

# YOUR COMMUNITY NEWS

## Charity which helps teens to escape crime wins top prize

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A BROAD Green-based charity helping more than 200 teenagers get away from poverty, crime and gang-culture through football has won a major award.

Kinetic Foundation took home the top prize at the 2018 Heart of the

Community awards, run by the Croydon Advertiser in partnership with Aberdeen Asset Management, after highlighting how sport can be used as a bridge for young people at risk of falling in with a bad crowd.

Since the charity launched in 2011 it has been working with Spanish football giants Real Madrid to run sport schools which have helped a number of boys and girls get into higher education, full-time work or become sport coaches.

Roberto Dos Santos Saratva is one person who has come through the Kinetic system. Growing up on the Pollards Hill Estate, he is now doing a sports and exercise degree at Bath University. The 21-year-old, who is on a placement year with the charity, said: "I used to organise a Friday night football session every week in 2014 and 2015 and as many as 30 to 50 people would turn up every Friday.

"At that time there was a lot of crime going on around Pollards Hill and we definitely saw a drop in crime while running the sessions! so while I've never been one to risk getting involved in that kind of thing I know it's helped others avoid or get away from it.

"[The team at] Kinetic helped with support and advice and I learnt how to be responsible and manage other people.

"Running those Friday night sessions, making sure I was there early to set up, it helped me understand a



From left, Craig Davis, Harry Hudson and Roberto Dos Santos Saratva from Kinetic at their new base of operations at Croydon FC

Photo: DAVID COOK

different kind of relationship with people who were my friends."

Roberto got the chance to play football in Wales and Sweden through Kinetic and other people who were in his group of 24 have gone on to become coaches at professional clubs such as Charlton Athletic and Ipswich Town.

Since being launched seven years ago, the charity has grown and now helps 70 teenage boys and girls on a range of programmes from education at Woodcote High School, in Purley, to others doing college courses based at The Warren, in Bromley.

Also more than 120 teenagers from all across south London – including Wandsworth, Lambeth and Sutton – are on a part-time programme with the charity around their studies.

Kinetic was set up by friends Harry Hudson and James Forberingham and they decided to base it in Croydon because they viewed it as a London borough where they could make a difference.

The borough's latest Sport England statistics show that one in five young people are living in poverty and one in four are overweight. Alongside football, Kinetic

also work with Thornton Heath Netball Club while linking up with primary schools and running sport holiday camps.

Mr Forberingham, 27, said: "We realised there were a lot of talented footballers who perhaps weren't going to have a playing career and weren't able to go on some programmes as they can be expensive. What we're trying to do is remove barriers for young people."

The long-term ambition for the charity is to set up a free school that can help children regardless of gender, ability, financial situation or ethnicity.

The other winners at this year's Heart of the Community ceremony, which took place at Vue Cinema at Valley Retail and Leisure Park last Thursday (June 14), were New Addington and Fieldway's The Family Centre, which supports local families, Sanderead Neighbourhood Care, which helps the elderly, Lives Not Knives and the Generation Kidz Klub.

The volunteer of the year was Lynn Edwards, of the South East Cancer Centre, with Amatare Okl, of the Revivify Community Initiative, and Jordan White, of the Croydon Steel Orchestra, runners-up.



Mickey and Minnie Mouse visited the carnival

Photo: NEW AD



The local Army Cadets ran a stall

Photo: NEW AD