 6 month contracts which we are hoping will be extended, so we can offer further training in youth work for our community development and youth & community workers. Trainee workers are not always treated with respect and not stretched and challenged but the feedback that we have received shows that the experience that these staff have received and in particular those working directly in the centre and with some of our partner agencies has been a positive one and that these staff are well set for their future careers.

Case Study



Roshan came to the Highfields Multi Access Centre after recommendation from a family member. Having been on Jobseekers Allowance for over 6 months and actively seeking work and having seen her Personal Adviser on several occasions, she became reassured that her Personal Adviser would support her to find employment in Business Administration/clerical work. Her Personal Adviser informed her of the Future Jobs Fund initiative and asked her to go to Job Centre Plus for a referral to the initiative. Having completed the application form, Roshan was invited to an interview and was successful in securing a post as a Receptionist at Ansaar, Leicester.

Roshan now works 25 hours per week and has also completed courses such as Health & Safety, Food Hygiene and others as part of the FJF initiative.

Roshan says *"I think the Future Jobs Fund is excellent, this programme has provided me with the opportunity that I would not have had, as I did not have the experience in the clerical field. I now have a job that I really really enjoy. The programme has not only led to a job but has also given me the opportunity to do various training programmes. I am really grateful for the Future Jobs Fund programme and to my advisor at Highfields Multi Access Centre for providing this opportunity"*.

Jaimini Ratan, Office Manager – Ansaar says *"Speaking on behalf of the Ansaar team, I believe the Future Jobs Fund has been a fantastic accomplishment. It has been great to see the end results, the Highfields Centre have succeeded in employing a wonderful group of people to work in our community and make a difference. Roshan has not had any previous office experience, however her dedication, motivation and hard work has made her an absolute asset in Ansaar. She is a valued member of the team and we hope she stays with us for a very long time!"*

September 2010

If Anyone Can, Highfields Can!

COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE WITHIN REACH

1ST OCTOBER 2010



In spite of a belated attempt by some senior Council officers to reverse the community governance decision at Highfields Centre, the Council's Cabinet finally decided on 21 June 2010 to complete the much delayed transfer by 1 August 2010 and now this completion has been finally rearranged for 1 October 2010!

Although the Council's direction of travel was set in December 2006 and final approval was provided in

January 2009, it appears there has been a concerted and determined effort on the part of some senior Council officers to ensure the democratic decisions of the Council were not implemented. At an extreme and from the information we have gauged so far, it includes one of these same officers bragging to our legal representatives that the Council's resources were much greater than the Association's and therefore, the Council could sit it out until the Association caved in and accepted the Council's transfer terms! Another example of this practice was the 5 month delay before a 'doctored' copy of the January 2009 Cabinet report was finally made available to the Association, with an earlier version sent to the Association being so heavily redacted that they even erased one of the seven part Cabinet decision! Unfortunately, such frolics were not limited to just the second and third tier officers and Mark Twain/Disraeli's quote of 'There are lies, damn lies - and statistics' resonates with the City Council's practice, as does their practice of inverting the truth. These ignominious examples of such unscrupulous actions have not gone unchallenged and for this, we must pay tribute to our local councillors and Cabinet members (especially, Councillor Abdul Osman) who have been very supportive in keeping these officers in check. In order to do this, both Cllrs Osman and Dr Chowdhury had to resign from the HCA Executive, as the Council had previously made it impossible for them to participate in formal City Council discussions about this Centre! We'd also like to thank Cllr Veejay Patel (LCC Leader) for helping to realize the 21st June Cabinet decision and to Andy Keeling (Deputy Chief Executive) for helping to ensure the subsequent implementation actions were not unduly prolonged.

So, we can put on hold a return to the campaign trail of yesteryears and the protest marches, petitions, rallies and meetings, as well as the related media and legal actions. Instead, we need to urgently progress the outstanding transfer completion issues and ensure our achievement is a sustainable legacy for this area and as many people have said, the real work to make a difference starts now!

However, given the long and at times, very difficult journey we have been on to achieve community governance, it would be very remiss of us if we didn't mark this achievement with a series of celebratory events – please contact the Centre for further details.

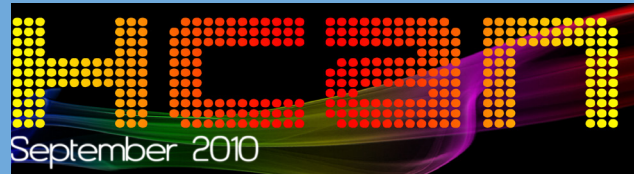
NEW FITNESS SUITE OPENING TIMES

From October, the fitness suite is extending its opening hours. The fitness suite will be open in the

Mornings: 11am to 1pm

Afternoons: 4pm to 8pm

The sauna is now fully operational, and will also be open at the same time as the fitness suite. Also from October, there will be new adult sports sessions taking place - book your place to avoid disappointment.



H-CAFE NOW OPEN!

Our 24 seat modern café is now open. It has been providing breakfast, lunch and dinner throughout the summer and is now open to the public. We have also provided halal and vegetarian meals and refreshments for various organisations. H-café is open to eat-in or take away between 10:00a.m - 2:00p.m and 4:00p.m and 8:00p.m. We can also provide outside catering for a variety of occasions. For more information, please contact the centre.



