

STARLIGHT

Starlight Black Child
Mixed Heritage Group

June 2005

A newsletter for families, friends and professionals with a keen interest in issues related to black young people of mixed heritage.

Welcome!

Welcome to the first issue of our newsletter which aims to keep subscribers informed about the activities and events being organized for the black child mixed heritage group. It also aims to share articles, conferences and other courses relevant to professionals, friends and families with an interest in race equality issues. We hope that subscribers will find the newsletter informative and contributions are welcomed.

Starlight black child mixed heritage group was launched on the 1 May 2005. The aim of the group is to provide a forum for adults, parents, carers and black young people of mixed heritage. There is an opportunity to meet, gain support, information and advice and to participate in outings and events. The group provides a voice for black young people of mixed heritage, their families and friends. The group is also committed to raising awareness of the significant contribution black people have made to British society, both in history and in contemporary Britain.

The group's objectives are as follows:

- To provide adults, parents, carers and black young people of mixed heritage with a

regular meeting place to gain support from one another.

- To offer the opportunity to share experiences and to discuss the group's understanding of racism.
- To enhance the whole group's awareness of racism.
- To explore ways in which the group can challenge racism by the most effective means.
- To provide the opportunity to share experiences of prejudice at a personal level.
- To provide the opportunity to share experiences of addressing racism at institutional levels.
- To celebrate the accomplishments of black people in British society, both in history and in contemporary Britain.
- To celebrate being a black person of mixed heritage.
- To organise and put on events.
- To set up activities and fun days for black children of mixed heritage, their families and friends.
- To provide clear publicity and contact details.

- To build up a set of resources that are relevant to the group's experience and



will promote discussion and learning.

- To be involved in fundraising for the group.
- To develop a newsletter and website.
- To develop a National Association.

Anyone wishing to join the group or who would like to subscribe to this newsletter, please complete the registration form on page 4.

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Special points of interest:

- Join us at WOMAD 29, 30 and 31 July.
- Summer Breeze Boat Trip 27 August 6pm til late
- Conference dates

If you would like to advertise an event or contribute an article, please contact:

Starlight BCMHG
1 Mole Place
OXFORD OX4 7SD
Tel/Fax: 01865 776691
E-mail: StarlightEnt7788@aol.com
Please ensure all details arrive by Monday, 22 August 2005

Next issue: September 2005

Letterbox Library



Starlight holds a stock of children's books for sale which have been provided by the book club Letterbox Library. They provide a range of children's books and resources that celebrate equality and diversity. Letterbox believe that challenging stereotypes and discrimination should play a fundamental part in every child's education and that we all

have a collective responsibility to make every child feel valued, regardless of their background or abilities.

Starlight are pleased to be able to offer these books for sale on behalf of Letterbox. Please telephone Glen or Sue on Oxford 776691 or e-mail: Starlight-Ent7788@aol.com to arrange a time to view these books.

'SUMMER BREEZE' BOAT TRIP



Starlight's first boat trip 'Play Time' was such a brilliant success that we have organised a second one called 'Summer Breeze'. Many thanks to Atlantic Studios, Studio 45 and DJ Col for making the first one such an excellent day. A particular thanks to Atlantic Studios, London, we hope he re-thinks his retirement as we'll miss his music - a true connoisseur!

The boat will leave Folly Bridge at 6pm and will arrive back at The Isis Tavern at around 10pm to continue partying til late.

Studio 45's Ja'Blinks is at the helm with DJ Col second in command. There will be Caribbean food

included in the price so come along and enjoy the party.

Saturday, 27 August 2005
6pm til late Tickets £20

For more information or to book a place contact : Starlight Enterprise, 1 Mole Place, Oxford OX4 7SD or phone: Oxford 776691 or 07786354454 or

E-mail: StarlightEnt7788@aol.com

Remember to book early as all tickets must be sold before we set sail. No tickets will be available on the day.

[Check out Studio 45's website: www.studio45.org.uk](http://www.studio45.org.uk)

'Does Colour Matter?' Conferences

"It was a very good conference, I thoroughly enjoyed the day and met some nice people. Well done Glen & Sue, keep up the good work!"

The first in a series of 'Does colour matter?' conferences was held in Oxford on March 17th 2005. It provided an opportunity for white and black professionals to discuss their perceptions of racism and to look to positive ways of working together.

Starlight believe this is an important debate that can make a significant contribution towards the creation of a genuinely culturally diverse, open and equal environment. By hosting this debate independent of any organisation, local authority or other institution, Starlight feel they are most likely to give participants an opportunity to explore these issues in an honest, open environment, free of any pressures, real or imaginary, that may limit their contribution to this debate if linked more directly with their work environment.

The day commences with a panel of

speakers putting forward their perspective. The panel in Oxford was made up of Tony Sewell, a leading black educationalist; Chris Gaine, Chair of Social Policy at University College, Chichester; Vicki Harman, Lecturer & PhD Research Student at University of London; Trevor Gordon, a Staff Trainer and Education Management Consultant; Ray Coker, formerly a Senior Lecturer at Southampton Institute; Gerry German, Director, Communities Empowerment Network, London and Robin Richardson, from Inservice Training & Educational Development. The meeting was chaired by Peter Fryer, Oxfordshire County Council UNISON's Assistant Branch Secretary.

