



# Whalley Range Youth Opportunities Association

Charity No. 512666

Donations  
welcome

# WRYOA is 30!

1981	1991	2001
1982	1992	2002
1983	1993	2003
1984	1994	2004
1985	1995	2005
1986	1996	2006
1987	1997	2007
1988	1998	2008
1989	1999	2009
1990	2000	2010
1991	2001	2011
1992	2002	2012

Interviews • Photos • Art  
Stories • Activities

30th Anniversary Magazine  
Made by WHIZ

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The ethos of WRYOA has always been about **developing the capacity of local people**, and so providing activities that meet the needs and interests of our diverse community through informal education and leisure activities. In addition to our team of staff and volunteers past and present, we have a volunteer **Management Committee** consisting of local people who have a good knowledge of the area and can share their expertise with us (and vice versa of course), and representatives of young people involved in the project.

For this reason we have never merged with larger organisations who might have helped us keep going but who might not have shared our local focus.

We have also wanted to encourage local



## How can I get involved?

Contact Alison, Project Manager:

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[www.facebook.com/WRYOA](http://www.facebook.com/WRYOA)

people to be involved in the work of the organisation, and have encouraged people of all ages to be volunteers, and then if possible paid staff.

This progression can be seen with our present staff who all started as local volunteers, (and several as students on placement with us from MMU). For this reason many members of the MC, staff and young people have stayed with us for a very long time.

To help the development of the association we have worked in partnership with a range of local, regional and national organisations (e.g. **Take Part**) and been keen to widen our horizons by hosting international visitors, students on placement and researchers who have been keen to work with us. The relationship with **Manchester Metropolitan University** provides us with trainee **Youth and Community Workers** on placement each year, as well as staff training and supervision, and involvement with partnership research and training activities where WRYOA staff have contributed to MMU courses and student recruitment.

Locally our collaboration with local schools, and other local organisations, and particularly the **Whalley Range Forum** has led to the development of the **Celebrate Festival** which held its 15<sup>th</sup> festival day in May 2012. This is a volunteer led festival to celebrate the

diversity and talent of our community as well as sharing information and having fun.

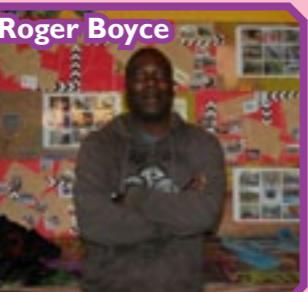
The festival reflects our interest in **art**, **music** and **creativity**; for example, this has been used as a medium for work around **drugs awareness** where the young people made a film, and booklet, and where **peace** was the theme for the production of a poetry book. Our DJ-ing and MC-ing nights were legendary!

We also use **cookery** as away way of providing learning as well as the social and conversational benefits of eating together. We produced the published '**Food4us**' book, and as a result a team of young people took part in **Ready Steady Cook!**

The stories and pictures you will see in this book reflect some of the work of our group, which from its origins as the **Free Range Project** has been running for almost 35 years, and hopefully shares with you the pride we feel in contribution to our community.

We are trying to be more self-sustaining, in difficult economic times so that we can continue our work for another 30 years. **If you would like to be involved**, as a volunteer, contribute your time and interests, or make a donation (e.g. through a regular donation) we would be very pleased to hear from you.

# Editorial



This magazine was produced at the Whiz Youth Project by the young people, Phil Reed and Roger Boyce, with Alison Chisolm, Michael Dunn, Fozia, Rakie and Dinah. We would like to thank all the people who made this magazine possible, including Carol Packham. There are too many to name them all!

Photography by Alison Chisholm, Lee Fullwood, Anthony Morris, Phil Reed, Chris Ricard, former WRYOA staff, volunteers and young people, and many others. Please accept our sincerest apologies if your name is missing.

# About this magazine



Making a time line



Celebrate Festival



Designing a peace banner

**Whalley Range Youth Opportunities Association (WRYOA)** was registered as a charity in 1982, making it 30 years old this year. We've decided to create a magazine about the history of the group and its projects to mark this anniversary.

Our voluntary group started in October 1981 as a result of the disturbances by local young people who had left many shops in Moss Side and Whalley Range damaged. Local traders on Withington Road were approached by workers and volunteers from the Free Range Project (FRP) that was based on Withington Road (103) and worked with local young people. The traders agreed to start an association through which they would make regular contributions for activities for young people in the area. The original committee was made up of local traders (the milk man, the treasurer, the owner of the Simpson Hotel, the chair and nine traders were regularly involved in meetings and making donations) and many local young people who were involved with the FRP.

The funding from the traders paid for a football strip and activities such as coach trips and other outings. Some of the traders became active volunteers such as the publican at the Caught on the Hop (now the

site of the doctors' surgery). The young people knew that a working relationship was being built with the local traders and that we were encouraging discussion rather than recriminations and aggression on both sides.

**In 1982 the Association became a registered charity.**

For several years WRYOA became dormant as the members moved out of the area, and some of the work was taken on by the Free Range Project. However, after the closing of the FRP the WRYOA was revitalised and a group of local volunteers including one member of the original volunteers (Carol Packham) and members of the Free Range Housing co-operative (where the registered office was based) started organising local activities again. This included the running of a weekly group for under 13's initially held at Manley Park Junior School and then at the Manley Park Methodist Church (the group was linked to Woodcraft folk).

**The first major activity was the Celebrate Festival in 1998, which is a huge success in itself, and had its 15<sup>th</sup> year this year.**

Successful partnerships with the City Council resulted in us obtaining funding to establish daytime provision for young people not attending school, the Whiz (Whalley Range Inclusion Zone) Project, closely followed by funding to run a detached project, Whiz-out. The WRYOA management

committee decided not to continue with its involvement with the then Manchester Youth College, Pupil Referral Unit and in Summer 2005 the daytime provision closed.

Following the termination of the funding for the outreach project the Whiz-out project was also suspended although the workers have continued outreach and community link work.

So, WRYOA has been running in Whalley Range now for 30 years, and has built a great reputation, through our play scheme JNR8 and youth provision Whiz, working with young people ranging from ages 5-25 years, whose parents attended the project before them, and some of whom are working with us now. We have over 130 young people from a diverse range of backgrounds on our register. We provide opportunities for them to participate in various activities, including cooking, Thai boxing, football, group discussions and workshops around issues that affect young people and their community, such as unemployment, stereotyping, crime, gang awareness, drugs etc. We are also committed to supporting young people and community members through offering a variety of volunteering opportunities, from working directly at our project to involvement in the planning and setting up of our yearly community festival, Celebrate.

