Letting your talents shine for the good

Tuesday 12 November, 2013

A budding creative from St Paul's in Bristol is urging young people to follow their dreams and not routes to crime.

Richie Royal, 25, found growing up without giving into the temptation of criminality hard. But he used his mother as inspiration for keeping on the straight and narrow and, today, uses his creative talents for good.

Now working with Fixers, a charity which supports young people to 'fix' the future, Richie is raising awareness of local opportunities that exist for young people which to help them discover their talents.

To raise awareness, Richie is creating a short film which follows the life of a fictional character that grows up on a troubled estate.

Richie said: "When I was growing up there were temptations in your face to do crime. I avoided the wrong route by trying to make my mum proud.

"I just use my talent. I started doing music, making videos and I decided to something different.

"My Fixers project is a short film about a young child growing up in the ghetto. He wants to start making money, goes down the bad route to make money and gets into trouble with the police."

To help with his film, Richie spoke to an ex-offender, Faisel Ghazghazi, who also grew up in St Paul's but found himself in and out of prison before a five year sentence made him change his ways.

He said: "I was in and out of prison on a regular basis for short sentences. I would always get out and then do the same thing every time.

"But in my last sentence I did just over five years and I decided to engage in projects they had to offer.

"I educated myself and I worked really hard to get what I have now and I am living a really good life today."

Community Safety Officer for the Avon and Somerset Constabulary, Inspector Paul Cox, feels the range of opportunities for young people has improved, but more should be done to encourage young people to stay away from crime.

He said: "St Paul's and Bristol in general have improved a lot in terms of opportunities for young people.

"But those temptations for young people are still out there and we need to really encourage them to make the right choices and take the right route in life."

Richie hopes more young people take advantage of the opportunities available to them; be it education or otherwise, to make the best of their lives.

He said: "My practical advice would be go to college, study what you like and just take all the advantages that you can take.

"Think about the future, think about the long-run, not the fast lane and remember to stay focused and stay positive."

Fixers is charity which supports young people across the UK to take action and change things for the better, addressing any issue they feel strongly about.

How each Fixer tackles their chosen issue is up to them – as long as they benefit someone else.

The award-winning Fixers project has already supported over 10,000 young people to have an authentic voice in their community.

Each Fixer is supported to create the resources they need - such as films, websites or print work - to make their chosen project a success.

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Now, thanks to a grant from the Big Lottery Fund, Fixers aims to work with a further 18,000 young people over the next three years.

Photo attached. Captions:
1. Fixer Richie Royal

For more information please contact Jatin Patel in the Fixers Communications Team by email jatin@fixers.org.uk or phone 01962 810970.

There are lots more stories about young people doing great things on the Fixers website, Twitter and Facebook pages:
www.fixers.org.uk
www.twitter.com/FixersUK
www.facebook.com/FixersUK

Notes to editors:

• Fixers started in England in 2008. Now with a £7.2 million grant from the Big Lottery Fund, Fixers is extending into Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland. To date, over 10,000 young people across the UK have become Fixers and created 1,100 projects.
• The Public Service Broadcasting Trust is a charity that brings together mainstream broadcasters, public and voluntary sector services, and viewers.
• The Big Lottery Fund (BIG), the largest distributor of National Lottery good cause funding, is responsible for giving out 40% of the money raised for good causes by the National Lottery.
• BIG is committed to bringing real improvements to communities and the lives of people most in need and has been rolling out grants to health, education, environment and charitable causes across the UK since June 2004. The Fund was formally established by Parliament on 1 December 2006.
• Since the National Lottery began in 1994, 28p from every pound spent by the public has gone to good causes. As a result, over £29 billion has now been raised and more than 383,000 grants awarded across arts, sport, heritage, charities, health, education and the environment.
• Margo Horsley, Chief Executive of Fixers says: “Fixers started in 2008 as just an idea… an idea given a voice by over 9,000 young people over the past five years. They have reached thousands of people with their work, on a national stage as well as in and around where they live. They choose the full array of social and health issues facing society today and set about making their mark. Fixers are always courageous and their ideas can be challenging and life-changing, not just for themselves.”
• Peter Ainsworth, Big Lottery Fund UK Chair, says: “The Big Lottery Fund is extremely happy to be supporting Fixers to engage with more young people to change things for the better. Thousands of public-spirited young people across the UK are campaigning to make improvements in their own communities. By providing a platform to highlight their voluntary work and many achievements, Fixers demonstrates the positive contribution thousands of committed young people are making at a local level and challenges negative stereotypes.”

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