



Everyday Impact Award

Name of organisation or individual nominated

**SPACE Youth & Community Centre
(Bringing a heart to the community by working together)**

1. What were you trying to change? (maximum 200 words)

Help us understand the vision, aims and objectives

The biggest need in the area was to provide a place for our young people to meet and socialise. They were large numbers congregating in a shopping precinct in the town centre, at risk of causing anti-social behaviour. The town centre also lacked a central meeting place.

The local YMCA in partnership with 4 local churches created 'SPACE' in an empty shop unit in this precinct.

SPACE aims to be the 'Living Room on the High Street' – an accessible, free, safe place to be; a place where people are accepted, can belong, contribute and develop. SPACE aims to provide a range of free activities to meet the needs of the local community based around a drop-in café. It is a community project run by community for community. SPACE began one night a week as a drop-in youth club, offering refreshments and activities including comfy sofas, music and the Wii. 14 months later, the project now runs various programmes from Monday to Friday including a young parents toddler group, Listening service for those effected by loss, a beginners computer class, after school club, youth club and hosting other agencies, such as the Credit Union and Citizens Advice Bureau.

2. What did you do to make change happen? (maximum 200 words)

Tell us about what actions you took, who you worked with, what resources you had to use etc.

A Centre Manager and Youth Work Development Manager work together to manage teams of volunteers from the local churches and wider community to facilitate each session. Local businesses and council grants helped furnish the shop unit with good quality sofas and equipment, whilst donations, fundraising, corporate and community grants fund the project. We work closely with the police, PCSOs, drug and alcohol counsellors, and sexual health advisors in managing and addressing the issues around running the youth club.

SPACE is about identifying the gaps in local service provision - complimenting, not duplicating what's already out there. We work with

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the local secondary schools in identifying those young people at risk of falling into less favourable pastimes and signpost them to the drop-in after school club for 11-13yr olds.

SPACE also encourages the young people to take ownership of the project. and take a lead in budgeting and making club decisions. The recently elected youth committee have suggested a 'SPACE says NO to drugs!' event.

Creating a space for different people to come and spend time together provides a platform for new ideas to be generated; eg. a community gardening project, skateboarding competition, video diary.
Everyone has something to offer!

3. **What were your tangible results?** (maximum 200 words)

Outline what happened as a result of the work and the impact it had

5 days worth of activities

Over 50 volunteers

16 Partner organisations

12 Partner churches

~ 300 visitors per week

We have seen lives change before our eyes! Here are just a few!

Susan, 29, depressed – made redundant from admin 18months ago, volunteers 2 mornings a week, moves to after school club, discovers a liking for youth work, enrolls on a counselling course, recently offered part time youth worker job at SPACE.

Dave, 18 – on the street, on drugs...attends youth club, few months later appears clean shaven, found home in YMCA, enrolls on training programme, and drug counselling, part of youth committee.

Michael, 40, schizophrenic- used to wander around town on his own, finds SPACE a safe place just to be, gradually gains confidence and makes friends. Starts to mix with younger and older people, just celebrated his birthday with new friends.

Mary, 78 -dropped in for a cuppa after shopping, noticed leaflets, attended beginners computer course, given a laptop, now e-mailing grandchildren!

Recently approached by 2 councils to look at feasibility of setting up a SPACE in other towns!

This model of all key partners of community working together works – why not have a SPACE in EVERY town!

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