Words by Carol Packham, Colin Stanton and Alison Chisolm

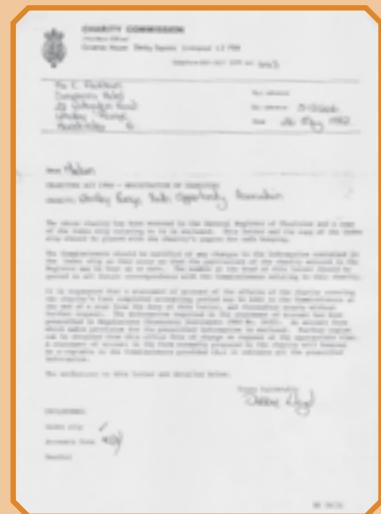
# In the beginning (1980s)

## September 1981

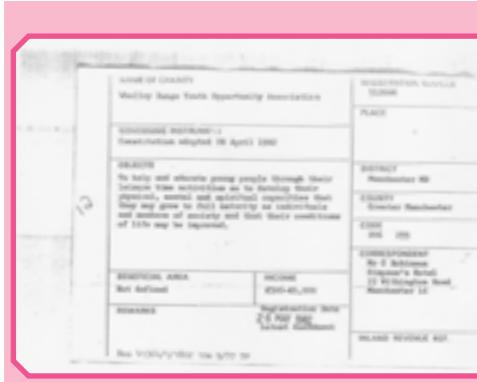
Following the damage to shops on Withington Road in the riots, a group of residents, including young people and local business owners, came together to identify that there was a problem in their area, and that they could do something about it by providing a place for young people. Hopefully the place would be self-financing and could undertake fundraising, but initially the group approached shop owners to donate money to fund activities for the young people, who in turn respected the shops more. They decided to register a charity and inaugurate the group as Whalley Range Youth Opportunities Association in order to stand a better chance of achieving funding and surviving.

The original elected officials were:

Chairman: Mr. Robinson (Simpson Hotel),  
Secretary: Carol Packham (Free Range Play Project),  
Treasurer: Bernard Goodrich (the dairy) and  
Public Relations: Winston Scott (also F.R.P.P.).



← Letter awarding charity status to WRYOA, 26 May 1982, and  
↓ certificate



They planned to extend the management committee to include a good cross-section of the people in the area and to hold monthly meetings.

## April 1982

On 28 April 1982, a public meeting was held at St. Margaret's School. The association aimed to establish a youth centre in a central location with facilities for young people in the immediate Whalley Range area aged approximately 14-19. After adopting a constitution that evening, they were granted charity status on 26 May, using the Simpson Hotel as their correspondence address.

## June 1983

By the following summer, the association had continued at full steam. Draw tickets were sold to raise several hundred pounds for activities such as football. Grant requests had been placed for hiring football grounds, and the members of the management committee were changing as people moved in and out of the area.

↓ 103 Withington Road (left), former home of Free Range Play Project



Holding those photos thirty years later!  
Including Rob Cole and Roger Boyce



### Robert Cole, young person

"I was involved with the project when it was known as Free Range but we called it the Free School. It was based in a house on Withington Road, Whalley Range. They had the usual in house activities such as pool and table tennis. Also they did arts and craft, lino cutting and printing. During the holidays they would take us on outings to places like Blackpool and Alton Towers. We would also go rock climbing, canoeing and horse riding. For one week during the six week holiday we would go camping. One such trip that stays in my mind is when we went to Germany and saw the Berlin Wall. For me and the majority of us that went, this was the first time out of the country. They used to hold a disco in the cellar that became known as the Dungeons. Young people from far and wide would come to perfect their dance moves. All in all my experience of the Free Range Project was positive. Going there kept us off the streets at a time when there was a lot of police and criminal activity on our estate."

### Barry Thorpe, youth worker

"I worked for the Free Range Project from 1982-86, my role was a youth worker. The project provided young people with somewhere to go at a time when there was a lot of trouble in the area particularly after the riots. We had table tennis, pool, board games and arts and craft on site to engage the young people. During the holidays we take the young people on various excursions. We also took them abroad a few times to Germany, France and Holland. From 1986 we provided our provision at St Margaret's Church on a Tuesday and Whalley Range Methodist Church on a Wednesday. From there we went to Princess Road Primary School on the estate. We weren't there long before we had to close due to drugs and gang problem that plagued the area around that time. For a few years nothing happened in the area as far youth work was concerned the Free Range Project was no more (around 1990)."

### Ray Edmond, youth worker

"I was involved with the Free Range Project from 1982-85. I was employed as a youth worker. I helped out with the day to day running of the project but my main role was managing the football team. One year we did the double, won the cup and the league. This still gives me goose pimples when I think about it as I saw how proud the young people were of their achievement."

### Interview Colin Stanton, volunteer

Colin started the co-operative Free Range Housing Project with Carol Packham in 1977. It felt a natural progression to develop the Free Range Project in 1982, at 103 Withington Road, although the office was taking up space in Carol's house for some time!

