

A REPORT OF WORLD OF HOPE LOCAL INQUIRY

ON THE RECENT RIOT IN WOOLWICH, BROADCASTED ON BBC NEWS @6.30 & 10.00pm

DATE: WEDNESDAY 31ST AUGUST 2011, TIME: 1:00PM- 6:00PM

VENUE: WORLD OF HOPE GREENWICH YOUTH ACADEMY

BOSTALL GARDENS

VIOLA AVENUE

ABBNEYWOOD

LONDON SE2 0TQ

SPECIAL GUEST ON THE DAY:

CLLR DENISE HYLAND, Greenwich Borough Commander, Mr. Richard, Abbeywood Safer Neighborhoods, Wilkinson Regional Manager Baz and Modupe his deputy, Isaac Attram a member of Greenwich Youth Crime Board and Solicitor Mrs Iyabo Eferakoro. We also had Matt Horne, Greenwich Social Inclusion Officer from Charlton Athletic Community Trust and Tayo Disu, Vice Chair of Lewisham Community Police Consultative Group who joined us with the inquiry as part of partnership work with World of Hope.

INTRODUCTION:

On the day of the riot World of Hope made series of phone calls to all our young people in Southwark, Greenwich, Lambeth and Lewisham where we operate encouraging them to stay in door not to participate in the riot and also to contact other young people they know to also stay away. Up till today we have not heard or informed by any family or young people that anyone engage in our project is involved in the riot. World of Hope was present in Woolwich on the night of the riot to discourage young people from further participation in the riot despite that we just returned from our weekend trip that Monday from Haven with girls to be raised as youth peer mentor from Southwark (Peckham & Nunhead). World of Hope consistently visited the areas affected as mentioned above to ensure that the feeling of the community and businesses where made known to the Community Engagement Board in the New Scotland Yard as we are part of the community representative on the board.

World of Hope identified the need for community to come together to reason, find answer to our WHY questions and to identify a way forward to prevent this type of incident in the future. This event kicked start with the introduction of the event by Florence Emakpose, the founder and Director of World of Hope. She talked about how World of Hope has impacted positively in to the lives of our young people and their families this can be viewed from www.worldofhope.org.uk

AIMS:

This event is to launch local inquiry to the recent riot that took place in Woolwich .

To create a Chance for young people, adult, Police, businesses, community leaders and political leaders from Greenwich Borough to come together to find out **WHY** the riot took place in our community. Also to find a way forward in preventing further riot in the Borough.

To give a platform for the affected businesses to express their loss and damages the riot and looters incurred for them.

To bring the Greenwich Borough Commander, Mr. Richard Wood in the dialogue with our young people and the community from Greenwich Borough to answer questions that needed answer to from the Police and to assess the damage caused to the Police during the riot and find out **WHY**.

PRESENTATION OF GIFTS TO NEW UNIVERSITY INTAKE - BY CLLR DENISE HYLAND

Cllr Denise Hyland talked about how she became our councillor as a mean of inspiration. She also appreciated the positivity in our young people especially those who are starting their higher education in

the various Universities for this academy year with presentation of a box of noodle each as a means of encouragement.

THE FINDING FROM THE INQUIRY OF THE DAY:

POLICE ISSUES:

Looking in to why the Police car was burnt down whilst they were in the fore front of the riot protecting our community. It was highlighted on the day that the young people seems to have a wrong perception of the Police in the sense that when a young person committed a crime and arrested by the police they do not like it. The young people also fail to understand that this is one of the primary duty of our local police. Although it was mentioned that we have a small proportion of police who are not treating our young people fairly but if there is no report brought forward it will be hard for the MET to deal or aware of the situation. This was also concluded with a recommendation that our Police in Greenwich Borough are committed, hard working and friendly to us in the borough there is no reason why they have to be paid back by burning their car or hurting them. There was an appreciation from the audience to our local Police for their effort and commitment in ensuring safety of our community despite the way they were treated badly during the riot. Applause from the audience as a means of encouragement.

