

YMCA Go West for sleep-out fundraiser

Friday 30 December, 2016

LOCAL youth charity YMCA Humber has long been synonymous with the Village People's hit 1978 song Y.M.C.A but it's another one of the group's disco hits, 'Go West' that is more apt as the organisation launches its Sleep Easy fundraiser for 2017.

The mass homelessness awareness events returns to Grimsby's Freshney Place Shopping Centre Car Park on Friday 3 February from 6pm until 6am but this time fundraisers will take to their cardboard boxes and sleeping bags in the centre's West Car Park at the Deansgate end of the town.

It is the fourth year running that Freshney Place Shopping Centre has hosted the event, which began in 2011 and has raised over £125,000 for YMCA and other homeless charities so far.

Over 80 people took part in the 2016 version of the event, which raised over £10,000 for YMCA Humber – the funds being spent on improving the current bathrooms at the charity's Peaks Lane Housing Project in Grimsby, home to 72 vulnerable young people.

Jonathan Byrne is YMCA Humber's Events and Marketing Lead and he is taking part in his ninth Sleep Easy event in total. He is hopeful that the public and local businesses will get behind the fundraiser.

He said: "The support for Sleep Easy has been incredible over the past six years but regrettably the problem of youth homelessness is one that is worsening, as the latest statistics show.

"Rising rents, a lack of affordable housing and welfare support cuts mean that it is increasingly harder for young people to thrive in independent living.

"For the first time, figures show a distinction between roof-lessness and homelessness – we house over 100 young people each night of the year, without places like YMCA, they would have nowhere else to live.

"So we are once again asking the local community and local businesses to spend one night sleeping rough...so others don't have to.

"Although we will have some cover on that February evening, it will still be a cold night and we are asking if you can give up one night's worth of comfort to raise funds for young people who need our support, especially at this time of year.

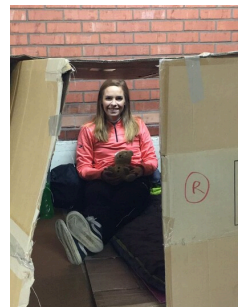
Jonathan added: "We would like to once again Freshney Place for all their support with Sleep Easy.

"As a YMCA, it is our dream to one day be able to build a multipurpose campus-style project that provides all the opportunities that young people need to belong, contribute and thrive in their local community, with the support of the public and businesses through events like Sleep Easy, we can turn that dream into reality."

Registration for Sleep Easy is open now, with early bird registration of £5 per person (under-18s free) available until Friday 6 January (registration is £10 per person, under-18s free after that).

Visit www.sleep-easy.co.uk to sign up for Sleep Easy today and for further information call Jonathan Byrne on 01472 359 621 or email sleepeasy@ymca-humber.com.

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