Colin Stanton, Carol Packham, Mike Thompson, May 2012



# Travel

Map image by maix, from Wikimedia

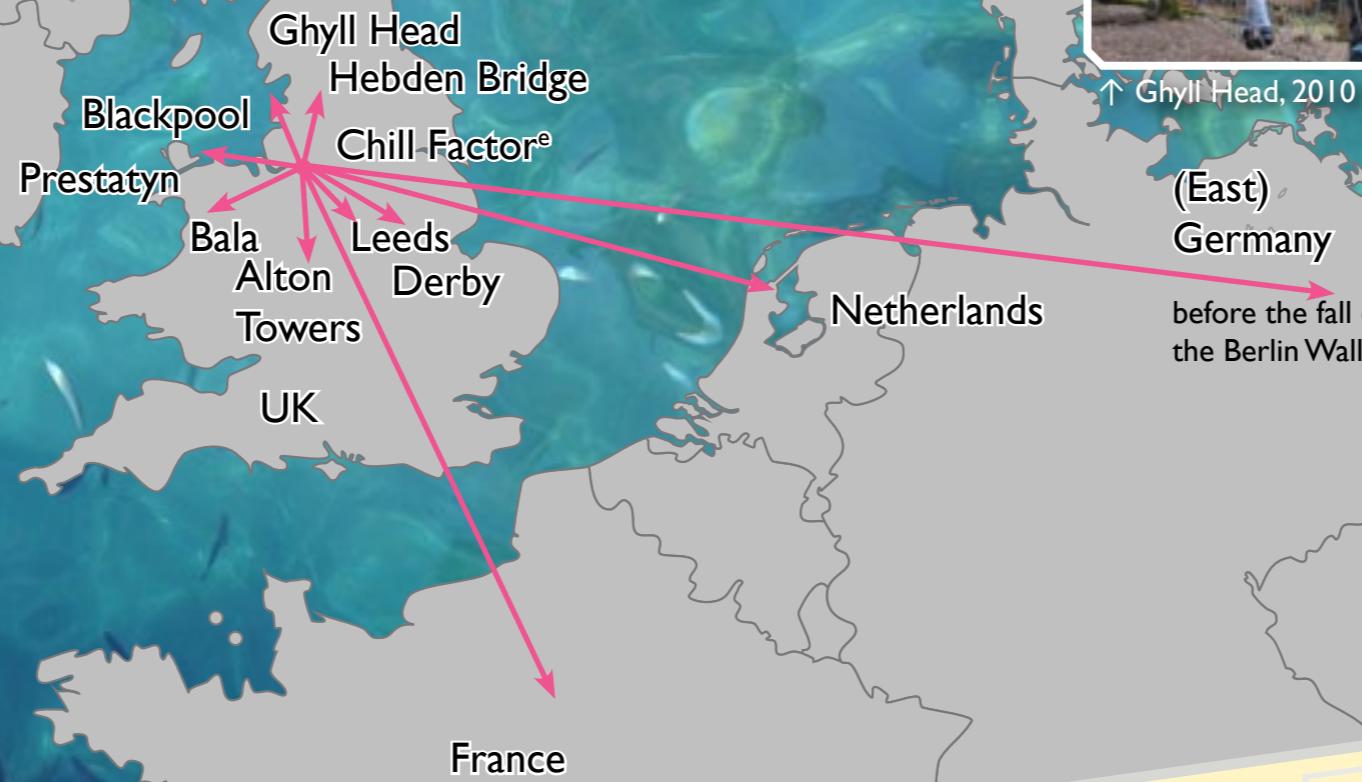


↑ Prestatyn, 2001, with Iram Ahmed (bottom-left) and Michelle Heron (bottom-right)



↑ Butterflies at Tropical World, Leeds, 2001

↓ Blackpool, 2010



↑ Manchester, 2010



↑ Ghyll Head, 2010

"I have been involved with this from when it was called the Free Range Project. It was based at 103 Withington Road; I was a young person then. We went camping every year in the summer. Some people even went to Germany and Holland.

"They had a disco that became known as the Dungeons. Young people from across Manchester would attend.

"Working here has helped with my personal development as I've worked under several different guises.

"The Whiz Project is a well-used and needed provision for young people in and around the area. I would like to see young people more involved with the running and decision making of the project."

**Roger Boyce**



↑ Paupers Wood with Forest Schools, 2009  
Outdoor cookery session, learned to make fire!

Tim was there at the beginning of WRYOA and helped with its formation as a volunteer. Tim drove to France on a bus with the project and his 2 year old daughter Laura in 1984. They visited Paris, stayed in a youth hostel in Versailles. "I can remember the boys came back with some bangers that would have been illegal in this country as they were so loud. They terrorised the Alexandra Park estate until they ran out of them."

Tim was also involved in a trip to Germany, and horse-riding back with Mr Easden.

**Tim Greenaway**

"I started with the Free Range Project in 1991, engaging young people with Wood Craft. We would take them on outings and trips all over the country. In 1994 we went to Bala, Wales, camping. Most mornings I would take the young people for a walk before breakfast. One particular morning I decided to have a lie in. So to wake me up the

young people put a frog on my chest. That's one of my memorable moments working there."

Mike designed the posters for the first Celebrate Festival, and was also on the WRYOA for a while, before leaving the area in 1999.

**Mike Thompson**

# Sport



Hiking



Cycling



Climbing



Hoola hooping



Thai boxing (see page 9 for more)



Go-karting



Rowing



Skateboarding



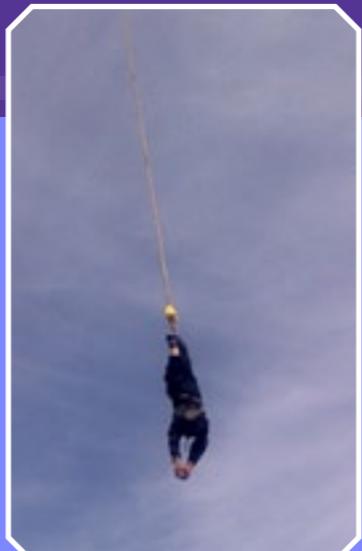
Snowboarding



Table football



Pool



Bungee



Egyptian dance



Paintballing



Bowling



Capoeira

## Thai Boxing

### Free weekly sessions at Whiz Youth Project



We encourage our young people to get involved in our in-house Thai boxing sessions. We have a fast growing team of young people who are dedicated to this sport; competing in competitions, volunteering and putting on demonstrations at various events.



#### Interview Michael Dunn

"I started at Whiz about 9 years ago as a volunteer. I got the opportunity after I was asked if I could get some equipment back that was stolen from the youth club."

Michael has been employed for the last eight years by Whiz. He enjoys seeing young people who are now in their 20s that have positive things to say about their experience at Whiz and how it has helped them.

"Being at Whiz has helped in my personal development. I wouldn't be half the person I am now if not for Whiz. They put me on courses that sparked a hunger for knowledge, for which I now self-educate."

"Whiz is like an extended family. Fond memories are when we did a sleep-over and residential, spending more time with the young people than the usual few hours a week."

We asked some of the young people about it. Here is what Sumit, Abaid, Abdull, Zak, Zain, Malik, Ateeke and Khama had to say.

#### How did you find out about Thai Boxing at Whiz?

"From attending the Celebrate Festival."

"From my dad/brother/cousin/family/friends."

"From the staff at Whiz."

#### Why do you attend?

"To learn to control my anger."

"It is a fun sport."

"Fitness/exercise."

"Somewhere safe to be."

"Develop self-defence skills."

#### How long have you been coming?

"Only a few weeks." "About 5 years."

"3 years."

"Started today."

"9 years."

#### What have you achieved and how have you benefitted from taking part?

"I feel calmed, also stronger and fitter since I've been attending."

"It helps with my school work."

"Learned new skills and techniques, and really enjoy it. Took part in competitions, raising my confidence levels. I even won a silver cup."

"Improved fitness levels, learned new techniques and just generally enjoyed the time spent."

"I have become fitter and have found a new sport."

"I feel fitter and am able to defend myself."

"Concentration at school, focus."

#### Any other comments?

"Whiz is great."

"Good trainer."

"Should do it more days."

"I think they are well-run and the guys do a great job."

"Would be better if there was more space."

# Funding and Changes (1990s)

Over the past 30 years WRYOA has reached out to various funders for support.

