Nottingham Trent restorative justice Fix

Monday 8 July, 2013

Two students from Nottingham Trent University are campaigning to show how restorative justice can help victims of crime find closure and discourage young people from re-offending.

Fixers Becca Ellison, 23, and Bryony Peters, 24, want to raise awareness of the process, which brings victims of crime and offenders together, so that both groups can communicate and find a positive way forward.

“It has been shown that if a victim and young offender come together, it helps with re-offending rates for the young person and it also helps the victims with post-traumatic stress,” says Becca.

“I believe the main problem with restorative justice in this country is the way they contact the victims.

“The rates are showing victims aren’t attending. They’re not being contacted properly; they’re being contacted by a letter.

“It’s not personal enough; if I got a letter like that I’d put it in the bin.”

With support from Fixers, the charity which supports young people to ‘fix the future’, Becca and Bryony are creating a film that can be sent to victims encouraging them to take part.

Kelvin Morris, a former offender, says: “I’ve never committed a crime since taking part in the restorative justice process.

“There are a few stories where the victims have told me about themselves, what happened to them after I committed burglary on their house, that have stuck with me for a long time. If I ever thought of re-offending, their stories certainly stopped me.”

Ann Stuart, a burglary victim has found closure through the restorative justice process.

“I do feel that it definitely gives you closure when you meet the defendant and you can ask them whatever you want,” she says.

“You can tell them exactly what you have been through and how you feel. And then you hear their side of the story.

“I think it can help both of you, otherwise you’re forever worrying – why did it happen, what did I do wrong, when’s it going to happen again?”

Becca and Bryony have just completed their final year of Nottingham Trent University, where they are studying Youth Justice. They hope that their Fixers film will show victims the process of a restorative justice meeting and encourage more people to take it up.

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 8,400 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.

Now, thanks to a grant from the Big Lottery Fund, Fixers aims to work with a further 20,000 young people over the next three years.

Fixers is a trademark of the Public Service Broadcasting Trust (PSBT).

“Fixers started in 2008 as just an idea… an idea given a voice by over 8,400 young people over the past five years,” says Margo Horsley, Chief Executive of PSBT.

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“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, said: “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.”

Photo attached. Captions:
1. Becca Ellison.
2. Bryony Peters.
3. Becca and Bryony.
4. Mugging Reconstruction.

For images, interviews or more information, please contact Sue Meaden in the Fixers Communications Team by email sue@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:
http://www.fixers.org.uk
http://www.twitter.com/FixersUK
http://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 8,400 young people across the UK have become Fixers and created 900 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.

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