

QUAD YOUTH FORUM MAKES A DIFFERENCE FOR BEN

The parent of a member of QUAD's Youth Forum has told QUAD, Derby's new centre for art and film, what a difference the group has made for her autistic son Ben.

The QUAD Youth Forum is an informal group for young people, which aims to nurture and empower through creativity. The group was set up as one of QUAD's commitments to working with the public, and particularly with young people.

Anne Booth, Ben's mother wrote in to QUAD outlining 'What QUAD Youth Forum Means For Ben and I' and the following text is in her words. "The Youth Forum, I think, has literally been the making of Ben. He was an isolated, but talented, boy who spent all his time at home, either messing around with a camera or on his X-Box. Because of his autism, he wanted to get out and about but was too scared of life outside the familiar world of home and school."

"When I saw the advert for youth members for QUAD I jumped at it. I was honest from the start about his autism, and the fact that although he is talented, he never stops talking and could drive you mad! You were very understanding and could see the potential in Ben from the start. He was so happy to show off his photo collection and felt really empowered after you left because he could see that he could be part of something new, exciting and enriching."

"The projects that you have been involved in have been varied, fun, and at times hard work. Ben has thrived in this atmosphere, and the highlight was when you all went up to Liverpool for the '*Portrait of a Nation*' (National Lotteries funded project). For anybody this was an amazing experience, but for Ben who had never stayed away from home with 'strangers' it was fabulous. I was so happy for all of you that it was a success."

"As the year has gone on, Ben's autism has blended into the background and his passion for photography and film making have taken over. He loves the group - they are all such lovely kids who he probably wouldn't otherwise have had the opportunity to mix with. He has now applied to Chesterfield College to do a media course in September because he has finally found his calling. He has also set up his own web-site. There's no stopping him now!"

"If you don't get any more funding it will be an absolute disaster for the current group and for groups to come. QUAD Derby is a fabulous place that will grow and grow and touch more people's lives." Anne Booth

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Ben Booth added "QUAD Youth Forum is great! I love being part of it. The group are really nice. I've learned loads and met loads of people. I love it."

Barbara Lambourne, QUAD Young People's Panel Co-ordinator, said "QUAD Youth Forum has been a great opportunity to bring together young people and create some truly inspiring work. The fact that their backgrounds are so varied has made that work all the more special."

The QUAD Youth Forum is currently seeking funding in order for it to continue beyond May 2009. For more information about the QUAD Youth Forum, please contact Barbara Lambourne, Co-ordinator of the QUAD Youth Forum, on tel: (01332) 285427.

Photographs by the QUAD Youth Forum are currently on display in the Derby Museum And Art Gallery as part of *FORMAT09. YOUNG FORMAT* can be seen until 5th April.

ENDS

QUAD is Derby's new centre for art and film, on the Market Place in Derby city centre. QUAD is a gallery, cinema, café bar and workshop that anyone can use.

QUAD is a partnership between Derby City Council, Arts Council England, EM Media, European Union, East Midlands Development Agency, Derby and Derbyshire Economic Partnership, Derby City Partnership and Derby Cityscape. See www.derbyquad.co.uk for more information.

For further information on this event, or any other issue relating to QUAD, please contact Kathy Frain on 01332 285422 (mobile: 0779441941) or email kathyf@derbyquad.co.uk