

# **Leeds University Union**

## Community Update

January 2010

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**Volunteering and Community Office**

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### **Working with students in the community**

- Unipol released their list of accredited houses on January 16<sup>th</sup> and officially announced that as the start of the house hunting season. The Student Advice Centre has already dealt with many queries from students and has started their contract checking service. Over 20 student volunteers have been trained up with another 15 waiting to help. An online contract checking survey has also been set up for students to use.
- The Knowledge Campaign continued with another ballooning walkabout where homes with open windows are left a blown up balloon through the window, to warn them that if a balloon can get through a window that their property is vulnerable to a break in.
- After recent attacks of young women around the city, the Knowledge campaign will be holding free self defence classes for students, open to everyone, at Leeds University and Leeds Met.
- A meeting is being held with students at Devonshire Halls to address recent complaints from residents after a public meeting last term with the residents of the area
- A new Leeds Bus Campaign has been launched in partnership with LUU, Leeds Met Student Union and Trinity and All Saints College. This campaign aims to find out what issues students experience with public transport in the city.

### **Volunteering and Community**

- The Action Christmas Present project worked in partnership with the Essentials team and Radio Aire to encourage staff and students to donate gifts for a local child in need of a present at Christmas. Essentials arranged drop off points in the union and Action members worked with Radio Aire to get more presents that the radio station collected. They then held a 'Wrapathon' at LUU Xmas Day on December 12<sup>th</sup> and invited people to help them wrap all of the gifts. The following week they dressed as Santa and elves and arranged to deliver the presents to local hostels and refuges through the 'Leeds Housing Concern' network so that 200 kids in temporary accommodation over Christmas got a nice surprise!
- LUU RAG (Raise and Give) has opened up their Community Fund, a pot of £8000 that local charities and community groups can apply to for small grants of £200 - £400. They have already

received lots of applications already, and hope to hear from many more local groups until applications close in March.

- Part of this Community Fund was raised by RAG by enlisting the help of some of LUU's societies for their naked calendar 2010. These were also sold at LUU's Xmas Day.
- Action are preparing for their Older People's Tea Party on Wednesday February 17<sup>th</sup> in The Riley Smith Hall at the union. This successful event, which runs every year will be bringing in 150 older people from older people's day centres and other independent groups in the local area for an afternoon of music, bingo, tea and cakes.

### **Other News**

- Community Officer, Hannah Greenslade, and other LUU staff went to the SUEI Conference (Student Union Evaluations Initiative) in Birmingham to speak to other universities about the successes they have had with the Neighbourhood Watch and Knowledge campaigns in the last year.

### **Union Community Reps (UCRs) update**

- Following on from the holiday and exam periods, the UCRs have been getting back in touch with the community groups in their area and going to meetings where they can.
- Rowena Collings (Hyde Park) has received positive feedback from the businesses involved in the shop local campaign for Hyde Park. The flyers are going to be printed soon and passed out by the UCRs and volunteers.
- Abigail Foster (North Hyde Park) & Kathryn Muir (Burley) have been in touch with the Royal Park Community Consortium (RPCC). They are holding public meetings every Tuesday at 6pm in Barakas on Royal Park Road. The RPCC have handed over their proposal for the building, but no feedback has been received yet.

### **Neighbourhood Watch Student Coordinators**

- All of the coordinators have been getting in touch with their allocated PCSOs following on from the exam period, so that they can get up-to-date reports on their area and target problem streets.
- Some of the coordinators attended the International Student Orientation Meeting for the new students that have arrived for semester two, and gave a talk on home and personal safety in Leeds.
- Sarah Purdue (Headingley) attended an Environmental Visual Audit in the Rosebank/Rillbank area of Hyde Park which was organised by Active4Life (part of the Cardigan Centre).