Following the presentation by the speakers there was an open debate for the rest of the morning. After lunch there was a series of workshops that allowed for a more in-depth discussion concerning the differing perspectives of

racism and the day ended with a plenary session where some key ideas were presented to take this important debate forward.

Once this series of conferences have been held, the findings will be written up and sent to everyone who has participated in this important debate. This report can be used as a template to take forward this work in their specific location.

If Starlight can achieve their aim they believe they will be able to contribute to the development of an inclusive set of services that values the skills and talents of a diverse range of people and is most likely to help create opportunities for all children irregardless of their cultural heritage.

The future dates and locations are: Thursday, 15 September 2005; in London Thursday, 15 December 2005 in Liverpool; Thursday, 30 March 2006 in Brighton; Thursday, 13 July 2006 in Birmingham and Thursday, 28 September 2006 in Bristol.

The cost of attending one of these days is £95 per participant and includes refreshments and lunch.

Please fill in the form on page 4 if you would like further details or wish to book a place.

Starlight Enterprise

Harmonisation

Glen Berley and Sue Funge

March 2005

Harmonisation Book

Sue and Glen spent most of 2004 developing their courses and events and in writing their first book *Harmonisation* which brings together different approaches to personal and social development and offers practical tips and advice that supports children.

There is a section on identity development and how to support children developing a positive racial identity. Strategies to deal with

bullying are included, along with reference to Emotional Literacy, Positive Thinking and other related approaches. Practical activities and ideas are included to make this manual a useful resource for anyone working with children and young people. The cost of this resource is £19.75 plus £2.50 postage and packing. If you would like to order a copy please complete the form on page 4.

WOMAD RIVERMEAD 2005

WOMAD stands for World of Music, Arts and Dance. It was originally inspired by Peter Gabriel: "Pure enthusiasm for music from around the world led us to the idea of WOMAD in 1980 and thus to the first WOMAD festival in 1982."

WOMAD at Rivermead returns this summer for the 16th time to the banks of the River Thames in Reading, UK.

The theme of this year's festival is the Caribbean with the veteran Jamaican group *Culture* performing on the Friday night.

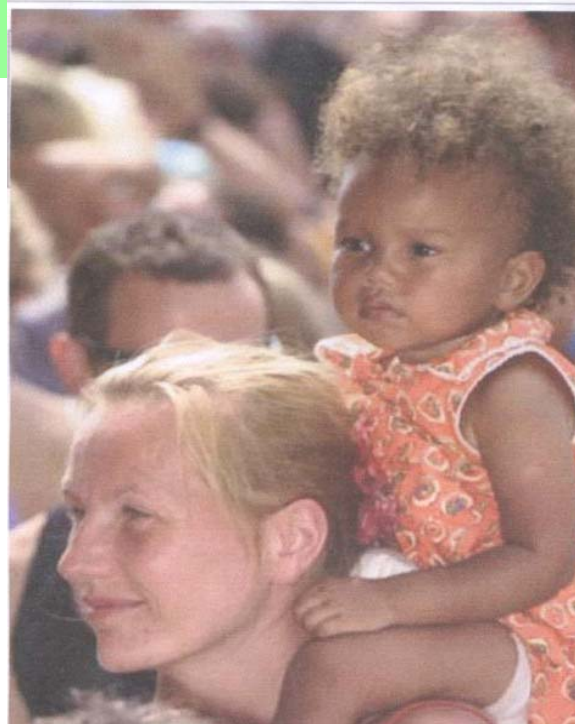
The full line-up can be found on WOMAD's website.

The weekend ticket costs £99 and we are planning to make a group booking. If you want to join us you must get in touch by Friday, 15 July at the latest.

WOMAD has a brilliant atmosphere and there is plenty for everyone to enjoy whatever their age. It is suitable for families with young children and should not be missed.

If you would like to join us, please get in touch before the 15 July and we will include you in our group booking.

Details of how to contact us are on page 4 of this newsletter. Hope to share this experience with you.



'I Can Do It!' Conference

This conference was held on Friday, 22 April at The Kassam Stadium for Year 10 and 11 students of African Caribbean descent attending schools in Oxfordshire. The day focused on what these students felt helped or hindered their academic achievement.

A number of comments related to the whole school environment and how the curriculum failed to reflect or acknowledge anything about black history, culture or multiculturalism in general. The students felt that their culture is not recognised and that there is a division of cultures in their school. They felt that bullying can be an issue and that racism is still a part of their experience in school. They feel that teachers should be making more attempts to identify the bullying that is occurring in their school.

They felt that it is important to know more about their heritage to help them to be confident about themselves and that they would benefit from this opportunity. They would like to learn about black history in school, however they are aware that some white people in their school might resist this being taught as they already think it is unfair that they have had an opportunity to attend this conference and wonder how they might feel if they had to learn about black history. However, they rightly point out that black history is not just for black students it is of interest to others too.

