

PLAY SAFE! Kids get cued in...

The Stephen Harrison Academy (SHA) is providing **FREE SNOOKER SESSIONS** for young people to help reduce anti-social behaviour. SHA staged a showcase snooker & pool competition on 31st August, bank holiday Monday at Hillsborough Snooker Centre, there were young people attending from all areas of Sheffield and joining in on the day.

SHA is actively working to give the young people of today a better chance in life by engaging them in snooker instead of hanging around on the streets where they are at risk of offending. Stephen Harrison says, "We at the academy believe this project is working really well, it's keeping the kids out of trouble and basically just giving them something to do. I've seen many groups of kids just hanging around their local shops, I always carry plenty of academy leaflets to give out informing the kids of our session times."

Stephen adds, "I believe in tackling things at grassroots level, the leaflets let the kids know about our snooker and pool sessions directly, they also know my face. I think it's great getting them involved in snooker, some kids are pretty good players there's some really natural, raw snooker talent in Sheffield, but more importantly everyone really enjoys playing the game and taking part." He also says, "Snooker's not just a boys game anymore, the girls really enjoy playing and are keen competitors."

Stephen Harrison Academy has been servicing many groups since it was first set up in the summer of 2007 ranging from learning difficulties, mental health, children with learning difficulties, youth offending and neets (not in education employment and training). Stephen says, "I'm really passionate about improving young peoples behaviour and giving them something positive to aim for, the young people seem to like coming to the snooker sessions we put on and I believe it can transform young peoples lives."

The academy has also been servicing Sheffield's north prevention team youth offending service since last year with some fantastic results, the academy has also forged strong links with the safer neighbourhood teams, Stephen says, "It's good to get the pcso's involved in this project." Chief Constable Meredydd Hughes says, "Keep up the good work."

Stephen Harrison the founder of the academy concludes, "We're really making a difference in the community, students at the academy can now earn GCSE credits through our nationally accredited UK Snooker Awards 'start learning, start earning programme', which provides many young people with their first job."

Clive Betts MP has heaped praise upon the project, referring to its social role. "It's all about social inclusion, bringing people together and enjoying themselves." he said. "I hope people will see the positive benefits snooker can give to people, provided they have the opportunity."

Clive goes on to say, "Stephen is offering an opportunity to those that have been ignored by sport in the past and now that you can obtain GCSE credits through the UK Snooker Awards, it gives people the chance to learn and update their skills and hopefully, eventually progress on to employment. Literacy and numeracy skills are key for employment opportunities." Clive also said "My support for The Stephen Harrison Academy is up front where it should be and we hope to build on what has been achieved so far and explore ways of expanding the service so that the opportunity can be made available to more people. It's a real social inclusion opportunity and the way sport should be used."

SHA's FREE SNOOKER SESSIONS are Monday to Friday between 4pm-7pm at Hillsborough Snooker Centre, Baxter Road, S6. So if you're aged 8-18 and you want to get involved you can just turn up or telephone 0114 224 2346 for more info.