HCA VOLUNTEER TRAINING

There are many reasons why people want to volunteer and work in Highfields Centre like 'I want to gain experience', 'I want to improve my chances of landing a job', 'I've got the time to offer support and learning to others' and 'I'm still at college but want to serve the community I live in'. Trainee volunteers attended training sessions to gather knowledge, skills and understanding about Highfields Community Association, the importance placed on serving the whole community of Highfields and making active choices about the kind of work or task they wanted to specialise in. Volunteers are required to have CRB clearance, references, attend training sessions and be observed and assessed before being appointed for a maximum period of three years, subject to a formal review at 18 months. Once appointed, volunteers are expected to attend supervision meetings and when appropriate team meetings. HCA encourages volunteers to take up opportunities and gain qualifications and certificates to enhance their life chances and improve the quality of work carried out. HCA will be appointing its first set of volunteers during September. If you are interested in volunteering for HCA, please leave your details at reception.



RAISE YOUR GAME? - ABSOLUTELY!



Children learning about photography

This year's summer playscheme, named Raise Your Game! definitely raised the Game! HCA obtained Extended Services funding to run a holiday arts & sports scheme. We decided to run a scheme for five weeks, targeting children aged 5-12 yrs for the morning sessions and young people aged 13+ in the afternoons. Overall, we ran 25 sessions over 5 weeks with up to 6 arts & sports activities. On average, 40-50 children attended the morning sessions & 10-15 young people in the afternoons. They took part in activities such as cooking, music

production, film & animation, badminton, jewellery making etc. Our

aim is to raise the creative and sporting ability of our children & young people in the local area and to improve their levels of attainment at school and in the home.

Our team of qualified senior workers were joined by our FJF staff, many of whom had never worked on a playscheme before. Some of the children had special needs/learning difficulties and our staff worked hard to ensure that they were fully integrated into the scheme. We have had excellent feedback from parents and guardians and this was reflected by the amazing turnout at our presentation event on Thursday 19th August 2010.

'Observed hard working staff that also seemed to enjoy working with children' Parent
'Enjoyed and made me want to come again' Child

There will be a full written report and this will be available shortly. Overall, we are tremendously pleased about this year's scheme and would like to thank all the parents for their support and the children & young people were a pleasure to work with.



HIGHFIELDS SURVEY REPORT 2010

The survey of local residents' views about the Highfields area and the services they used in the area, including those at Highfields Centre was conducted in the first two weeks of July 2010. In order to gain an accurate reflection of the area, it was decided to gather views from across the whole of the Highfields area and this was achieved by teams of the Highfields Community Association's (HCA) Future Jobs Fund staff (supervised by HCA's Management Team members) going from door to door in every part of the area. A total of 495 surveys were completed. Whilst the full survey findings have yet to be analysed, the following initial findings can be identified:

- The respondents' ages ranged from Under 13 to 76 plus, with the majority of respondents being in the 26 -40 age group (29%) and 41 - 60 age group (28%)
- 16% of the respondents were from the 20 - 25 age group, 12% from the 13 - 19s, 10% from the 61 - 75s, 3% from the over 75s and 2% from the Under 13s
- The respondents' gender was equally divided between males (50%) and females (50%)
- 85% of the respondents lived in the Highfields area, with 5% in Evington/Crown Hills, 2.5% in St Matthews and 1.5% in Belgrave - 6% lived in other parts of the City, with 3 respondents living in Oadby, Wigston and Countesthorpe
- 18% of the respondents were in full time employment and 10% in part time employment
- 15% of the respondents were in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance and 14% in receipt of other benefits
- 16% of the respondents were in full time education and 9% were caring for their children
- The ethnic origin of the respondents was 55% Indian, 8% Pakistani, 8% African Caribbean, 7% African, 6% Bangladeshi, 6% English, with 2% each from the Dual Heritage, Other White and Middle Eastern communities
- 21% of the respondents had lived in the Highfields area for more than 25 years, 18% for 16 - 25 years, 17% for 6 -10 years, 14% for 11 - 15 years, 12% for 2 - 5 years, 4% for less than a year and 14% of the respondents did not live in the Highfields area
- The predominant reason for living in the Highfields area was family links (31%), followed by links to friends (14%), multi-cultural area (10%), friendly area (7%), safe area (7%) and it's near the city centre (6%) - 11% stated they had no choice but this includes those who were born in this area!

HCA INPUT AT DTA CONFERENCE



At the Development Trusts Association (DTA) national symposium held on 28th June 2010, Priya was invited to give his input on the subject of Can a community organisation play a bigger role to achieve 'more for less' in the current climate.

HIGHFIELDS CENTRE ADVISE SESSIONS

The Highfields Centre adviser, Yasmin Nathani aims to provide free, confidential and independent advice to the local communities to access their right/entitlements. It is Accredited by the Community Legal Services Commission, Matrix and Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner.

Yasmin is able to advise on Benefits, Housing, Immigration/Nationality, Debt, Education and General Advice. She is available by appointment only on Monday and Wednesday afternoons 12:30pm - 3:30pm and is available for drop-in sessions on Tuesday and Thursday 9:30am - 12:30pm. Please note that the first 10 people will be seen for all drop-in sessions only - tickets can be collected half an hour before the session and if you choose to leave the building, you will have to wait until the end of the session before you will be seen.

