Greater Manchester Mayor Andy Burnham to attend charity MedEquip4Kids launch of schools mental health project

Tuesday 7 November, 2017

On Thursday 9th November children charity MedEquip4Kids (www.medequip4kids.org.uk) is holding an event to mark the launch of its new initiative, The Hummingbird Project – an eight-week course to improve young people's emotional wellbeing in schools across the North West. The event will take place from 5.45pm at the Virgin Money Lounge,98 King Street, Manchester M2 4WU.

The launch will start with an introduction from Metro Mayor of Greater Manchester Andy Burnham, followed by presentations from Ghazala Baig, (CEO, MedEquip4Kids) and Professor Jerome Carson (Professor of Psychology at the University of Bolton).

MedEquip4Kids is a children's healthcare charity based in Manchester with over 30 years experience of funding paediatric medical equipment, play and distraction facilities in hospitals, and other resources not available from limited NHS resources. The charity's work gives thousands of babies, children and young people every year an enhanced experience of medical care.

As a children's health charity, MedEquip4Kids passionately believes that young people's mental wellbeing is every bit as important as their physical health. Over the last three years, they have been funding resources such as books, toys, games and communication aids for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (known as CAMHS) across the UK. To date they've raised over £110,000 to deliver new equipment to 157 CAMHS teams across the UK.

It is very clear from recent media reports that record levels of young people are struggling with their mental health. Academic pressure, social media, bullying, poverty, and the lack of availability of professional support have all been named as contributing to the epidemic of poor mental health. Key figures in a young person's life, such as parents or teachers, can often spot when a young person is struggling, but may not know how best to help.

As a children's health charity, MedEquip4Kids wanted to take a more active role in helping to tackle the growing mental health crisis. The research they initially commissioned highlighted that schools are facing a serious shortage of resources and training to support the mental health needs of their pupils.

The new initiative will consist of a bespoke, evidence-based 8-week Emotional Wellbeing training course that will give young people the techniques and tools to become more emotionally resilient whilst also introducing them to the key concepts of Positive Psychology.

The workshops will be co-designed by MedEquip4Kids, psychologists at the University of Bolton and young people from across the North West who will provide their views on where they feel support is most needed. The sessions will be delivered by MedEquip4Kids' Project Co-ordinator and volunteers who have lived experience of mental health issues.

The project hopes to make a real, measurable difference to young people's emotional wellbeing, help young people and school staff to become more aware of the early warning signs, alleviate pressure on services, and reduce the stigma associated with mental illnesses.

To attend the launch, please confirm your attendance to MedEquip4Kids by calling 0161 798 1600 or email info@medequip4kids.org.uk by the end of Wednesday 8th November.

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