

## **WASP Youth Club**

WASP Youth Club is for 8-13 year olds living on the Whitehawk Estate in East Brighton, which is one of the most deprived areas in the country.

The youth club has 90 members and the majority of these children live in poverty and with parents who give them little time or positive attention as they are dealing with mental health, domestic violence, drug or alcohol issues and often a combination of these.

Some of the children have additional needs such as emotional/behavioural difficulties, learning difficulties and/or physical disabilities and some have caring responsibilities. All of this leads to the children suffering in terms of physical and mental health development, social opportunities and educational achievement and making the beginnings of long-term social exclusion. The Youth Club gives these children a real break where they can for a short time have some fun and forget their worries.

We provide a safe place with positive adult role models who have the time to really listen, get to know the members and so build relationships of trust and respect, something which is often lacking in their lives. We work hard to help these young people to learn practical and social skills which will help them to become more confident giving them higher self esteem and aspirations for their future. This trust we build often results in unsatisfactory situations at home being disclosed and so staff being able to support the children to address these, at a pace which is manageable to them.

Overall we work with the young people to break the cycle of the negative lifestyles which run through the generations of many of their families and to seek alternative ways of living their lives.

### **The main reasons the young people give for attending are:**

'I love coming here we always do loads and have such a good time. If didn't have this place to come to I would probably just hang around the estate, then you get a bad reputation and people think you will get into trouble – they are probably right'.

'It's somewhere safe to go which is good fun'.

'Somewhere I can talk to adults who really understand my problems and help me but don't tell me what to do'.

'Somewhere I can meet my friends and have a good time and learn things like cooking'.

'The only place my Mum will let me go because she trusts the people here and I can walk here on my own'



The Youth Club is seen as a great success by its members, funders, other agencies we work alongside, volunteers and staff, we have been particularly successful in engaging with children who have turned up saying they do not want to join but have hung around being disruptive, some of these children are now regular members and our biggest advocates.

Having a youth club for this age group is particularly vital as it covers the transition from primary to secondary school. This can be a particularly difficult time for many children as they change their friendship groups and have to fit into a whole new very daunting system which for these children is often quite a way from home. We can give consistency at this time which is often what makes the difference in these children coping with this move and integrating successfully into their new environment.

The youth club urgently needs funds to remain open after June 2011

Should the Youth Club close these children will have nowhere else to go as there is no similar provision in the area. Many of the children say they will simply hang around the estate as it is better than being at home. Others will not be allowed out as parents do not feel it is safe for them, thus leaving them at home isolated in often extremely unpleasant circumstances. At this time of increased unemployment and increased stress within families it is vital that we keep this service going.

### **Whitehawk is in the East Brighton Ward**

- 46.9% of children in East Brighton live in poverty this is in the top 1.7% of all wards nationally
- East Brighton has the highest number of reported domestic violence incidents in the city with 23.52 per 1,000 residents compared to the next highest area which is 19.14 per 1,000 residents
- 46.5% of all children and young people living in the East Brighton Ward live in households with 3 or more children.
- 70.5% of all children and young people living in the East Brighton Ward live in lone parent households

### **Youth Club Costs**

**We urgently need to raise £10,000 to keep the club open to the end of this year and we are seeking contributions or support to fundraise towards this**

