

'Dragon's Den' Style Project Gets Youngsters Fired Up In Edinburgh

Twelve young adults from Edinburgh gained invaluable insight into business leadership and strategy after being given the chance to design a long-term sustainability project for the Craggs Community Sports Centre in partnership with house builder CALA Homes.

The group, aged between 15-18 years were able to show off their business acumen by developing a long-term plan for future funding of the recreation centre.



The idea to let users of the Craggs have a say in its future was devised by organisational development experts Maasai Camel, and saw a group of executives from the upmarket house builder put the young people through their paces in a Dragon's Den style planning and pitch session.

"It was fantastic to see the CALA team work with these young people, brainstorm ideas for their pitches and help add some real life business insight, wisdom and creativity to their proposals.



"I have no doubt that the experience will be exceptionally valuable for both the CALA staff and the young leaders and I'm looking forward to seeing how the chosen project pans out"

-Richard Knight, Director at Maasai Camel.



As part of the workshop, the teams had the chance to visit social enterprises across the city, including The Melting Pot and Edinburgh Palette at St Margaret's House, to get a flavour of the types of schemes they could come up with.

Following a day of planning, the teams took part in a nail-biting, Dragon's Den style pitch, where their ideas were scrutinised by a panel of Board Directors and trustees from both the Craggs Community Sports Centre and CALA Homes.

Simon Turner, Craggs Development Manager, said: "It's been an eye opener in a really positive way for both the CALA managers and the young adults, as both have been exposed to a range of ideas and people they wouldn't normally interact with.

"The passion, drive and ingenuity displayed by the young people has been truly inspiring and with help from their new mentors their visions have been transformed into real life feasible projects."

Cementing new relationships and blowing off some steam, the CALA team enjoyed the superb facilities offered by the Craggs Centre with a basketball game while the Dragons deliberated on the various proposals to select the overall winner.



Kevin Whitaker, Regional Chairman at CALA Homes (East) who was one of the dragons said: "Taking part in the programme has been a challenging but rewarding experience for both our team and the young people involved. It's been great for our executives to step out of the corporate world and give something back to the community."



The event with CALA and the Craggs Community Sports Centre was a real success and highlights the principles that guide Maasai Camel's particular approach to CSR projects.

As Richard explains: "All too often, CSR projects are seen as 'give and forget' - they're something that happens as a one-off, short term initiative, rather than something that involves an ongoing relationship where the consequences and benefits are very real. We believe that learning for both sides is best created in the context of actual delivery and there's no substitute for that."



The Craggs is an important part of the community of St Leonards and the wider part of South Edinburgh, and its continued success will have a significant impact for all the groups which use its facilities. As the new initiative develops, it will allow the range of services and activities available at the Centre to expand, supporting this important community resource for the future.

