Urban Synergy wins top prize at London's New Year's Day Parade for Lewisham

Monday 6 January, 2025

Urban Synergy, Lewisham's Mayor's chosen charity for 2024/25, has brought home **first prize** from the **London New Year's Day Parade (LNYDP)**, marking the first win for Lewisham since 1998. Despite relentless rain, the team's float—*"A Brighter Tomorrow: Powered by Youth and Innovation"*—impressed judges and spectators alike, showcasing the creativity, talent, and community spirit of Lewisham's young people.

The parade, watched by millions around the world, saw the social mobility charity Urban Synergy's vibrant float designed by independent and local artists from **Goldsmiths University** and brought to life by **Mahogany Carnival Arts**, **Lewisham Youth Theatre**, local community groups, and **SQS**, who generously provided the parade lorry.

The win comes with a significant prize, which will go directly towards **supporting Urban Synergy's mission to help 50,000 young people by 2027** through mentorship, skills development, and work experience programmes.

Leila Thomas (she/her), CEO & Founder of Urban Synergy, said:
"Winning this prestigious prize is an incredible way to kick off the year. Despite the pouring rain, our young people, artists, and community partners showed their resilience and determination. This win is not just for Urban Synergy, but for Lewisham and young people in urban areas as a whole. We're excited to use this prize to create more opportunities for people aged 9-24 years of age to reach their full potential."

Proposed Quotes:

- **Brenda Dacres (she/her), Mayor of Lewisham**:
  "This win is a triumph for Lewisham! It's a reflection of our borough's creativity, resilience, and community spirit. Urban Synergy has done us proud, and I'm thrilled that this prize will help them continue their vital work with our young people."

- **Victoria Shaskan (she/her), CEO of** Lewisham Youth Theatre:
  "Lewisham Youth Theatre is a charity that raises young people's ambitions and empowers their voices through creativity. We were thrilled for our young performers to lead the parade entry - like bursts of sunshine on a wet day - bringing their energy and passion to help Lewisham win.

  "The young performers said, 'We loved interacting with the audiences - waving and giving high fives. Even though it was cold and wet, seeing the audience's eyes light up when we shouted Happy New Year made it worth it."

The Urban Synergy float celebrated a brighter future powered by youth, featuring a bold design and performances that highlighted innovation and ambition. The parade's organisers praised the float for its energy and creativity, standing out even in challenging weather conditions.

Thank you to everyone involved—from the artists and dancers to local supporters and sponsors, including **SQS**, **Lewisham Youth Theatre**, and **Goldsmiths University** and the artists Morgan Tucker Yumeng Kuai Alma Tischlerwood and Saskia Olde Wolbers. Our thanks also to Ces Serventi of Inkwood Studios and young broadcaster of the Been There Done That Chat podcast Garima Ojha for helping us to capture the excitement of the day.

Together, we've started the year on a high note for Lewisham's young people.

Donate to Urban Synergy
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About Urban Synergy

Urban Synergy is a mentoring charity that has supported over 33,000 young people from underrepresented communities, equipping them with the skills, confidence, and opportunities to achieve their full potential.

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About Lewisham Council

Lewisham is a vibrant and culturally diverse borough. This is reflected in all aspects of daily life, from the response to the pandemic where the community rallied to support our most vulnerable residents, to the 170 languages spoken in our homes, schools and businesses. We have a rich history of welcoming people from all over the world and are proud to be recognised as the UK's first Borough of Sanctuary, for our work in championing the rights of refugees and migrants.

As we plan ahead, we are working towards a fairer, greener, healthier and more economically sound future for all in Lewisham. This means continuing our efforts to tackle climate change for generations to come; ensuring that good health and wellbeing is equally accessible to everyone; and safeguarding local jobs and upskilling residents with tools they need to succeed. Building on the community spirit and activism that has helped us through the pandemic, we are committed to creating a Future Lewisham we can all have a part in.

About the float

Lewisham's float spotlit innovation and ambition for young people in Lewisham and urban areas, drawing on cutting-edge visuals and high energy performances, that reflect Urban Synergy's mission to empower young people from diverse backgrounds in innovative ways, to build career inspirations and aspirations for their futures. The float celebrates Urban Synergy's bold vision for a brighter future, using the imagery of science, environment, innovation and resilience within geometric forms.

A collaboration between local groups, the float features young people and multi-generational performers from across the borough including; mentees and mentors from Urban Synergy, Lewisham Young Mayor's team and Lewisham Youth Theatre.

Showcasing stratospheric costumes and an explosion of colour with geometric patterns on organic forms, the float brings all communities together with a youthful, foot stamping music compilation and dancing to get everyone grooving. The float will create an immersive experience, merging traditional parade excitement with a forward-looking twist.

Made and designed by local artists and students, the colourful float vehicle features the logo of Lewisham council, elevated with multicultural patterns, to illustrate the diverse, youthful population of Lewisham and the values of inclusion and harmony. Through the eyes of a child, the playful colourful frame, represents our global inter-connectivity across cultures in Lewisham. Molecule Man made from recycled local elements, represents uniqueness in everyone, influencing not only those in the borough but extending universally.

Designed by **Goldsmiths University** and independent artists Morgan Tucker Yumeng Kuai Alma Tischlerwood and Saskia Olde Wolbers from an overall brief developed by branding expert Rochelle Bond. Thanks go to our brilliant drivers on the day Will and Dean, and to our sound wizards Daniel Hibbert and Richard Carter - learn more at instagram #tastingnoteslive.

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