

NEWS RELEASE:

22 March 2010



Priesthorpe Students to Premiere Documentary on Racism

Over the last six months students from Priesthorpe School in Leeds have been working to produce a documentary that explores the issue of racism and community cohesion in the Leeds and Bradford area. Their project will come to fruition this month with the premiere showing of their documentary at 9.00am on Monday 29th of March.

With the recent electoral success of the BNP in West Yorkshire the students were concerned about the relations between different communities in the Leeds Bradford area. In particular, they were worried about the still raw memories of the Bradford riots resurfacing and wanted to investigate how local residents felt about this.

With the support of youth empowerment charity Envision the students have spent the last academic year exploring the subject of community cohesion and the issues that can lead to racial tension. The school programme run by Envision supports young people to develop community projects that address issues that they have identified as important to them. The Priesthorpe students decided to make a documentary in the hope that it will encourage greater cultural understanding and help improve community relations.

The team's documentary project has already won significant support from local community and business leaders when they presented their idea at Pitch 4 Change – a Dragon's Den style event run also run by Envision. The panel of 'dragons' were so impressed with their presentation that they awarded the team the full £500 they requested and pledged to support them in kind. Jeremy Piercy of national retail chain Shared Earth offered to mentor the team and Harvey Ascott of Leeds Bridge offered production support.

Since then the team have been working hard conducting interviews, shooting and editing footage, and promoting their finished product.

Priesthorpe student, Bethany McDonnell, said, "Through the making of this documentary I've learnt how to be part of a team and how everyone should be treated equally, but aren't a lot of the time! However, we can all try to make a difference."

Envision Coordinator, Robbie Packer, said, "It's been a pleasure working with Priesthorpe students this year getting to the bottom of such a complex issue as racism and expressing a young person's take on it through this documentary, I'm really looking forward to the finished product on Monday."

Envision Leeds, Hillside, Beeston Road, Leeds, LS11 8ND
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www.envision.org.uk

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Envision volunteer, Ruth Briedenbach Roe, said “Working with the team this year has been a pleasure and their passion for their documentary has given me a unique perspective into racism and community cohesion in the Leeds Bradford Area”

The premiere will be attended by young people from the local area, representatives of the teaching staff, Councillor Mohammed Rafique, Paula Sutcliffe of Stop Hate UK and Harvey Ascott of Leeds Bridge.

-Ends-

For further information please contact:

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Event Details:

Where: Priesthorpe School, Priesthorpe Lane, Farsley, Pudsey, LEEDS, LS28 5SG

When: Monday 29th March

Time: 9:00 – 9:30

Attending: 30 young people from the local area and representatives of the teaching staff as well as Councillor Mohammed Rafique, Paula Sutcliffe of Stop Hate UK and Harvey Ascott of Leeds Bridge.

The team cordially invite members of the press. If you would like to attend please contact Robbie Packer at robbie@envision.org.uk or 0113 397 6445

Notes to Editor:

- Envision was founded by four young people in June 2000 as a response to the environmental and social issues facing British society in the 21st Century.
- Today Envision supports teams of 16-19 year olds from 130 schools and colleges in Birmingham, Leeds and London, helping over 2000 young people every year to design their own **local community projects** tackling issues ranging from street crime to climate change. The experience builds **confidence, aspirations and skills** inspiring the next generation of young community leaders.
- Priesthorpe is a popular and over-subscribed community Specialist Sports College of 1200 students, 160 of whom are in the Sixth Form. The school is situated in LS28 close to the boundary between Leeds and Bradford. Most of our students come from Farsley, Stanningley, Pudsey and Calverley, with a further 20% from Bradford.

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