



UNITAS UPDATE

QUARTERLY UPDATE APRIL - JUNE 2023



MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

ROBIN MOSS

I am delighted to share that we have developed our organisational strategy for 2023 - 2026, which will shape our future direction as we continue our journey as a charity that changes young people's lives. This strategy is built on the foundation of centring young people and serves as a framework to navigate the challenges and opportunities we face. Through this strategy, we aim to achieve greater impact, enhance our effectiveness and always wisely spend funds entrusted to us by our donors.

We are really excited and energised by this new strategy and if any of our supporters would like a private briefing about it, please do be in touch.

In the meantime, we are gearing up for an exceptionally busy summer holiday period. With our average attendance per session at a post-pandemic high, we will be welcoming thousands of young people over the next few weeks. If you want to drop by to see our work for yourselves, we'd be delighted to show you around. We will be open seven days a week for the whole summer so any day is a good day to visit!



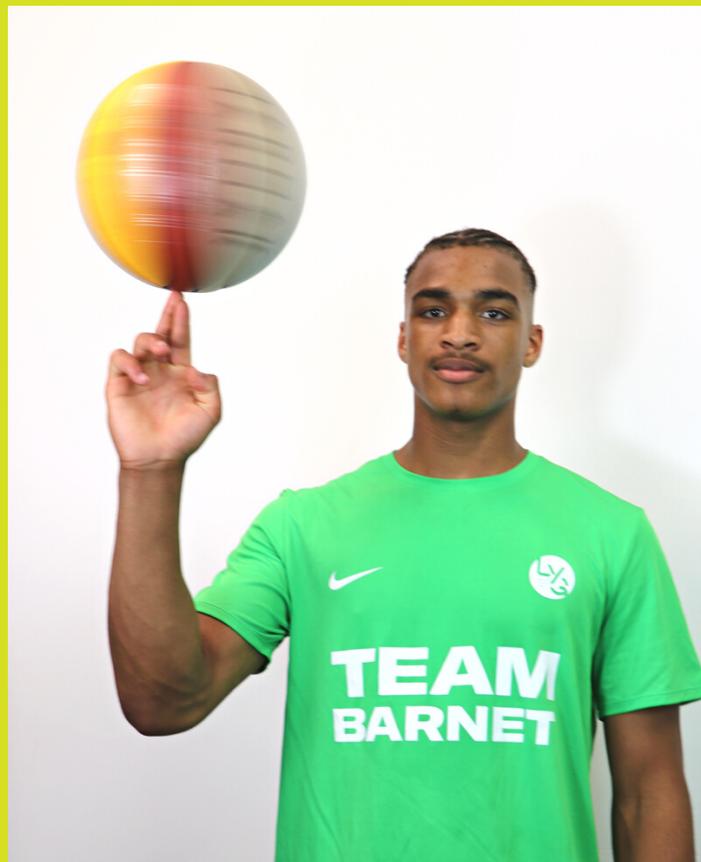
SPOTLIGHT ON SPORT

MAURICE (AGE 17)

I first attended Unitas when I was 14 years old. At that time, I struggled to build relationships with people my own age and I lacked confidence. Since joining Unitas I've made new friends, learned how to become more self-sufficient, resilient and when to ask for help from staff who I know have my best interests at heart. Unitas is my home. If I could live here I would.

I spend hours working on the game I love, basketball. Sport has a huge impact on my physical and mental wellbeing. My ability to play the game well has greatly improved thanks to the staff and the facilities on offer in the fitness and boxing gyms at Unitas. When I first came to Unitas I would visit both areas regularly. The Sport Coordinator Rory and youth worker Katy put a fitness programme together for me, which really helped me focus. I would train a lot and had access to state-of-the-art equipment that would normally only be available at gyms with expensive membership fees that were not an option for me. Rory became my mentor. We worked on a personal development plan, he helped me focus on different pillars of my life - not just my sport but also my mental health, employment, and wellbeing. We would review these pillars regularly and I was able to see real progress. This plan really helped me focus on myself and even was instrumental in me securing my first ever job!

The boxing gym is another great space at Unitas. It's an area that's really helped improve my fitness. Thanks to Unitas I have gained a boxing training qualification. This involved me training in the area three times a week with other members and working with youth workers who are experts in boxing. Katy worked with me every week for three months in conjunction with the local boxing club to help me complete the course. Not only did this give me a sense of achievement, but it also helped kickstart some solid friendships, many of which continue to this day. I'm currently on a basketball programme at Crest Academy, where another member from Unitas attended first, and managed to get a scholarship opportunity to the United States. I would never have got any of this without the amazing facilities and staff who work at Unitas. I feel like that help is only minutes away with Unitas being around the corner from my house. Who would have thought that they would open such a blessing so close to where I live.



