

Jack Petchey's "SPEAK OUT" Challenge!

20,000 Teenagers to Speak Up and Speak Out in the World's Biggest Youth Speaking Event

Troubled, moody, violent and unable to communicate – Britain's teens are busy courting media attention for all the wrong reasons.

But that is all about to change for thousands taking part in the world's biggest youth speaking competition.

Jack Petchey's "Speak Out" Challenge!, run by SpeakersBank, a not-for-profit organisation, begins again this month, offering 14-15 year olds the chance to talk publicly about issues that are important to them.

With 25 teenagers already losing their lives to violent gun or knife crime on the capital's streets this year, perhaps there has never been a better time for adults to take notice of what our young people have to say.

Sponsored by the Jack Petchey Foundation and now in its fourth year, up to 20,000 young people are expected to compete for over £25,000 worth of prizes.

Each will receive six hours intensive training in the skill of effective public speaking before taking part. There will be no restrictions on what they talk about; no use of notes; no podiums and no barriers - only their voices, their words and their passion.

The class joker, the tough-talker, the shy silent or the high-flyer – all competitors will have the same chance to Speak Up and Speak Out!

During over 550 school heats across the southeast, judges will select winners from 37 regional finals who will then go on to compete in the Grand Final on the 10th July 2009.

Over the past three years, both teachers and students report huge increase in confidence and self esteem:

"Never in a million years did I believe I could stand on that stage and deliver a speech about child poverty to a large audience. Before the public speaking workshop, I was shy, lacked confidence and had no self-belief. I left that workshop a totally different person and now, even my teachers comment on how confident I look and sound"

Chhaya Jain, 14, Borough of Barnet Championship 2007

Sean Kennedy, project director says:

"It is simple, the same equation for all – "Confidence leads to inclusion and inclusion leads to achievement"

The grand final will be held at the Mermaid Conference and Events Centre in London, 10th July 2009, where the champion will receive a prize valued at £5,000.

-ENDS-

Notes to editors:

- Please go to www.speakoutchallenge.com for more information on Jack Petchey's "Speak Out" Challenge!
- The first Regional Final, is on the 27 of November, in Haringey, London. For further information on events contact 0845 838 8948 or <http://www.speakoutchallenge.com/pages/events>
- SpeakersBank is part of the Speakers Trust charity. Its network of professional trainers, speakers and facilitators provide dynamic training to all sectors of the population, particularly to those in the education, voluntary and public arenas that have little access to such opportunity. For further details visit the website www.speakersbank.co.uk
- According to the Sunday Times Rich List, Jack Petchey OBE is amongst the country's top ten most generous givers to education and youth. Established in 1999, The Jack Petchey Foundation gives grants to programmes and projects that benefit young people aged 11-25. The Foundation is eager to help young people take advantage of opportunities and play a full part in society. The major focus of our work is the Achievement Award Scheme. The Foundation focuses on London and Essex. Since it has been established the Foundation has awarded grants totalling over £50million. For further details visit the website www.jackpetcheyfoundation.org.uk

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