**Lottery Fund:**  
**Awards for All, MCC:**  
**U-Decide, MCC: Youth**  
**Fund, Connexions,**  
**Home Office, Esmee**  
**Fairbairn, Grass Roots,**  
**Moss care Housing,**  
**Sport Relief, GMP, CDF**  
- Community First, O2  
- It's Your Community,  
BT Community  
Connections,

**PCT, Manchester**  
**Metropolitan**  
**University, Manchester**  
**Play, Manchester**  
**Crime and Disorder,**  
**Central Manchester**  
**Primary Care Trust,**  
**Youth Opportunity**  
**Fund, Youth Capital**  
**Fund and others.**

# **Minutes from Annual General Meeting of Whalley Range Youth Opportunities Association, 7 February 1996**

## Attendance

Carol Packham  
Dave Norton  
William Weetman  
Timmy Afekafe  
Mukhtar Khares  
Laura Packham  
Ruth Afekafe  
Mike Thompson  
Liam Packham  
Lizzy Kaur  
Patricia Egan  
Janet Scragg  
Pritan Singh  
Linda Weetman  
Carol Bailey

## **Apologies:** Cath Fry, Ohmeed Khan (Muslim Parents Association)

## I. Report of activities

Carol stated that the WRYOA started in 1981 and became a registered charity in 1982 and had been involved in a range of activities for young people. Trips, camps and the weekly Woodcraft Folk, but with problems of a lack of a base.

The Community Chest, Voluntary Action Manchester, Manchester University Rag Fund, Central Manchester PCT, Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester Play, Manchester Crime and Disorder, Central Manchester Primary Care Trust, Youth Opportunity Fund, Youth Capital Fund and others.

## **Interview with Bill Williams, Chair of Whalley Range Forum**

Bill has been a Whalley Range resident for 19 years, and got involved with WRYOA "by accident," as he puts it. Young people in the area he lived were causing mayhem, and people were leaving as a result. Some people decided this was not the answer, and Bill took a group of residents to the local police station to see what could be done. The group were very vocal, and were recommended

set up a residents' association, which soon joined with the Whalley Range Forum, itself only three years old.

As a volunteer for WRYOA, Bill is able to work in just his area while maintaining a full-time job. He remarks how at the beginning of WRYOA, everyone came in raw with no formal training in community development. It turned out only a few young people were being destructive, and they told everyone about JNR8, encouraging them to come. They hadn't heard of it, it was only just open.

**Bill Williams, Rick Walker, Open Day, 2000**



## Education Departments Youth

**Worker**  
Mukhtar, with the Youth and Community Workers, has account. Paying 2% interest under £500 and 2.5%-3% over £500.

### **3. The WRYOA is raising funds to get:**

1.A mobile bus: for information and help.

2.A purpose built Youth Club. The Woodcraft Folk suggested ways of raising money to help the centre Community Workers, has recently opened a youth club on Wednesdays and Thursdays from 7pm onwards. This is at the Whalley Range Methodist Church, Cromwell Avenue.

enabling us to show the  
Lottery Fund how we can  
continue funding the running  
of the centre.

Barclays Bank is a good possibility for a charity account. Paying 2% interest under £500 and 2.5%-3% over £500.

## Management committee

**Secretaries:** Linda Weetman,  
Pauline and Paul McLeish

[Laura Packham](#) and [Ruth Afeke](#).

**Treasurer:** Carol Packham  
**Chair Person:** Mick Thompson

## 5. Annual account

The WRYOA has currently got £500 in the bank.	Norton
Accounts were accepted by the meeting. It was decided to look for a bank because of the extremely low interest rate. Mick explained that	It was agreed that we would form a young people's committee who would send representatives to the WRYOA meetings.



# Volunteering

We offer a healthy mix of long term, short term, and one time opportunities, not only to local people, but to the young people who attend our project also. There are many areas where volunteers can utilise their skills and expertise within Whiz, where we offer a variety of educational and fun activities four days per week and during school holidays for young people aged 10 - 19 years old. We offer positions in both skilled and non-skilled specific categories, helping volunteers develop their skills, as well as learn new, essential youth work skills.



↑ Dinah Pemberton, a committed volunteer for the last 18 months, with Alison Chisholm at Whiz

So, if you're looking for experience in a specific area relating to youth and community work, or even admin work – why not come along and see what's on offer here?

## Interview with Celebrate Festival Co-ordinator Chris Ricard

### What did you get out of it?

"The opportunity to co-organise a big event from start to finish. Finding the funding to booking the entertainment, to making links with lots of people, to working with a fantastic team of volunteers – and to see everyone from the community having fun, socialising and participating at the Celebrate Festival!"

"Also the opportunity to expand on the Festival by promoting Celebrate to the wider community and bringing people together throughout the year: celebrating the diversity of ages and cultures of Whalley Range residents with Chand Raat and International Women's day celebrations, providing community meals, older people's events and work within schools."

### What are you up to now?

"The same and more: sharing resources and information, running the website, sending out bulletins about local events, jobs, opportunities, working in the community, a would-be journalist... (think News & Events/ the Celebrate Report and the Alley gates brochure!), photographer (Whalley Range Flickr site, community events etc.)"

### Why you think the project is important?

"The WRYOA/Whiz provision for young people is crucial to this area: with no college, library or central community centre in Whalley Range it's easy to become isolated, to think no-one cares or is there for you. JNR8



For more on the Celebrate Festival, turn to pages 16-18.

## Interview with Iram Ahmed, volunteer and management committee member

Iram first became involved 17 years ago while at college, taking A-Levels in Sociology, Law and English. She went on to study Law at MMU while continuing to volunteer at the WRYOA summer play schemes. She was also employed for the 'Splash' sessions around 2001, then kept a position on the Management Committee ever since.

Her sister came to the girls' night on a Monday, and Iram still helped out on a voluntary basis when she had time.

As a young person, it helped her to build up her CV, helping with activities during the summer months of her degree. It helped her afterwards too. "As you get older, being on a management committee shows commitment and dedication." She is grateful to Carol Packham for her encouragement and support. "It's good to have young people on the committee to get better feedback from the others, as a go-between."

