

Achievements of Margate-based project celebrated at star-studded National Lottery Awards ceremony

Sport 4 NRG, a project helping to provide opportunities for young people at risk of offending, has been recognised as one of the UK's best Lottery-funded sports projects at the 2007 National Lottery Awards.

Lottery ambassador, Gary Lineker, presented the Best Sports Project Runners-Up trophy to representatives from the project at a star-studded ceremony. The event was shown live on Saturday 15 September on a special BBC 1 programme 'The National Lottery: Big 7'. The ceremony, hosted by Dale Winton and Jenni Falconer, was attended by celebrity Lottery ambassadors including: Elaine Paige; Tess Daly; Craig Doyle; Mel Sykes; Tiana Benjamin and Dermot Murnaghan.

A record number of public votes were received in this, the fourth annual National Lottery Awards, which aim to recognise the difference that Lottery-funded projects of all sizes make to local communities. Having received an incredible show of public support at all stages of the competition, which saw over 640 entries this year, Sport 4 NRG made it to the final three in the Best Sports category. They were pipped to the post by Bedford-based healthy lifestyle programme, Fit@Sixty.

Spokesperson for the project, James Gregory, said:

"We were absolutely thrilled to have reached the finals of the Awards. We are really grateful to everyone who has voted for us. Being part of the competition and getting to appear on the BBC show, has had the biggest positive impact on everyone at the project. The Awards have given us a great excuse to thank everyone who has helped us make the project the success it is, and to make the most of our Lottery funding.

"Sport 4 NRG helps kids who are at risk of offending. It keeps them busy and helps put them on the right road through physical activities. It has proved a massive success and radically reduced the risk of re-offending."

James Purnell, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, said:

“The National Lottery Awards are a chance to celebrate the achievements of Lottery funded projects up and down the country. Every year the Lottery gives millions of pounds to local projects that help make a real difference to local communities. This year’s projects are no exception, demonstrating creativity and inventiveness in the way they have enriched peoples’ lives.”

Over 600 young people have benefited so far with a hugely reduced re-offending rate. A study of the scheme showed that, out of 250 young people referred by the police, only 4,8% have re-offended.

Lottery funding has been spent on employing qualified sports coaches for football, basketball, tennis, cricket, volleyball, boxercise, trampolining, rock climbing, golf and surfing. It has enabled the project to hire facilities and equipment, it has also helped pay for transport to out-of-area locations for activities such as ice skating, motorcross and surfing, and to buy team kit for the young people in the scheme.

Since The National Lottery began in 1994, more than £20 billion has been raised and over 270,000 grants given out to projects like Sport 4 NRG across arts, sport, heritage, charities, health, education and the environment. The National Lottery Awards aim to celebrate and recognise the difference that Lottery-funded projects have made to people, places and communities all across the UK.

Other winners at The National Lottery Awards 2007 were: The Brindley for Best Arts Project; Rumbles Catering Project for Best Education Project; the National Botanic Garden of Wales for Best Environment Project; Exercise For All for Best Health Project; Somme Theatre for Best Heritage Project; and RNIB Talk and Support Telebefriending for Best Charity/Voluntary project. The winning projects all received £2,000 to be spent on their project.

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Notes to editors:

- Now in their fourth year, The National Lottery Awards recognise the difference that Lottery-funded projects make to local communities and celebrate the achievements of the people behind them.
- There are seven categories in The National Lottery Awards:
 - *Best Arts Project*
 - *Best Education Project*
 - *Best Environment Project*
 - *Best Health Project*
 - *Best Heritage Project*
 - *Best Sports Project*
 - *Best Charity/Voluntary Project*
- The National Lottery Awards were launched in March 2007, and projects were encouraged to nominate themselves, or they were nominated by the public. An independent panel of judges selected a shortlist of ten projects per category from the 646 entries received. The first round of public voting took place between 9 July and 3 August. The three projects with the most votes in each category then went through to a final round of public voting between 13 and 31 August. The project with the most votes in each category was declared the winner and the other two projects, runners-up.
- For more information on the Awards visit The National Lottery Good Causes website: www.lotterygoodcauses.org.uk/awards
- Since The National Lottery began in 1994, Lottery players have raised more than £20 billion for Good Causes, which is equivalent to £25 million per week.
- For every pound spent on The National Lottery, 28p goes to Good Causes.
- Over the past 13 years The National Lottery has distributed over 270,000 grants to projects across the arts, heritage, sport, environment, health, education, voluntary projects and charities.
- Over half of all Lottery grants are under £5,000, helping small projects make a big difference.

Photography, quotes and/or interviews with any of the finalist Lottery-funded projects can be arranged. For further information, a quote or to arrange an interview please contact: Matthew Mansfield on 020 7211 1855 or

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