

HOLFORD DRIVE

On Thursday 27th March, a team of Perry Beeches School Reporters went to interview a receiver of an MBE - Lincoln Moses about the new Holford Drive Sports Hub in Perry Barr, Birmingham.

Holford Drive is the first of its kind in the West Midlands, with about 800 young people attending each week. It was opened on November 25th 2013, when the keys were officially handed over to the community from Birmingham City Council. The aim of the centre is to help young people make good use of their free time, keep healthy and widen their opportunities for the future. At the centre there is everything from an all-weather tennis court; training pitches; boxing room with rings and punch bags, as well as a studio for exercise, dance and Zumba classes; to a prayer/mentoring room; six colour-coded changing room and toilets; various parent/carer viewing areas; and a boardroom. In addition to this, there are also facilities for physiotherapy, first aid and the centre offers excellent disabled access. The four core sports are football, tennis, boxing and cricket. There are various activities for young people to become involved in. Everything in the centre was donated by various organisations, mainly Sport England. Broadway Academy, the neighbouring school, is one of the centre's partners. Also, all staff work 'pro-bono', which means that they volunteer. As Lincoln stated, "The community runs it on behalf of the community."

As a part of many committees and boards – including the FA Race Equality - together with his football team, Continental Star, (the longest running sporting club which will celebrate its 40th anniversary later in the year), Lincoln has years of experience and has always challenged concepts which are unfair. When asked about the relevance of the location, Lincoln explained "It's an area of high deprivation; many young people face difficulties because of circumstances." He was also keen to point out how many other people are involved, "I don't want people to think it's just me in charge, without the support of others we wouldn't be able to do this."

It has been a long journey, with ten years of stress and illness, along with eight operations for Lincoln, yet despite this he is very proud of the centre. While he has had to make a number of sacrifices, Lincoln replied that "Without a shadow of doubt, yes", when asked if he thought the centre was making a positive contribution to the local community. However, there are some perks, such as seats at the London 2012 Olympics, visiting Wembley Stadium, going to the Caribbean and meeting the Queen when he received his MBE. Since 2009, Lincoln has received an impressive eighteen awards. It would be fair to say that he is a remarkable man!

Furthermore, he added that "The biggest reward is changing the mindset of young people", which clearly the centre is successfully doing. A young man was interviewed using the boxing facilities that he uses at the centre for training, as it offers the best opportunities and it keeps people off the streets, helping to reduce the number of crimes. Also, coming to the centre has taught him dedication, focus,

discipline, control, the basics of boxing and technique. Additionally, the young man went on to explain the difference Holford Drive has made to both his life and the community, "It has made a huge difference; I'm proud of what I've achieved. I've changed for the better; I'm a better person now. It has made an immense difference to the community. More and more people are coming, often troubled people. It teaches them respect." He said to improve the centre he would recommend encouraging more people to attend, no matter what age and to work together as a community even more.

Lincoln also has some ideas on how to develop Holford Drive in the future, such as: a floodlit driving range, walking/bicycle path/area, a multi-sports area and after school clubs. For a year's membership, it is £10 for adults and £5 for children.

Even though it has been a long journey, Holford Drive displays so much potential to be a multi-sports hub that will still be going from strength to strength in many years, helping countless young people along the way. It offers lots of exciting opportunities for development.

By Aimee, Sophie and Suhail