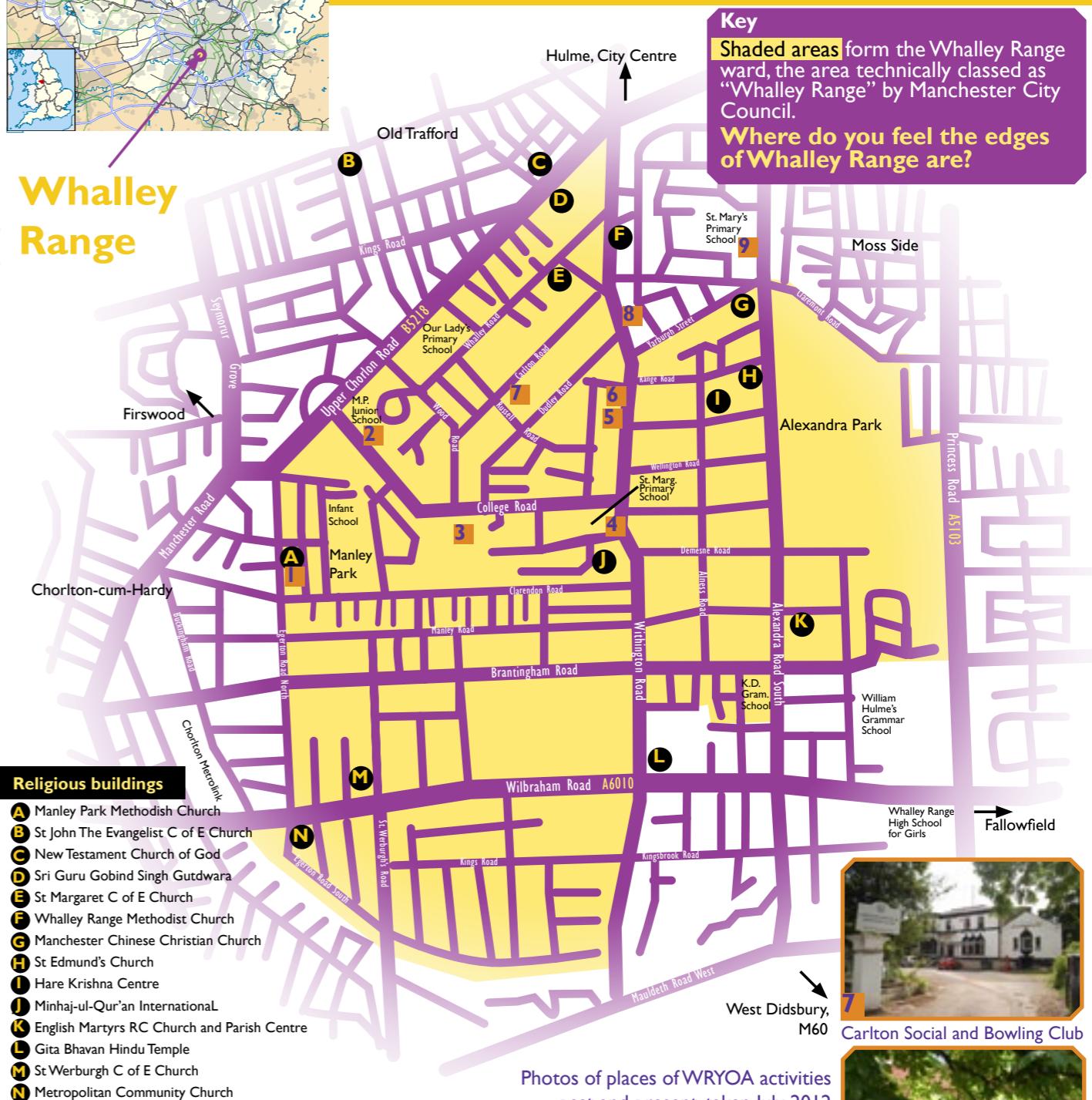
Iram now works for the Ministry of Justice in diversity and inclusion in the northwest, which helps with her role with WRYOA.

"WRYOA is good for young people, particularly for the girls and the play scheme events. It provides a good second home for young people, and spirit of the community when events bring people together."

Gr Mcr map by Nilfanion, from Wikimedia



# Map of Whalley Range



Photos of places of WRYOA activities past and present, taken July 2012



# Moving to JNR8 (1990s – 2000s)

WRYOA began using a room in Manley Park Methodist Church in the late 1990s, which was later named JNR8 Youth and Community Centre. They ran two groups in one day, early and late, and for several years ran with very little equipment and no office or telephone.



## INSPIRE Project

The Whiz project was funded to carry out a six-month project to challenge the perceived and experienced barriers some young Afro-Caribbean males have around employment, education and training.



↑ Carol's 50<sup>th</sup> birthday party, 2001. From left to right: Bev Harrison (Woodcraft/Celebrate volunteer), Peter Jolly (Celebrate volunteer), Zakia Vasi (Free Range volunteer), Carol Packham (WRYOA treasurer), Donna Stanton/Alvia Spence (original committee member as a young person), Dave Esdale (started Whiz), mystery lady, Una Baines (JNR8/Celebrate volunteer).

## Manley Park Methodist Church

"I would like to say, on behalf of Manley Park Methodist Church, how much we have enjoyed having WRYOA tenants for the past decade and to extend our congratulations on your 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

"We have watched JNR8 and Whiz develop tremendously and establish themselves in the local community. They have input so much over the years that the impact that has had on the community can only be commended. Times, particularly recently, have not been easy but staff keep composure and smiles even through the most difficult periods.

"We were particularly pleased to help host Celebrate this year. What a great event! The rain was not going to stop you! Cheers,  
Russell Kirby  
Senior Steward"



## Teen Times magazine

In 2000, 10-13 year olds at JNR8 were invited to design and compile a 12-page magazine. It featured photos, stories, an agony aunt page, spoof advertisements and horoscopes. The project was run by Rick Walker.



## Interview Nicole Joseph, manager and youth worker

From 1999 to 2000 Nicole worked as the centre manager at JNR8 funded by Youth Opportunities Fund. She was responsible for the recruitment, training and supervision of a team of volunteers.

Nicole managed the smooth running of the youth and community centre and facilitated the development of services in Whalley Range. She worked strategically to promote the development of inclusive provision. Her work involved researching sources of funding, and where appropriate, preparing submissions.



## Interview Una Baines, volunteer

Una has been involved in WRYOA for over 10 years, and has helped out in just about every way possible. In 2001 she was a play scheme volunteer and helped on trips to Prestatyn beach, Tropical World Leeds and the otters at the Chestnut Centre. She participated at a junk musical instruments workshop run by Abiodun Allen, where the drums themselves became pieces of art (photos above), and one where the young people sewed cushions from recycled materials, run by Debbie Anderson.

She learned computer skills and how to design leaflets from the Celebrate Festival. In the early years of the Festival they did not have an office, so

would organise the food, prizes and performing artists from phone boxes. This networking and ground work allowed them to build a database to use for future events. Their aim was to find as much talent in Whalley Range as they could. Una organised a thank you benefit for the volunteers of Celebrate after the event, obtaining donations from Unicorn and the Barbakan. It was held at the football club on Brantingham Road, and featured comedians, bands and food.

Getting involved with Celebrate has been a good grounding, which Una and others have been able to take on to other places and learn more skills. Una started the Energise Project at JNR8 to do up the grounds – it didn't take off there, but it did at the Sure Start Centre.

Una continues to be involved in organising women's health sessions, such as foot massage in an afternoon, which she began learning in the 1980s. "For some women that is their only chance to get out and have time just for them." She puts on (mixed-sex) health days at JNR8, including Tai Chi, Qigong and Afro-Brazilian dance (with Sue Ferner).

A big lesson she has learned is to choose one of the many things she was developing and focus on it. It's easy to get carried away.

Una believes in making the most of what is there. She still feels freedom as a volunteer; if you are interested in something, you could develop it at JNR8 and Celebrate.



