



Do you know the Truth About Youth?

Young people from around Birmingham will be attending ‘The Big Debate’ next week to mark the launch of Truth About Youth; a 2-year media campaign focusing on challenging the negative stereotypes of young people. The campaign is being run by Award Winning youth empowerment charity Envision in partnership with The Co-operative Foundation.

The Big Debate will take place at Aston Villa Football Stadium on Thursday 12th November and features a fantastic panel line up including Guardian journalist Rowenna Davis, Alun Thorne from the Birmingham Post, video journalist Ben Godfrey from Midlands Today, Local Councillors Paulette Hamilton (Lab) and Reg Corns (Con) as well as representatives from West Midlands Police and the University of Birmingham.

The event aims to create an opportunity for young people to voice their thoughts and opinions about issues that are important to them and thereby challenge the stereotypes that suggest young people are apathetic and disinterested.

Local business and community leaders will also be participating in the debate and are very interested to hear what the young people have to say.

Lizzie Hatchman, Regional Youth Project Manager from National Trust, said, “As a conservation charity, we are learning that young people are vital to the development, delivery and future of our work in heritage and environmental issues. Through volunteering and work experience, young people have shown us that they are passionate about having a voice on issues such as, the care of green spaces for the benefit of all. The skills, energy and commitment that young people can bring to a project are very special and should be highly valued”

Food and refreshments will be served after the debate providing both young people and adults a special opportunity to meet and chat about what they’ve heard and learnt in the debate. This networking element of the event is all about encouraging young people and adults to actively engage with each other on important issues such as sustainability, community cohesion, social justice and climate change.

The Big Debate is just the first of many other events, activities and programmes that will give a voice to the views and opinions of the young people of Birmingham. Over the course of the 2 year campaign the Truth About Youth will aim to support over 700 young people to deal positively with the challenge of growing up in a culture which has a widespread negative perception of youth.

Andrew Ridge, Envision Programme Manager and Project Coordinator for the Truth About Youth Campaign, said, “This is a fantastic opportunity for the young people of Birmingham to really get their voice heard. Over the last 10 years Envision has worked with thousands of young people across the country, empowering them to make real differences to their communities. The Truth About Youth campaign is about telling the world what young

Envision Birmingham, Unit 313 Scott House, Custard Factory, Gibb Street, Birmingham B9 4AA

www.envision.org.uk

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people think as well as promoting the successes, achievements and contributions that young people make every day.”

- Ends -

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For more information on Envision go www.envision.org.uk

Event Details:

Where: Aston Villa Football Club

When: Thursday 12th November 2009, 3.00pm to 5.30pm

Itinerary: The Big Debate: Launch of the Truth About Youth Campaign

3.00 to 3.30: Introductions and Opening Remarks

Sarah Robinson, The Co-operative Foundation Manager

Nick Nielsen, Director of Envision

3.40 to 4.30: Truth about Youth Debate

Panel Members:

- Alun Thorne - Head of Business, Birmingham Post
- Rowenna Davis - Journalist, The Guardian & Envision Grad Advisory Panel
- Ben Godfrey - Video Journalist, Midlands Today
- Cllr Paulette Hamilton – (Handsworth Wood), Birmingham City Council
- Cllr Reg Corns – (Northfields), Birmingham City Council
- University of Birmingham Representative - Confirmed, TBA
- Birmingham Police Representative - Confirmed, TBA

4.30 to 5.30: Networking - Food and Refreshments

Press are welcome to attend all or part of the event – RSVP to emmab@envision.org.uk.

There will be plenty of **fantastic opportunities for photos** throughout the event.

Notes to editors:

- Envision provides young people with the opportunity to make a difference. The charity was established in 2000 by four young people who wanted to challenge the stereotype that young people are apathetic and disengaged.
- Today Envision supports 16-19 year olds from 100 schools and colleges in Greater London, Birmingham and Leeds, helping over 3000 young people every year to design their own local community projects tackling issues ranging from street crime to climate change.
- The Truth About Youth campaign aims to support over 700 young people over the course of 2-years to deal positively with the challenge of growing up in a culture which has a widespread negative perception of youth, and;
 - Increase levels of interaction between young people and adults to raise mutual understanding and develop projects in which they all have an interest and for those projects to have a lasting benefit
 - Engage young people to identify and set up their own cooperative projects which address their needs and demonstrate young people’s value to society

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