SPOTLIGHT ON SPORT

Sport is one of the most popular and impactful elements of Unitas' activity programme. The Chief Medical Officer for England recommends that all young people should do at least 60 minutes of physical activity a day - more than half do not. In Barnet, 36% of young people are overweight when they leave primary school, above the national average. Even more troublingly, obesity rates are almost three times higher in young people growing up in the most deprived wards compared to the least deprived.

The percentage of young people who come to Unitas who are on free school meals is more than twice the average for the borough, and the bar for free school meals is set very low - just £7,400 annual income per household. 70% of our members are from the five lowest deciles according to the government's Indices of Multiple Deprivation. Each month we receive over 3,000 visits from young people, reaching deep into the local population who typically cannot afford other extra-curricular activities. Maurice's story is just one of thousands here at Unitas.

INSIGHT DAY AT PENTLAND

JUNE 2023

Our longstanding corporate partner Pentland Brands hosted 25 of our young people aged between 11- 19 for a private Insight Day. The theme of the day was “Learn how to create your own brand, Apprentice-style”. Pentland Brands is a privately-owned British company that operates in the global sports, outdoor and fashion market. Their portfolio of brands includes JD Sports, Ellesse, Speedo, Mitre and many other household names.

Led by our Employability Coordinator Vernon Douglas, our young people were encouraged to create a brand name, logo and target market. Young people were taught key skills from Pentland staff when creating their brand and were supported by the in-house design team to come up with a winning logo. Many of the young people who came along were already curious about entrepreneurship and this visit turbo-charged that interest. An Insight Day provides young people an opportunity to gain valuable knowledge about the industry and the company hosting the event. This therefore helps shape young people’s own journey.

By interacting with professionals within established businesses, young people can expand their professional network and build connections that can be valuable for future job opportunities or mentorship. Additionally, our young people were able to listen to industry experts discuss theoretical brand concepts being applied into real world scenarios. This practical exposure helps our young people understand how to turn their own ideas and visions into business realities.

If your company might be able to host a future Insight Day, please contact the team (fundraising@unitasyouthzone.org) to discuss further



GIVING OUR YOUNG PEOPLE A PLATFORM

APRIL 2023

Sony Music has a long history of supporting emerging artists, offering mentorship programs and providing opportunities for young talent to grow in the music industry. Unitas has been working with Sony for the last year on a music mentoring project alongside the other two London Youth Zones. 50 of our young people were given the opportunity to have access to one-to-one mentoring in a chosen area of music. There was a variety of activity including singing, rapping, dancing and guitar playing.

The programme ended with four Unitas members showcasing their talent at Sony Headquarters at the Sony Music Showcase, which was attended by industry professionals, media and other key stakeholders. It was something our young people will never forget.



MAY 2023

The London Youth Games is the annual sporting event in the United Kingdom first established in 1977 that pits each borough against each other. It is the largest youth sports festival in Europe and provides an opportunity for young people to compete in a wide range of sports. This year, Unitas' basketball team represented the London Borough of Barnet at the London Youth Games, taking place at East London University. The team, picked and coached by our youth workers, competed against other teams in neighbouring boroughs. They won two out of their three games, a great result!

Our participation is great for young people as the London Youth Games has played a significant role in the development of many talented athletes who have gone on to represent their country at national and international level. Through our continued involvement we are optimistic that this can be a platform for talent identification and offer opportunities for our young people to access training and development programmes.

JUNE 2023

The President's Cup is an annual event run by OnSide that brings together all of the Youth Zones for a day of friendly competition. This year, it was hosted by Warrington Youth Zone and our young people joined with 400 others for a day of fun, colour, noise and friendship. Activities and challenges ranged from football to climbing, enterprise to cooking, art to rugby and dance to the gym. Our team of 20, made up of both Juniors and Seniors, made the journey up to Warrington the night before and slept over until the day the competition. Everyone had an amazing time and forged connections with young people from across the country.