## Information board outside JNR8

## Interview Mari Gibson, manager and youth worker

Mari was a youth worker in 2001 to 2002 at JNR8, running Whiz and helping with Whiz-out. "Young people that had been excluded from school for a few days would turn up in the day time just because they knew we were here. There was a lot more flexibility when I started, in terms of running the project based on what the young people wanted. Now to get funding you have to run things the way the funder wants to go. There is a lot more paperwork to do now."

She went on trips and residential with the young people. Mari now works for the Children's Society in the Z-Arts Centre in Hulme.



## Interview Noreen Khan, manager and youth worker

Noreen started as a play scheme volunteer in the holidays of 1999, around the same as Mari, mostly helping during half-term and holidays. She later ran JNR8 Play Scheme and left in 2007.

Noreen started the girls only night (which is still going today) amongst other activities, including Let's Get Serious, which was the project that brought Roger Boyce back to WRYOA, no longer a young person.

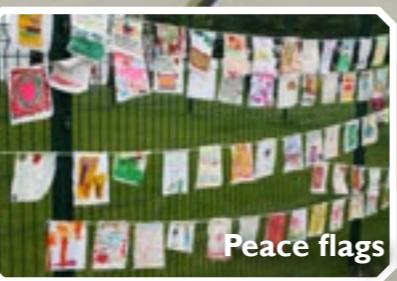
← Interviews for this magazine. Clockwise from bottom:  
Roger Boyce, Carol Packham, Phil Reed, Mari Gibson, Noreen Khan, Tim Greenaway, Mike Thompson.  
Not in photo: Colin Stanton, Alison Chisholm, Meshach Brennan and Rakie Dean.

She lives in the area and enjoys seeing the young people she worked with, now grown up.

"Young people would be lost without this project. It has broken down barriers in terms of convincing Muslim parents to allow their daughters to attend the project. This is a very needed project within the Whalley Range community and needs backing to keep it going."

Noreen is now the head of AIM (formerly Cool UK), which recently sailed through its first OFSTED inspection.

# Celebrate Festival



**CELEBRATE98** | 1998



| 1999



| 2002



| 2003



| 2006



| 2007/11



Whalley Range has hosted its annual **Celebrate Festival** since 1998. The Festival brings together all parts of the community through art, music, dance and food. It is usually held on the May Day Bank Holiday, and each year has been hugely successful.

## The beginning of Celebrate

In 1997, WRYOA undertook to stage a youth arts festival, culminating in Celebrate98. The aims were much the same as for Celebrate today.

- To celebrate the talent, diversity and resources of Whalley Range.
- To promote a positive image of the area and improve the quality of life.
- To encourage participation of the different communities within the area and work within an anti-discriminatory framework.

We succeeded this by providing approximately two hundred children and young people with the opportunity to experience music, video, photography, sculpture and circus skills workshops. This was commissioned and run by seven local artists in a variety of settings, such as schools, church and community halls, and the involvement of the community and its resources was of equal importance in developing community spirit.

With help from numerous volunteers and a paid co-ordinator, people from the different 'communities' within Whalley Range were able to work together on a variety of projects which formed part of the festival and its lead-up. This allowed many of us to experience, develop and improve new and existing skills in a variety of roles and functions, in the spirit of co-operation and friendliness, enhancing employability for some.

Turn to page 12 for an interview with the current festival co-ordinator, Chris Ricard.

## Some statistics after 15 years

**400** band, DJ, poet, dance and artist performances  
**250** adverts for local businesses, in the pages of 15 years of programmes  
**6** logo designs (see top-right)  
**125** raffle prizes, including a microwave, VCRs and hampers, donated by local businesses  
**100** volunteers in a database, with new people on board each year  
**6** hosting venues (see right)



Date	Location	Co-ordinator
May 2012	JNR8 Youth & Community Centre	Chris Ricard
June 2011	Manley Park Junior School	Chris Ricard
May 2010	St Margaret's Primary School	Chris Ricard
May 2009	St Margaret's Primary School	Chris Ricard
May 2008	Carlton Social & Bowling Club	Chris Ricard
May 2007	British Muslim Heritage Centre	Lee Fullwood
May 2006	St Margaret's Primary School	Lee Fullwood
May 2005	St Margaret's Primary School	Lee Fullwood
May 2004	St Margaret's Primary School	Lee Fullwood
May 2003	GMB College	Lee Fullwood
May 2002	GMB College	Lee Fullwood
May 2001	GMB College	Jan Hanson
May 2000	GMB College	Carol Helme, Rick Walker
May 1999	GMB College	Denise Fahmy, Rick Walker
May 1998	GMB College	Francia Messado, Rick Walker



# What happens at a **Celebrate**?

## Festival

Whalley Range



### Celebrate 10/365

Celebrate 10/365 was a year-round series of events held to mark ten years of the annual Celebrate Festival, held in 2007. We successfully planned and held a series of free and accessible Community events throughout this anniversary year of Celebrate.

Many successful events took place during the year; extra funding was applied for and received from the Local Network Fund. This funding enabled us to extend our activities – providing activities for the under 12's in our community – by holding a series of after-school and holiday activities, specifically aimed at our younger Whalley Range community.

These activities included weekly cookery sessions, a Newsgroup who produced newsletters distributed through homes and schools in the Whalley Range area, a Lantern art project, a Saturday arts and games club and lots more.

Young Celebrate took part in a diverse range of community events including a launch party for the Al-Buraaq Women's group at the end of Ramadan for all local women and children; Celebrate helped the group to set up and Young Celebrate provided all the entertainment and face-painters for the under 12's at this successful event. The young people's cookery club also provided some food to share at the celebration, which was held in our local community centre.



Words by Chris Ricard



## Food and healthy eating

The kitchen at JNR8 has been a culinary creative environment for Whiz and dedicated cookery clubs, plus all kinds of activities that have been hosted at the centre.

We influence and educate young people on eating a healthier diet, gaining a broader understanding of the impact of food on the wider well-being. We allow for young people to understand the importance of eating a balanced diet.

Some of our best discussions with young people have been whilst cooking in the kitchen, and eating together as a group. We see cooking as an essential part of our work, where we build relationships and discuss delicate issues. We often carry out important one to one sessions during this time. We use cooking in various sessions; therefore this is an ongoing area of work. Young people develop essential life skills in the kitchen, as well as learning important food facts, nutrient facts and about choosing the right food.

We also recognise that through cooking a variety of foods to suit our diverse group of young people that it breaks down cultural barriers. Cooking food and eating means that we can reach communities we wouldn't otherwise reach. Events and activities take place to promote healthy eating messages (i.e. meals to mark cultural events).

The JNR8 centre has a history of successful cookery sessions including the JNREAT project, which created the Food 4 Us practical guide to cookery sessions and led to the TV appearance of some of the young cooks on Ready Steady Cook.

The cooking and sharing of food is a very important aspect of JNR8 Youth & Community centre; some of the young people who attend come from single parent homes where often the parent will be out at work in the evenings.

