



Protecting local
communities

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PRESS RELEASE

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FLAGSHIP YOUTH PROGRAM CELEBRATES 50TH COURSE AND ITS ACHIEVEMENTS

YOUNG people sharing experiences of their time on a flagship youth program and their achievements since, will be just one of the celebrations at an event to commemorate Cleveland Fire Brigade's 50th Local Intervention Fire Education (LIFE) course.

Dignitaries including Vera Baird QC MP and Mayor of Hartlepool, Stuart Drummond will be attending the Legends Lounge at Middlesbrough's Riverside Stadium at 2.00pm on Friday 3rd April, along with key partners including representatives from the four local Authorities, Cleveland Police and youth agencies as well as young people who have taken part in past courses.

The event will be celebrating the achievements of the 500 13-17 year olds who have taken part in the program with some coming along to tell their story and what they have achieved. There will also be awards given to key partners who have supported the course which started in 2004 as well as the launch of the new LIFE course which has been developed to build on the existing success.

Though the course is based on fire related activities young people also explore the consequences of their actions on themselves, their families and their community with particular emphasis placed on encouraging them to make the most of their physical and mental capabilities to become more responsible members of the community.

Participants are also able to gain qualifications including First Aid, TROCN level 2 certificate and a fire awareness certificate. In the new LIFE course, they will also be able to gain a BTEC award in the Fire and Rescue Services in the Community which is equal to a GCSE grade A-C. The new course is also being lengthened to eight days as many of the elements have been enhanced including the importance placed on the misuse of alcohol and drugs and the links to crime and anti-social behaviour.

John Doyle, Chief Fire Officer said: "The LIFE program is our flagship youth program contributing to real positive changes in young people. Since the programmes inception we have engaged with over 500 young people from across Hartlepool, Redcar, Middlesbrough and Stockton and we are very proud of the success of the course and those that have taken part in it.

"All this, however, would not be possible without the support of our partners within the local community who have been involved in referrals, support and monitoring of the young people which has helped shape the program. These include Safe in Tees Valley, Redcar and Cleveland Youth Inclusion Program, Hartlepool Youth Inclusion Program, Youth Offending Service and Connexions.

"Another key partner Artenius UK Ltd has also made a significant difference by providing members of their staff to act as instructors during the courses which has proved to be invaluable and has encouraged young people to explore training and employment opportunities within their own local community.

"Our new program which will be run from April 2009, fits into our vision to support vulnerable and disadvantaged young people and reduce risks in the community. It hopes to build on the existing success of LIFE and develop the opportunities for sustained engagement with the participants in the future."

Vera Baird QC MP said: "This is a fantastic programme of which our Fire Service can be immensely proud. They have engaged with the local community to ensure that they reach the right people and literally have changed young people's lives.

"They have also had the confidence to change the LIFE course and move it along as they have learnt how to improve it. I look forward to seeing again some of the Teesside youngsters whose LIFE awards I gave to them at ceremonies in Eston Fire training Centre in my constituency over the years."

MEDIA OPPORTUNITY:

- The media is invited to the 50th LIFE Celebration at the Legends Lounge, Riverside Stadium on Friday 3 April.
- Two young people from previous LIFE courses will be available for interview as well as MP Vera Baird and Chief Fire Officer John Doyle between 2pm-2.30pm and after the event at approximately 4pm
- DVD's will be given out on the day of footage from the LIFE course
- Footage and photographs can be taken throughout the presentation which will take place between 2.30pm-4pm
- Please confirm your attendance to Rachel Morrow or Stephen Forster on 01429 872311

For further information please contact Les Jones on 01429 872311

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