

Birmingham's Young People Pitch 4 Change!

On Thursday 10th December, five teams of young people from Birmingham pitched their ideas to improve their local community to a panel of business people at Envisions **Pitch 4 Change**. The five teams were shortlisted from over 70 school teams taking part in Envisions schools and colleges active citizenship programme.

Pitch 4 Change is a 'Dragons Den' style event that provides young people with the opportunity to pitch for up to £500 to help them deliver their own community projects. The Teams have been planning and developing their projects during weekly sessions at their school or college as part of the Envision Schools Programme. The five teams that took part were selected for their inspiring ideas and original approach for tackling local issues and concerns in their schools and neighbourhoods.

In the lead up to the event, the teams visited local businesses including IAMCO, Severn Trent Water, BEST City Council and Packt Publishing to receive mentoring on how best to pitch their projects to the 'Dragons', as well as advice on how to fine tune their projects particularly in areas such as budgeting and marketing. The day of the event saw the five teams present their ideas to a panel of local business leaders who had the final say on how much money each project was to be awarded.

The 'Dragons' were; Simon Cocks, Director of Waster Services for Severn Trent Water, Jackie Ridge, Managing Director of Preston UK, Stephen Haselden, MD of Ozone Bus, Katie Smith, Member of the Cooperative Group and Marketing Manager for Packt Publishing, Damian Carvill.

The student teams experienced varying levels of success and received some excellent feedback from the Dragons, as well as pledges of continuing support from the panel. The schools and college taking part were;

- **Baverstock School**

Baverstock pitched for £500 to organise a cleanup of their school and local area with the support from students and people from the local community. The event would also include live music, refreshments with the overall aim of bringing the community together to share responsibility of looking after the area. The dragons loved the idea and awarded the team **£450**.

- **King Edwards VI Camp Hill Girls**

The team at Camp Hill wanted to show the local community the importance of saving water by organising an event and getting people from the community to sign pledges stating that they would reduce their water consumption. The

Dragons were willing to provide **£250** for a pilot run of the event and would then release a further **£250** for a follow up event.

- **King Edwards VI Handsworth**

This team pitched their idea to create a memorial garden within their school grounds to commemorate the young men and women who have served at war in the past decade. The Dragons were very impressed with the presentation and idea and awarded the team the full **£444** they asked for as well as pledging to put them in contact with a garden designer who currently has their own TV show.

- **Small Heath School**

The team at Small Heath are concerned with young people in their area getting involved in crime and pitched their idea to organise an event to bring the community closer together. The Dragons awarded the team **£100** to initially plan their event and would release a further **£250** once they had finalised their plans and secured the necessary external organisations to progress their idea.

- **Joseph Chamberlain College**

The team at JCC felt that society put too much pressure on people to look a certain way and therefore pitched for funds to put on a fashion show celebrating all body types. The Dragons commended their choice of topic and agreed to fund a pilot event with **£200**, releasing a further **£300** if they could demonstrate success.

Pitch 4 Change proved to be great day of fantastic pitches from very enthusiastic young people and saw the Dragons award an overall **£1,444 to the youth-led community projects** with a further £800 in the bank should the young people follow through with their inspiring ideas. Damian Carvill, Marketing Manager for Packt Publishing said of the students; "It was great to see them so engaged and passionate about issues that affect not just them, but the wider community."

The young people will now continue with their weekly Envision sessions at their schools and colleges, working to bring their projects ideas to fruition. This event has certainly shown there is a wealth of talented young people in Birmingham interested in making positive change and in becoming our future community leaders.

-ENDS -

Editors Notes:

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

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.

- Last year Pitch 4 Change awarded £10,000 to teams across London.
- Pitch 4 Change events were held in London, Leeds and Birmingham and awarded over £8,000 to 20 Envision School Teams.
- For further information about Pitch 4 Change and all the individual events happening around the country next week please go to www.envision.org.uk/businesses/pitch4change