CELEBRATING OUR DIVERSE COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY IFTAR

Unitas was proud to invite people from all faiths and none to come together during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan to break bread and learn more about each other and the local community. An Iftar is the sunset meal that breaks the Ramadan fast each day and is traditionally eaten with a large family or a group gathering. We were delighted to host over 300 attendees in partnership with the Islamic Centre Edgware, North Finchley Mosque and others. We are honoured to be promoting inclusivity and unity, with the feeling of togetherness very much felt with many of the attendees bringing their own food to share including fruit, cakes and other desserts.

It was also an opportunity for many residents to walk through the Unitas doors and have a key insight into the youth work that we do here every week, through the year. With Ramadan being a time of heightened generosity and acts of kindness, Unitas feels privileged to share in the spirit of giving by extending hospitality to others and providing a warm meal to those who were fasting.

PERSIAN NEW YEAR (NOWRUZ)

The Iranian New Year, also known as Nowruz, is the traditional celebration of the Persian New Year and typically lasts for 14 days. Nowruz is a significant cultural religious holiday observed by many Iranians across the world and particularly those influenced by Persian culture. It is a time that represents hope and the coming together of families and communities. Our staff member Sanaz Abolfazli cooked several traditional Iranian dishes, each rooted in Persian culture and symbolise different aspects of the new year. The delicious food included Sabzi Polo Mahi (a popular dish consisting of herbed rice and served with various herbs like dill, parsley, cilantro, and fenugreek). Additionally, we had an authentic Bandari performance. Those in attendance took part in this energetic and lively dance, involving group formations and rhythmic movements which incorporated lively footwork, and hand clapping. The dance style emphasises elegance, fluidity and storytelling through movements and draws inspiration from Persian poetry, literature and historical themes.



THE KING'S CORONATION

Our young people celebrated the coronation of King Charles III with face painting, fancy dress and draping the Unitas building with the British flags. It was amazing to see young people in elegant gowns and costumes inspired by historical monarchs - truly attire befitting a royal occasion. The experience was immersive and brought a smile to the young people's faces. And what better way to finish off the programme then for young people to tuck into some traditional fish and chips!



CELEBRATING OUR VOLUNTEERS

What do you do at Unitas?

I volunteer my time in the Recreation area each Tuesday and have been doing so for over a year.

What made you decide to volunteer at Unitas?

I first visited Unitas as a donor through an Impact Reception. Once I walked through the doors, I was blown away with the incredible youth provisions being offered to young people and the impact Unitas is making through its work. I learned about social inequalities that exist within Barnet and how this is disproportionately affecting young people's access to further learning and recreational activities. Beyond a financial contribution I really wanted to actively participate in improving the lives of young people by providing support, guidance and mentorship. I feel it is so important for young people to have a space to have fun without worry and to be themselves. This is a truly inclusive centre as there is so much choice, from a £1 meal for dinner, to rock climbing, or dance there is so much for so many.



Name: Nikhil

Role: Volunteer in the Rec
Volunteer since January 2022



What is the best thing with volunteering at Unitas?

Being able to contribute in a small way to the overall work of Unitas is very fulfilling. I enjoy spending time with young people in the recreational area; seeing them have a positive experience by playing table tennis, pool or hanging out in a safe environment. I really love the vibrant atmosphere and just want to be part of Unitas as much as possible.

What would you tell someone who is thinking of maybe volunteering at Unitas?

I would encourage people to find their local Youth Zone and get involved in whatever capacity they can. The young people really need the support. If you spend time at Unitas its really eye opening to understand the lack of resources out there and what Unitas provides is an essential requirement for many young people's daily lives.

HEROICS FROM THE HALL

In June, a group of parents and staff from The Hall School took part in the Blenheim Triathlon, raising funds for Unitas Youth Zone. It is the only triathlon in the world which takes place in the grounds of a UNESCO World Heritage site and is one of the most popular mass-participation triathlons in Europe. The dedication, perseverance and unwavering spirit of all those who took part was truly awe-inspiring. From the cheers of the crowd to the rush of adrenaline through the gruelling cold temperature swim, Unitas would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude and thanks for the team of 50 participants who have so far raised over £25,000 for our young people! Their funds will be targeted towards our gym and boxing provisions, allowing them to go from strength to strength.

We are so proud to include The Hall School in our family of supporters. If you are interested in taking part in a challenge event to raise funds for Unitas, please contact the team (fundraising@unitasyouthzone.org) to discuss further.



Left: the "Tour de Godwin" riders came all the way from Hampstead to Blenheim Palace to support the Triathletes

Below: the whole The Hall team after their amazing efforts on a glorious sunny day



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