

# BYZ NEWS



The official newsletter of Blackburn Youth Zone: June 2020 | Edition 13

When the Covid-19 crisis hit in March 2020, Blackburn Youth Zone adapted quickly to ensure that we were continuing to meet the needs of the children and young people of Blackburn with Darwen. Although BYZ's income is rapidly reducing due to the crisis, the irony of Covid-19 is a hugely increased demand for our services and young people needing us now more than ever as we see signs of decreasing mental health and emotional well-being, through the social isolation and lack of positive activity across the community. BYZ is a fundamental part of the community and right now we are needed more than ever, and will continue to #WhateverItTakes

- Hannah Allen CEO

## BYZ Digital Offer

BYZ have been supporting over 303 young people through targeted youth support via our 'Internet Youth Club' and a further average of 555 young people engaging with our 'Youth Zone at Home' programme on social media. Activity sessions are delivered through live streaming and recorded video content. Providing a mix of interactive learning, quizzes and chat, delivered every couple of hours throughout the



Theme of digital offer:

- Lets Learn
- Lets do stuff
- Lets share positivity.



## BYZ has given out 10,000 free meals since the start of lock down

Blackburn Youth Zone has now supported the distribution of 10,000 meals to members of the community in need during the Covid-19 crisis.

When the crisis hit in March BYZ was required to quickly adapt the way in which they were going to support young people and the community. The Youth Zone launched its successful service to provide healthy, nutritious meals each day Monday-Friday to anybody who needed one, now 3 months later supported over 700 families in the borough.

As well as this, BYZ have also ran a 'ZONE TO HOME' and an online Iftar.



GOT GREAT NEWS FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER? EMAIL [MELANIE.THOMAS@BLACKBURNYZ.ORG](mailto:MELANIE.THOMAS@BLACKBURNYZ.ORG)

## **'ZONE TO HOME' raises £20,000 and supports over 4,000 people**

Over the bank holiday weekend Blackburn Youth Zone with support from the local community took on a massive challenge to support just over 4,000 people through their new campaign ZONE TO HOME.

Over 500 homes were visited on Friday 10th April, the Youth Zone team and volunteers embarked

on the exciting challenge of supporting members and the wider community through the bank holiday weekend. The recipe gave families the chance to spend time in the kitchen together and to cook a healthy recipe.

**A big thank you to Lisa Goodwin Allen from Nothcote, Cardboard Box Company, What More, Wellocks, Pets Choice & everyone who donated for making this possible!**



## **National Volunteer Week**

Thank you to all BYZ volunteers who have given up their time to support our 7 day a week, 365 days a year operation, your very kind support goes in to supporting thousands of young people every single day. Our service really would not be possible without our amazing volunteers. Since opening we have had 96,000 hours of volunteering given to BYZ and an average of 250 individual volunteering. You can support and volunteer - we have volunteers across the organisation including Youth Work, Admin, Drivers, Marketing and Sports Coaches. Check out our website for how to get involved - <https://www.blackburnyz.org/volunteering/>



## **Young people bring the community together for the first Blackburn with Darwen online Iftar**

Over 60 people from different backgrounds came together online to share an Iftar video call in an ambitious project led by Blackburn Youth Zone supported by BwD Strategic Youth Alliance.

The Big Iftar event, on the evening of Thursday 21 May, was arranged with the help of the Youth Ambassadors and

Community Ambassadors, both projects delivered through the Our Community, Our Future social integration programme.

Youth Ambassadors, Blackburn Youth Zone staff and partners, supported by 30 volunteers, embarked on the ambitious task of providing 2,000 young people and their families with meal packages and recipes for them to prepare, have fun and cook together. That evening 60 people from all different backgrounds came together virtually through a 'zoom' video call to break their fast, enjoy a vegetable biryani together and share stories.



## Supporting BYZ members

BYZ has continued 1:1 work with our more vulnerable members, this will be by video call or by telephone.

We have 200+ members who have mental health concerns, are isolated or suffer loneliness and they will be prioritised. During COVID 19 we spoke to 354 young people during May, through phone calls, social

media surveys and Zoom youth club sessions, 67% of young people stated they had struggled through the crisis and had benefited from the support BYZ has provided them with. Each week we have provided welfare calls to our most vulnerable members. In total the team have made 2436 calls, supporting young people with mental health challenges and helping mitigate the difficulties of loneliness/isolation.

We have supported 12 young

people with weekly 1-2-1 online mentoring sessions delivered by volunteers.



## Gatsby Masterclass

### Connecting young people and the business community



Mr Cocker, Headteacher from Pleckgate School said:

**"Just wanted feedback that our young people really enjoyed yesterday's master class. They are high quality and of value to our students. More students have expressed an interest in the other masterclasses as a result. Look forward to receiving the video"**

Blackburn Youth Zone online programme grows, as we're reaching out to the business community to see how they can help provide learning experiences for young people from across the town, by sharing their industry lead expertise, skills and experiences to help teach others.

This project is delivered via digital platforms through masterclasses, which will invite young people from all backgrounds to participate within a 1-hour workshop around a specific topic/interest. This is for school years 9 – 11 and will run every Wednesday 2pm – 3pm. Can you support young people across Blackburn with Darwen and provide a masterclass for young people? If so please get in touch with [leon.crosby@blackburnyz.org](mailto:leon.crosby@blackburnyz.org).

## Working Together

- Thank you so much to Northcote who have very kindly donated food to support the young people of the borough who are in need of meals #ActOfKindness #whateverItTakes

- Thank you to Granby Marketing, PM+M, BAE and all volunteers who came in to donate their time and support BYZ Big Iftar.

- Thank you Duchy of Lancaster for donating a BYZ cooker which supports feeding young and families through COVID 19.

- We would like to take this opportunity to thank Cllr Maureen Bateson for her commitment to the children and young people of BwD for the last 22 years and for her support towards Blackburn Youth Zone.

- Thank you to Granby Marketing for donating beauty products to youth members



## Patrons Breakfast



On Friday 5th June, BYZ held their second Patrons Breakfast where Hannah Allen and BYZ Chairman Rt Hon Jack Straw hosted the event on zoom which brought together the BYZ network.

Guest speakers of the online event were Michelle Mellor, MD of Cummins Mellor and Fiona Eason former People and Culture Director at Crown Paints who gave the network support and advice on logistic of returning to work after COVID -19 and how to support the workforce and communicate

## Meet Ben - BYZ member



Ben, who became a Blackburn Youth Zone member around three years ago when he was 13, felt pressure from home and school to decide on his next steps, and was confused about what path to take.

Ben had a growing interest in art, gaming and engineering - all of which he enjoyed at BYZ. With

our help, Ben applied to do a pre-apprenticeship course with BAE Systems - a BYZ Patron. During this time he also completed his GCSEs and made the decision to study engineering at Burnley College. When the Covid-19 crisis hit, the BYZ offer moved to a 'Virtual Youth Zone' and Ben was keen to continue to

support younger members. Ben used his initiative and skills to create a 'Virtual Youth Zone' on Minecraft. Ben's Minecraft Youth Zone is now being used by other Youth Zones across the country, helping 1,000s of young people stay connected to their local Youth Zone whilst they are stuck at home.



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