The centre serves as a welcoming 'second home' often providing the only chance of a hot, freshly cooked meal, created in a supportive welcoming environment with friends and staff working together.

The under 12's weekly cookery club focused on the importance of a healthy diet, basic cooking skills, safety in the kitchen and basic food hygiene; we have an ongoing recipe book which we share with other groups, families and friends.



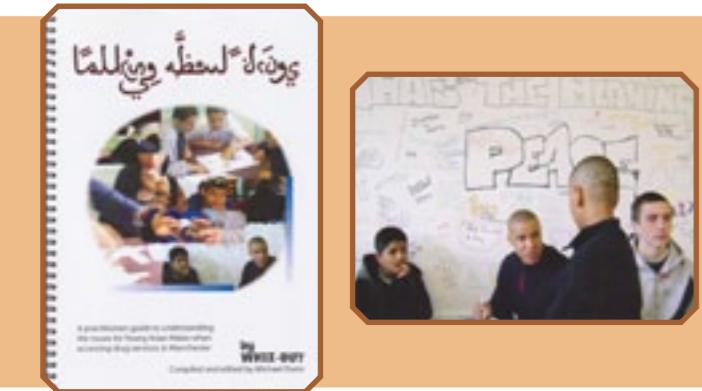
# Whiz (2000s – 2010s)

Whiz Youth Project is an after-school and holiday provision for young people aged 13-25. The young people engage in informal education, bike maintenance, music, art, sport, trips and activities.

Whalley Range Inclusion Zone (WHIZ) was established in 2001, and was also a daytime provision for young people who had been excluded from school. Whiz was named by Dave Esdaile.



Two of the logos that Whiz has used; the one on the right is the present one, designed by Phil Reed with the young people of the youth project in March 2012. The map of Whalley Range fills the globe, showing that the inclusion zone is for everybody.



## Talking About Drugs, 2007

Michael Dunn and Whiz produced "a practitioners guide to understanding the issues for Young Asian Males when accessing drug services in Manchester" booklet after a series of workshop sessions.

The booklet covered identifying drugs and their impact on local communities, innovative ways of breaking down barriers and ways to raise awareness. Sessions included group work, role play, questionnaires and conversations with members of the community such as shop keepers and religious figures.



## Urban Art Project, 2011

This project was based around urban art using spray paint and pens. As well as producing pieces of art, young people designed a wall piece for the front of the shed outside the church. The workshop facilitator, Conor, advised and encouraged the young people, teaching skills and techniques needed to achieve the full potential of their artistic visions. The image reflects the diversity of our project and Whalley Range using a sketch of the British Muslim Heritage Centre on College Road, and trees. (See interview on page 22.)



### Quote from a parent, Melba Finni

"As a parent of 3 and a foster carer to many I would be lost without a project like Whiz! It has been a god send to me and my family. My eldest son was 10 when we moved to the area and with him having ADHD he wasn't the easiest child to handle. The workers from Whiz gave him the time, understanding and patience he needed, they go above and beyond the call of duty!"

"I can't thank them enough for their input and for what they do for the children in the area. Without a youth club like this in Whalley Range there would be many children on the streets with nothing to do."

"May they stay around for many more years to come."

Shannon Wildes, one of the young people



### Interview Paul Allen, youth worker

"I worked at Whiz over several years, mostly part time in the evenings, and mainly involved with the group work program and Thai boxing. Working at Whiz with the young people in my local community was one of my most satisfying experiences. I have seen the creativity of the young people combined to produce some amazing pieces of work and successful community projects."

"Throughout my time at the project I was privileged enough to personally witness individuals growing and developing into their potential. This is something all the workers at Whiz encourage from the day a new person is welcomed through the front door to the day they decide move to pastures new. Of course at times it was challenging but it there was always an opportunity for some deep belly laughs and always rewarding."

"I believe working at Whiz has influenced me to maintain a vibrant, fun and optimistic attitude to life like many of the young people I have worked with. Most importantly their expression, influence and involvement in the many community projects over the years have reaffirmed my belief in the importance of our youth and the importance of nurturing them for all of our futures."

"From the fullness of my heart thank you to all the young people and staff who have allowed me to have some positive influence on their lives and to both of you for having had a positive influence in mine."

### Don't Judge a Book by its Cover

The WHIZ Project Anthology, a booklet of 15 poems produced by the Whiz daytime young people.

#### Father's Day

It's Father's day, daddy has gone away  
Something lead him astray  
There were no words I could say  
Could convince him to stay

Father's day and the sun is shining  
But for him is wasn't the right timing  
Now he's gone into hiding  
But we're not pining

It's Father's day, I don't go short  
Mama's here to hold the fort  
She's the one to teach me sport  
And share lessons she's been taught

Father's day the sun goes down  
Even though daddy is not around  
Mama's eyes sparkle,  
I know she's proud  
Her love is a jewel  
and I've been crowned

By Chanje Kunda

### Words from the present Whiz Project Manager

#### Alison Chisholm

"I have been with WRYOA now for five years; this is my second home. I am very passionate about my work here; we're like a big happy family. I've seen young people grow into responsible young adults in my time here, and like to think that we here at Whiz have played some part in their personal development, through providing activities that improve awareness and identity, develop talents and potential, facilitate employability, whilst contributing to the realization of dreams and aspiration. Indeed there are those

who come back and work, either as volunteers or as paid workers, which I believe is a testimony to the value that we have added to their lives. We like to create a home from home experience for our young people, a place where they can come together, where there are no barriers, and they can relax and have fun.

"Positive experiences encourage happiness and well-being; it makes us feel good about ourselves, without a doubt. I believe that we should tell young people they did well, compliment them, encourage them – you might be the only person who does it. It all builds on their self-esteem and confidence, makes us happy!"



# Whiz (cont.)

## Interview Conor McGinley, volunteer

"I first became aware of the Whiz Project in 2008 at the Celebrate Festival. Up until this point my working life had been arts-based mainly in film, performance, fine art and graffiti. I finished uni in 2006 and moved to Manchester. I'd looked into teaching but it really didn't call to me, and I hadn't thought much more about working with young people until I met Alison. I also talked to a few of the young people who said they had an interest in graffiti. I knew this was one thing I could help with, but I wasn't sure if I had anything else to offer.

"I started by volunteering on Tuesday nights. I really wasn't sure if I had anything to add to the place, but if nothing more I could be an extra pair of hands and eyes. The young people I met were wonderful, they were clever and thoughtful people and over the few years I worked at Whiz I enjoyed how they enriched my life with new words, music and the energy of youth. Working at Whiz was not only about the young people it also meant I met a lot more members of the local community and it showed me that the skill set I had could be used in ways I had never really thought of.