There were a number of comments related to the negative attitudes they feel some teachers have towards them. They feel it is unfair that they are treated differently from the

white students. They would like to feel respected too. They commented that some teachers can be quite sarcastic and pick on the black students and may blame them for disruption in the class when in fact they have not been involved at all. They feel that some teachers can behave like a bully and can label them as stupid just because they haven't understood what has been said.

The students were willing to admit that their own behaviour and attitude can sometimes aggravate the situation in school. They could see that if they have no focus this won't help them to learn and progress. They acknowledged that there are groups and individuals who mess around in class and can wind the teacher up. In this way they could see they were not helping themselves. They could also see that not doing their homework or revision is not going to help their progress.

The students acknowledged that friends can be distracting in class by speaking during lessons or disrupting lessons. They acknowledged the pressure to experiment and be the same as others in their peer group. They can be labelled and this can cause arguments but there is also a fear of exclusion. They identified the types of students that can cause disruption by being attention seeking, acting as class

clowns or being needy for affection.

The students identified a number of strategies that would help them to achieve their potential. They felt it was important to be able to talk through any issues with a trusted adult. For some this was the Connexions worker in their school, for others it was their parents or a teacher they could trust. They recognised the importance of having a supportive family who believes in them. Supportive friends and help from a mentor, who has recently left school and is familiar with the issues they face, were also identified as support networks that would help.

The students' discussions have highlighted key issues that need to be addressed. They clearly benefited from the opportunity to discuss their experiences in school. It is now important that we build on this event and address the issues raised throughout the day and help our black students to achieve. Therefore a further conference is being organised in October 2005 and more details will be included in the next issue of this newsletter.





RAP 1

The aim of this project is to raise the aspirations of black young people of African Caribbean descent by providing activities that support the development and maintenance of a positive self identity and self-esteem, encouraging them to achieve their full potential. The content of each session will focus on different aspects of personal development and self awareness. These sessions will include activities that help the young people to consider what it means to be young and black in Britain today. They will include aspects of black history that will help to promote a pride in their black heritage and a positive racial identity.

By the end of the course, the young people will have had the opportunity to:

- develop and maintain a positive racial identity;
- increase self-esteem / self-concept / self-awareness;
- develop and practice the skills of positive thinking;
- understand what it means to be emotionally literate;

- develop appropriate personal coping strategies;
- increase their levels of confidence;
- develop strategies to deal with feelings of anger and unfairness appropriately;
- feel positive about themselves and raise their aspirations.

The 'Raising Aspirations' Project will offer twelve sessions of one and a half hours to young people of African Caribbean descent aged between 11 - 16 years old.

The outcomes include:

- raising the aspirations of young people of African Caribbean descent;
- helping them to recognise and focus on their abilities and do well;
- being proud of their identity and gain knowledge of their shared history.

RAP 2

This is the second phase of the Raising Aspirations Project whereby young people attend a one day workshop and have the opportunity

to meet and talk with a number of black professionals.

The workshops will offer 'taster' sessions in careers such as, TV and media, Computing, Fashion Design, Electrical Engineering, Law, Hair & Beauty, Youth & Community work and Art & Design. There will be the opportunity for each young person to sign up for three different workshops throughout the day.

RAP 3

This is the third phase of the Raising Aspirations Project whereby professionals working with black young people of African Caribbean descent can register to attend a one day conference focusing on meeting the needs of black young people.

The conference will include keynote speeches followed by a series of workshops that black young people, who have completed RAP 1 & 2 courses, will be involved in planning and presenting.

By the end of the conference, participants will have had the opportunity to:

- gain a greater understanding of the issues black young people face in the UK today;

- reflect on their own values, attitudes and beliefs;

- gain a greater understanding of how they may successfully work with black young people, helping them achieve their full potential;

- be provided with practical tips and ideas that develops their work positively;

- have the opportunity to network and register for future events.

The outcomes for the young people include:

- developing planning and presentation skills;
- improving communication skills;
- gaining confidence;
- gaining a greater understanding of other people's values, attitudes and beliefs.

For further information please complete the form below.

REGISTRATION FORM

Name: Title: (Dr/Mr/Mrs/Ms etc) Address:
 Post code: Telephone:.....
 Mobile: E-mail:

- I wish to subscribe to the Starlight Black Child Mixed Parentage Group newsletter and enclose a cheque for £20 for one year's subscription.
- I would like to join the Starlight Black Child Mixed Parentage Group and would like further information about meetings and events.
- I wish to book place(s) on the *Summer Breeze* boat trip & enclose a cheque for £..... being the total due for place(s).
- I am interested in attending a 'Does Colour Matter?' conference and would like further information.
- I would like to book a place at the 'Does Colour Matter?' conference in on and enclose a cheque for £..... being the total due for place(s).
- I would like to book a place for the WOMAD festival in Reading and would like further information.
- I would like to order copies of *Harmonisation* & enclose a cheque for £ being the amount due including postage & packing.
- I would like further information on the RAP courses.
- Other comments:

Signed:..... Date: