



Date: 1<sup>st</sup> November 2008

## **25,000 Teenagers to Speak Up and Speak Out in the World's Biggest Youth Speaking Event**

Beginning this month, 25,000 teenagers will speak out on everything from gang culture to global warming as they compete to become the 2008 "Speak Out" Challenge! Champion.

Run by SpeakersBank, a not-for-profit training organisation, Jack Petchey's "Speak Out" Challenge! is the biggest public speaking event of its kind in the world. Initial rounds will take place in over 550 schools across the Southeast, before the grand final on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2008.

The competition begins with each teenager receiving a full day of training in public speaking and effective communication. This gives them the skills and self-belief to deliver their speeches with clarity and confidence.

At a time when teenagers complain that no-one ever listens to their views, 25,000 now have the opportunity to get their message across and speak openly and honestly about what really matters to them.

There are no restrictions on what they talk about, no use of notes, no podiums and no barriers, only their voices, their words and their passion.

2008 is the third year of this project. Out of 10,000 speeches given in 2007, the top ten topics teenagers talked about were:

- 1) Knife and gun crime
- 2) Global warming
- 3) Stereotyping of teenagers
- 4) Racism
- 5) Bullying
- 6) Eradicating poverty
- 7) Sport
- 8) Importance of the family
- 9) Celebrity culture
- 10) Size zero debate

Over this time, 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, where the champion will receive a prize valued at £5,000.

-ENDS-

**Notes to editors:**

- Please go to [www.speakoutchallenge.com](http://www.speakoutchallenge.com) for more information on the Jack Petchey's "Speak Out" Challenge!
- The first Regional Final, is on the 13<sup>th</sup> of November, in Hammersmith, London. For further information on events contact 0207 022 1845 or <http://www.speakoutchallenge.com/pages/whenwhere>
- 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](http://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. Since the Foundation was established in 1999 £30million has been donated to a wide range of organisations that worth with and support young people aged 11-25. A self made successful businessman, despite being told he would never make the grade, Eastender Jack started the Foundation to help youngsters take advantage of opportunities and to play their part in society. The Foundation's main methods of grant support are: Achievement Awards, Leader Awards, Project Grants and Sponsorship. For further details visit the website [www.jackpetcheyfoundation.org.uk](http://www.jackpetcheyfoundation.org.uk)

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