

Forward Planner



NoV022/Jan05

MPs to hear passionate young people's tales of volunteering

Event: **Volunteering Select Committee**

Date: **Wednesday 2 February 2005**

Time: **2pm – 3.30pm**

Place: **Atlee Suite, Portcullis House, London**

Teenagers from around the country will challenge MPs to understand the benefits – and problems – of young volunteers at a Select Committee event to be held in London next week.

Six young members of the British Youth Council (BYC) will explain how volunteering can bring communities together and improve career prospects in an event which launches Youth and Children month as part of The Year of the Volunteer.

Daniel Wood, British Youth Council Chair, said the event was an ideal setting for young people to educate parliamentarians and policy makers on the realities and benefits of volunteering.

“BYC believes that young people as empowered citizens can really make a positive contribution to society. Many young people already make a difference to their community by volunteering. Whilst many studies mention the many benefits of volunteering, young people at our event will be able to tell the tale of how they personally have benefited from it directly to key decision-makers. How they have put the words and thoughts of others into action, by acting on their passion,” he said.

“Our event will showcase the diverse volunteering activities young people participate in, highlighting their commitment to being active, engaged citizens in their local community.”

The Select Committee event, which takes place on Wednesday 2 February in London, features a panel including four MPs and Radio Five Live presenter Guy Ruddle. Speakers include an 18-year-old student who has volunteered with various organisations including Childline and the Red Cross speaking about career prospects for volunteers, and three members of the Muslim Youth Helpline discussing personal development.

Stephen Twigg, one of BYC's Honorary Presidents, added his support to the event: “Every day young people across the UK are making a difference to people's lives by donating their time and effort. The Year of the Volunteer, including this month dedicated to young people, is a great way to recognise their hard work and to say thank you. We also hope it will encourage more young people to get involved whether it's through youth-led organisations like the British Youth Council or simply by helping out in their local community for a few hours a week. The Russell Commission's forthcoming report on volunteering will also look at more ways of engaging young people, getting them to turn their passion into action!”

BYC will also be initiating a policy consultation on children and young people's volunteering, through the ePolitix website. This will provide an opportunity for UK parliamentarians, voluntary and commercial sector organisations to participate in an online event exploring the merits of children and young people's volunteering.



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CSV creates opportunities for people to take an active part in the life of their community.

CSV is a registered charity no. 291222 and is a company limited by guarantee registered in England under no. 1435877.

Speakers will include:

Martin Jermyn, 18

Martin is a young, enthusiastic and passionate individual; he has worked alongside groups of students visiting a local elderly day care centre and assisted with the planning and organisation of various social events for those attending the day care centre. As Head Boy of the Greensward College, Hockley, Essex, Martin had the opportunity to work closely with other students and the wider community on various voluntary schemes and recently joined the ChildLine Young People's Advisory Group. He was awarded the Princess Diana Memorial Award for Young People in 2004 and now having embarked on studies at the University of Nottingham has got involved with the Red Cross and will shortly be acting as a volunteer on a holiday programme for disadvantaged children.

Naja Omergie, 18 and Misha Badr-Safdari, 17

Naja and Misha are founder members of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Youth Forum. They play a key role within the forum in educating their peers, Youth Support and Development staff and heads of department on the rights of young people. Both are also key members of consultancy groups who services regularly contact in order to get young peoples' perspectives on service delivery issues. They have also been involved with various interview panels and have had their say on final decisions regarding the employment of staff.

Shahida Mohamedali, 17

Shahida joined the Muslim Youth Helpline (MYH, based in north-west London) in April 2004 as a volunteer Helpline worker and is trained to respond to client enquiries via telephone, email and when the occasion arises, conduct face-to-face visits with clients. Shahida is one of the youngest Helpline worker volunteers.

Amina Al-Yasin, 17

Amina volunteered on the MYH in July 2004 to work on www.muslimyouth.net. She is currently Editor of the Citizenship and Identity channel on the site. Amina manages a team of two volunteer writers.

Abbas Premji, 19

Abbas has been involved with the MYH for two years in a number of different capacities. He is currently engaged as a photographer for the audio visual team on muslimyouth.net and has recently featured on a rap produced for the site.

Other speakers include Stephen Ferguson (16), Kent Youth Assembly and a group of young people from the Genesis Project about school inclusion based in South London.

Committee Members:

Derek Twine - *Chief Executive, The Scout Association*

Guy Ruddle - *BBC Radio Five Live presenter*

Ashley Sweetland - *Member of the Young People's Advisory Group, Russell Commission*

Kathleen Cronin – *Chief Executive, British Youth Council*

Hilton Dawson, MP for Lancaster and Wyre – *Co-chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Children, Winner of the Children and Youth Champion Award 2004 by ePolitix.com*

Matthew Green, MP for Ludlow - *Honorary President of the British Youth Council,*

Vice-Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Youth Affairs

Lorna Fitzsimons, MP for Rochdale – *Treasurer All Party Parliamentary Group on Youth Affairs*

George Osborne, MP for Tatton – *Honorary President of the British Youth Council and youngest Conservative MP*

The Year of the Volunteer is being coordinated by CSV and the Volunteering England consortium and has backing from the Home Office.

Event details:

Volunteering Select Committee Event

Date: Wednesday 2 February 2005

Time: 2pm – 3.30pm

Place: Atlee Suite, Portcullis House, London

Please contact us for an invitation

ENDS

To attend or for further information, please contact Jules Mason at BYC on 020 7785 6456. At CSV contact Chris Pitt, Year of the Volunteer Press Officer on 0207 812 0036 or cpitt@csv.org.uk or Martin Walford 0207 812 0033, mwalford@csv.org.uk

Notes for editors:

1. The British Youth Council is a charity run by young people for young people. As the national youth council for young people aged under 25, we represent and involve a unique range of young people from over 180 organisations and a network of over 450 youth councils across the UK.
2. Year of the Volunteer 2005 is owned by volunteers, led by a partnership between Community Service Volunteers (CSV) and the Volunteering England Consortium, and supported by the Home Office.
3. The Volunteering England Consortium consists of Volunteering England, TimeBank, do-it, The Media Trust, Bitc and Youth Action Network.
4. To find out more about events and activities during the Year of the Volunteer 2005, please visit the official website at www.yearofthevolunteer.org and watch The Community Channel 24 hours a day on Sky 585 and Telewest 233. It's also on ntl 14 and from 6-9am on Freeview 46. Alternatively, contact the CSV Action Desk at your local BBC radio station.