The Borough Commander took time to answered questions that he was asked about shortage of police which is due to police been moved to Tottenham and reduction in the number of police force due to government cut. PC Paul Martin from Abbey wood SNT came with a young police cadet to talk about the Opportunity for young people to join POLICE CADET. World of Hope works in partner with Police cadet in referring our young people who are interesting or planning to study Criminology to join in enhancing their opportunity in the future. One young person has joined and we have another 2 young people about to be referred from World of Hope.

LEGAL IMPLICATION:

During the inquiry we had a solicitor, lyabo who enlightened both young people and adult about the legal consequences for those who decide to engage in criminal act. She gave definition of THEFT, DNA and the link with facebook. Everyone find this very interesting as most people never knew that an employer could check facebook of their potential employee for the types of comment place on their face book and the type of friends they keep on it. The employers do this to help them to decide the right candidate for their vacancies. There was a particular question from a young person that if one commit a crime is there any restriction in travelling to another country. The Solicitor answered, it depends on the type of crime and the country rules and regulation but there some crime that if one commit the person will be restricted from entering some other countries that is, if one has drug related crime record a country like USA has the right to refuse entrance. The young people were warned to stay out of crime for them to abstain from obtaining crime record that will ruin their present and the future

BUSSINESSES:

Two senior staff from Wlkinson explained how their business and staff were affected as their newly open shop was burnt. They just reopened which has slow the flow of their customer down, the front entrance is not yet repaired the customers has to enter through the back door entrance. They were sympathised with as there was no reason found for what they experienced that left some shops like Blue inc and a pound shop completely burnt not recovered yet. There was a confirmation of financial support from the government.

COMMUNITY RESPONSE:

There were different comments from the young people to show that not all the young people are in favour of the riot and looting. It was highlighted by the young people that some young people do not

see prison as a means of punishment, they see it as a place to have fun where they can gain access to different games such as play stations, gym and good food on time. The parents also pointed out that the government has taking their right of discipline their children away which could affect the behaviour of their children. Moreover, it was also said that the people that took part in the riot seems to be those who are not in the right state of mind which indicate that drug could have impact as a normal human being is not expected to act in that atrocity and abnormal way.

COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITY AND A WAY FORWARD:

It was identified that the products brought by the looters from the shops were definitely kept in people's houses where an adult should be aware of where those products came from. The Police therefore enlighten the participants on how to report by dialling a number (101) from the flyer distributed and anonymously as well to make it difficult for the criminals to get away with what they have done.

It was also identified the need for more resources to work with young people by the government as the young people who are involved are part of our community there is a need to work with them to break the circle of offences.

QUESTION & ANSWER TIME WITH THE BOROUGH COMMANDER:

The Borough Commander talked about the difficulties they face regards to shortage of police during the riot as he has to deployed his staff to help out in another borough where there was a riot earlier without knowing that the riot will later spread across the Country. A young person asked why do you have to send your staff to another borough? He answered, within the police force there is a system to deploy staff in the area where they are not busy to help out where more help is needed. Unfortunately there was no awareness of spread of riot as the riot occurred very fast. However more help were requested from other borough as soon as the riot hit Greenwich borough but they could not spare any of their staff. Mr Wood also highlighted that the big screen that display the picture of those who took part in the riot was tested in Greenwich borough first which has been helpful in identify the wanted people for arrest. The good news is that there has been heavy prison sentences to those who were caught.

At the end of the inquiry there were different types of activities to keep our community together in further engagement for people to know each other. Food and drink were available £1 per person to recover cost. Also there was canvassing for young people to write their views on the riot.

FEED BACK:

The attendees said that the event was timely, highly needed and it helps in getting the community together for better engagement and to find a solution to our community problems.

The event was well attended, in a peaceful environment with community spirit. It was very successful in meeting the outcome set.

Having done this inquiry, World of Hope will be submitting a written evidence to the selected Committee at the House of Common.

APPRECIATION:

The entire team, young people and trustees from World of Hope will like to appreciate all our special Guest especially our Borough Commander, CLLR DENISE HYLAND, Sergeant Stone, Abbeywood Safer Neighborhoods, Wilkinson Regional Manager Baz and Mdupe, Isaac Attram, Mrs Iyabo Eferakoro, Matt Horne from Charlton Athletic Community Trust and BBC Television (Ayshea Buksh)