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THE MANCHESTER YOUTH ZONE FIGHTS CHILD HUNGER WITH HOLIDAY CLUB

*Youth centre serves 800 free hot meals to local families in need.*

The Manchester Youth Zone has launched a new holiday club to support families throughout Greater Manchester that are struggling to meet their basic needs with the region’s rising poverty line. The aim of the programme is to ensure children, especially those who receive free school meals during school term, have access to a safe environment and receive hot, cooked, meals throughout the holidays.

Richard Marsh, CEO of Manchester Youth Zone, says: “statistics from the council report within Greater Manchester 42% of children are living below poverty - double the national rate and this figure is even higher within North Manchester where we are based. Since Manchester Youth Zone opened doors 6 years ago, there have been several incidents where we’ve seen young people’s weight drop significantly, as much as a stone, during holidays.”

The first holiday club at Manchester Youth Zone, funded by UKfast and the Department for Education, took place over the summer months.

Marsh ads: “we had several instances of young people coming in wearing their school uniforms throughout the summer holiday club. When asked by staff why this was, it became apparent it was because they were the only clothes they owned. With this feedback we knew it was important to continue the holiday club - there are lot of young people that need a warm, safe place and access to hot nutritious meals.”

The Manchester Youth Zone ran a second holiday club during half term throughout October 22nd – 26th with funding from Manchester-based financial service provider MoneyPlus Group.

Marsh said: “ MoneyPlus Group do so much for the Manchester Youth Zone all year round and after hearing about holiday hunger and the effect this can have on young people, they jumped on the opportunity to do more. We organised a selection of warm clothing to ensure all young people coming into the holiday club and evening sessions leave with appropriate clothing for the weather.”

The Manchester Youth Zone holiday club has served over 800 free hot meals to 41 different families, involving 50 young people per day.

One in 10 people within the region are skipping meals so family members can eat and one in five are cutting down on the amount of fruit and veg they buy, according to a special report released from Manchester council in 2013 states. With the growing need for the holiday club and the positive impact it is having in the community, the Manchester Youth Zone endeavours to continue the initiative during the upcoming festive season and seeking support from the business community to do so.

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NOTES TO EDITOR

The Manchester Youth Zone is located in Harpurhey, North Manchester and is ranked as the 2nd worst ward in England for the effect of long term deprivation on children. Many in the surrounding area are vulnerable to poor educational attainment, future worklessness and to developing antisocial or offending behaviour. Manchester Youth Zone provides a unique safe place for young people aged from 6 – 19, up to 25 with additional needs, from across Manchester. With a wealth of sport and creative activities, MYZ currently welcomes almost 1,000 young people each week and we work to raise our members aspirations and equip them with the tools to increase their confidence, build positive relationships and add something back to their own community.

<https://www.manchesteryz.org/>

Manchester Youth Zone is a registered charity under the number: 1134580.