

Young Carers Debate
February 2008

&
Launch of Young Carers Film
"HEART TO HERTS"



REPORT

**Young Carers Debate 15th Feb 2008,
and the Launch of the Young Carers Film.**

Heart to Herts

Introduction:

In November 2005 the Young Carers Council held their first Debate.
The Motion was '***Should Young Carers Be Supported In Their Caring Role***'?

The Motion on 15th February 2008, was '***Is Short Term Support for Young Carers Better Than Open Ended Support***'? I am pleased to say that attendance there was a good attendance at this event, and once again was very successful.

The event was held at Campus West, Welwyn Garden City, and gave the Young Carers Project the opportunity to launch the new Young Carers Film.

The Feedback about the Debate and the film has been very positive and on the following pages the main arguments of the Debate are outlined together with an explanation of how the Film was made.

To fund this event, Members of the Young Carers Council successfully completed a bid to the Youth Opportunity Fund.

We would like to thank the Young Carers Council for putting the bid together and the Youth Opportunity Fund for sponsoring this event.

The Debate:

Panel for the Motion:

Representative Agencies:

Bernie Talbot – Youth Service

Adrienne Arthurs – Extended
School Co-ordinator

Jo Willis – Carers in Hertfordshire

Panel against the Motion:

Young Carers:

Dani Pettifer – Chair YCC

Rebecca Rollinson -
Vice Chair YCC

Dhiran Patel – Secretary YCC
and other Members of the YCC



Young Carers against the Motion – Opening Argument:

The Young Carers panel are against the motion of short term support being better for young carers.

We care 24/7 everyday, every week, every year – why should we have to make do with short term support.

We save the country probably millions of pounds caring for our relatives, are we only worth a few weeks support for that?

We deserve continuing support for as long as our caring role exists.

Panel for the Motion – Opening Argument:

With limited resources and tight funding, should we ration and limit our services? Should we aim to help young carers to move onto generic services or offer them the security of knowing they can access a service as long as they wish, causing waiting lists and some young carers never getting a service?

We believe it is better to spread resources to reach more young carers with shorter interventions, this will allow more young people to be empowered and move on with their lives.

Delegates wanted to know from the Agencies team, how they thought short term support would work: for example

- Would young people be able to dip in and out, or would they only be able to have one bite of the apple?
- What would the young people do for support in-between their 'allocated' short term support?



(Delegates asking questions)



(Young carers responding)

The team responded by saying:

“By giving young carers the right support and coping strategies you can actually help empower them to help themselves, if you just give them handouts all the time, they can become reliant on the state and less able to make their own decisions. Short term support is better, it enables them to make choices for themselves and more young carers can access services.

The Young Carers Council replied passionately;

- Short term support is not the way forward – we need support to be there for us, *when* we need it, not just six weeks out of a year.
- The Project gives us the support we need, and we can get support from them when we need it.
- We know funding is an issue, but we don't think providing short term support would be the best use of funding.

Young Carers present spoke about their caring situations and pointed out how their caring roles varied: each young person emphasising the need for long term support.

Their arguments were once again very powerful and challenging. The vote at the end of the debate was unanimously in favour that short term support was ***not*** the way forward for young carers, and that they ***should***; receive support for as long as they had a caring role.



Film Launch

The Young Carers project were very pleased to be offered the opportunity to make a new and up-dated film about young carers, sponsored by The Women's Counselling Centre and funded by the Big Lottery Young Peoples Fund.

Working with Mark O'Sullivan, Go! Film and Drama Productions, we were able to run a series of 4 one day workshops for young carers interested in being involved in directing, filming and starring in the film.

12 young carers attended the workshops which included street interviews, role play, warm up games and group sessions.

In total, young carers shot 7 hours of footage under the direction of Mark O'Sullivan. They learned about the pre planning involved, how to handle cameras, including the best angles for filming, short or distance shots, how to get the best sound, interview techniques, and role play. The days were not all work though. There was plenty of time to play silly games, warm up, cool down, and most importantly, time to talk.

Asked what they had enjoyed most about the workshops, young carers said:

Talking about different situations,
Making new friends
Everything!
Filming, acting and working with people
Interviewing the public
Group work
Having the chance to use new equipment

Asked what they had learnt from the workshops they said:

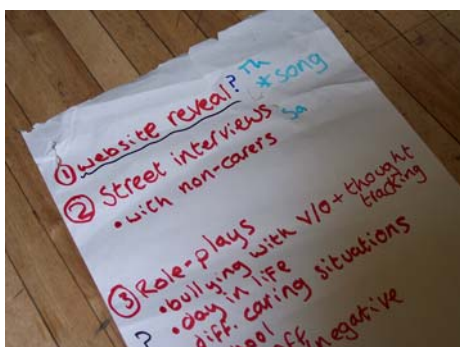
How to use cameras
Tips on filming
Other people's situations
Confidence building
New games
How to interview and communicate

Evaluation:

Feedback after the Debate and film Launch was extremely positive from the staff.

When asked to describe in a few words what they had gained from the day, these were some of the comments.

- Inspired again to respond to the ongoing needs of young carers
- Fantastic to hear from young carers and to have the opportunity to understand what they get out of their caring role.
- Great Debate, good to see the confidence of the young carers
- Helpful to hear the honesty of young carers and what they need
- A good understanding of carers needs, but also a rounded view of the fact that young carers have lots of talents and are committed to each other.



Young Carers were asked what they had enjoyed about the event. They said:

- Watching the film
- The Debate
- All of it
- Seeing the film and hearing the talks

We asked them if they had learnt anything new from this event: They said

- More about young carers and how other people are coping
- I learnt how much support I get from the Young Carers Project
- How to be a better carer and I'm not the only one
- Short term support won't be beneficial
- Helps to share feelings.

Conclusion:

The day was very successful and achieved the desired outcome for young carers, which was to raise the awareness of staff from across agencies, and to explain the type of support young carers need.

Our thanks to Tim Parlow, Children Schools & Families, for Chairing the Debate at very short notice! He did an excellent job and made sure he remained neutral!

We would also like to thank Bernie Talbot, Integrated Youth Service, and his team:

- Adrienne Arthurs, Extended School Co-ordinator
- Jo Willis, Learning Disability Support Worker, Carers in Hertfordshire.

They put up a valiant effort to sway people into thinking short term support was the way forward. But once again the Young Carers were very articulate and knowledgeable about the service they feel they deserve.

Our thanks as always go to the Young Carers Council and young carers present, who always speak openly and honestly about their caring roles. They are a very powerful voice for young carers across Hertfordshire.

Cindy Honour
Project Manager
May 2008.



**“GREAT DEBATE,
GOOD TO SEE
CONFIDENCE OF
YOUNG CARERS”**

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