

## Norwood's stars of track and field shine at Young People's Focus Group sports day

21 August 2009

Norwood's Leonard Sainer Children & Family Centre in Barkingside was a hive of activity this week as it played host to a sports day organised by its innovative Young People's Focus Group (YPPFG).

More than 40 children and young people took part in a range of activities, including football, crazy golf, short tennis, cricket, basketball and athletics, during the event on Tuesday. The entire day, from the sporting activities on offer to the choice of food at lunchtime, was planned by eight members of the YPPFG.

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The YPPFG was founded in 2005 with the aim of giving children and young people with learning disabilities the opportunity to express their opinions and make their own decisions. The group's discussions are then fed back to Norwood's management to make sure that the services are relevant to them.

Nine-year-old Leah, a member of the YPPFG committee, said: "We held two meetings. First of all we decided what to do. Then we decided what sports we would offer, and the sorts of food. We took suggestions from our friends and then voted on them.

Leah, who was given the task of formally welcoming participants at the beginning of the day, added: "I'm very happy with today. You feel like you are helping." The other members of the committee were Michael, Ella, Michael, Elisa, Kojo, Stephanie and James.

The sports day was open to members of Unity, which is Norwood's recreational service for children and young people with learning disabilities, and Buckets and Spades, the Charity's respite care service. At the end of the day, each of the participants received a medal in recognition of their efforts.

Sonia Muscovitch, Norwood's Development Manager in Redbridge, said: "This sports day shows exactly why the Young People's Focus Group is such a valuable initiative. The YPPFG committee worked very hard in planning this event for their peers, and made sure that everyone had a good time. The day was a great success from start to finish and I'd like to thank them for all their hard work, which paid off on the day."

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