"For the first few weeks I went to Whiz I simply hung out and lost a lot of games of pool with the youths. We talked and I tried to see if there were any of their interests I could help them with. Tuesday nights were the kickboxing session run by Fats. This was probably the first chance I had to encourage them to get involved with an activity. It was also one of the first lessons I learnt about youth work; the best way to get the youth involved is to lead by example. So even though I was very unfit and out of shape I got my tracksuit on and each week I trained with them. I was so impressed with the young people who came back week after week, and the level of commitment they showed to the sport, and the enjoyment they took from it.

"I hadn't been there long when a woman who was part of the Peace Festival held at the Zion Centre came to the youth centre. She gave us some paints and big sheets that she wanted us to paint with graffiti. This was an activity I was able to add a lot more to, and I soon ended up running this project. The young people had great ideas and I felt great about being able to help them realise their ideas. After this project Alison helped me learn about funding bids, and I wrote and delivered two big projects with the young people; one was a t-shirt making project and the other was a graffiti project. Both were very exciting and the talent shown by the youths was incredible; not only did they produce some great art work on t-shirts and canvases, but they added to their youth centre by painting a mural outside the building. A small group of the youths also showed their art work off to Manchester city councillors. Both of these projects proved very popular and were still running when I left Manchester in 2011. This is of course only a snippet of some of the great activates I was involved with. I also ran an art workshop with younger children during the summer schemes; this was another really enjoyable experience.

"It was heart breaking to leave Whiz even though I was only there for a few years. The amount I learnt and experienced has enriched my life and taught me a great deal that I will carry with me. I'm now living in Ireland where I'm still very much involved with youth work. It seemed to me that the more you invest of your time and skills into young people the more you gain in return; being someone for young people to talk to, to ask questions of, really helps them and myself. I feel youth work has helped become a better graphic designer which is my day job. It's also helped me understand a lot about the community and wide society I live in; I owe this to all the wonderful people of all ages I met and worked with at Whiz, and the wonderful lesson I learnt there. Thank you for having me."

## Interview Rakie Dean, MMU student placement

Rakie is a post-graduate student taking Youth & Community Work at MMU, and was recommended to come on placement at Whiz, due to her experience and knowledge of the area. Her placement ran for the first six months of 2012.

On first impression, she liked the way that the young people at Whiz have a diverse range of backgrounds. She noticed it had a friendly, home-like environment, more like being amongst friends than a youth group, and felt the same from the staff.

Rakie began coming four nights a week, and her favourite activity to lead was cooking. Her planned sessions ran over a series of months, during which time she saw a vast improvement in the related skills and confidence in the young people. By the end, they could take the lead; before, they would just observe. She would participate in the other activities in a session, such as group discussions on gang and drug awareness, snooker, IT and football.

When asked for one thing she had learnt about youth work, she replied quickly. "No two days are the same. One day can be very quiet, but you go with the flow of those attending." Despite a shortage of funds, she insists you can still be creative, and this is another skill she has developed.

Finance is just one of the pressures which she has been working under, and she organised a bag packing session at the local supermarket to raise funds. Rakie highlighted the need to be reliable, to manage time well, and to be trustworthy, as often the young people can find it hard to open up.

Coming to the end of her placement, she has thoroughly enjoyed it, and has seen "110% commitment" from the other staff, for which she says the young people benefit. She feels that the young people are judged too much for their stereotypes – more people could give time volunteering – it is rewarding.



## Girls' group



At the moment Whiz provides for girls on Monday evenings, 6-9pm. We recognise the need for separate girls work; they need a place to express themselves, where they can relax and be themselves. Girls are excluded from many activities when sessions are mixed; boys tend to dominate the pool table, the music equipment, and gaming equipment. Also, we recognise that certain cultures prefer that boys are not around.

### Interview with Zava, Safa, Kainat and Ayesha, young people aged 13 to 18

These girls have been coming for up to 7 years. They have enjoyed participating in dance, music and circus skills workshops, cooking sessions and going on trips to places like Blackpool, all run by Whiz Youth Project.

Most of these activities are mixed sex, but some of the girls prefer to come to the girls-only night on Mondays.

Whiz has given young people in Whalley Range the opportunity to learn new skills that they might not get at school or at home. Kainat says she has learned to cook properly; Safa says it has shown her the importance of manners at home – you help out and get respect in the end. She also says Whiz has inspired her to do well in her future career.

All of the girls agreed that the youth group makes people of different age, race and religion come together. With these young people, they get to go on trips and have fun, make new friends and, if needed be, lower their tempers to feel calm inside.

What would they do if Whiz was not there? Ayesha says if she was hanging out on the street, that would be a bad thing;

if she's at Whiz, it's a good thing. It calms you down; you can get advice if someone has been bullied.

Safa says you can always find a friend at Whiz, and get positive support. She comes in most Mondays. They appreciate that it is a place to get hot and healthy food, if there are financial problems at home or a parent is working late.

Finally, they agree the staff help you get on with the people you don't know or particularly like, and make them feel better about themselves when they are down.

# Where are they now?

Just some of the many folk who have been involved one way or another.

Name	What they did for WRYOA	What they do now
<b>Edward Afekafe</b>	Woodcraft Folk attendee (1996 onwards)	Outreach worker for Manchester City Football Club; ambassador for World Cup bid
<b>Iram Ahmed</b>	Young person, later staff at JNR8 (2001 onwards)	Ministry of Justice diversity and inclusion in the NW;WRYOA management committee
<b>Una Baines</b>	Volunteer JNR8 and Celebrate	Energise Project, Sure Start Centre
<b>Roger Boyce</b>	Project young person (1981 on); volunteer/sessional worker	Staff at Whiz (2005 to date)
<b>Majid Dar</b>	Volunteer (2004)	Coordinator, Youth On Solid Ground
<b>Earl Davey</b>	Project worker	Youth and Community lecturer, Bolton University
<b>Michael Dunn</b>	Volunteer/sessional worker	Staff at Whiz (2003 to date)
<b>Katrina Garg</b>	Volunteer (2001) then manager of Whiz (2003-6)	Mental health practitioner, youth worker at 42 <sup>nd</sup> Street
<b>Mari Gibson</b>	Manager of Whiz (2001-2002)	Safe In The City at Z-Arts Centre
<b>Nicole Joseph</b>	JNR8 coordinator when opened (1999)	Head of Youth Services, St Helens
<b>Noreen Khan</b>	Volunteer at play scheme then manager of Whiz (7 years total)	Head of AIM (formerly Cool UK) Pupil referral unit
<b>Jessica Kippen</b>	Staff (2004)	WRYOA management committee
<b>Gina Lewis</b>	Student placement, then summer SPLASH scheme organiser	Youth Worker, Stockport College
<b>Carol Packham</b>	Volunteer (1977)	MMU course leader in Youth & Community Work; WRYOA management committee
<b>Rabbia Zesham</b>	Volunteer (2003)	Runs Kiddie Days Nursery