

Gary Francis young achiever awards 2019

Winner: Shekeila Scarlett

Sheila has gone above and beyond for the Hackney community - she has always committed herself to the Immediate Theatre board and was also appointed as one of the chairs for the Young Futures Commission.

When Sheila put herself forward for the Young Futures Commission Chair, Immediate Theatre was delighted to support her. She worked extremely hard, outside of her day-job hours, for the interview preparation and was absolutely thrilled to achieve the position.

When we first met Sheila, she was excluded from mainstream education, she then had to cope with her family being evicted and living in un-secure housing and has since spent a significant part of her young-adulthood supporting her family, including having to give up her educational aspirations

She still has plans to go back to further her education and eventually achieve her qualifications in Social Work, which we have always encouraged and supported and will continue to do so. We feel that this award would cement those aspirations.

Winner: Khallum Caller

Khallum has been a youth leader at Hackney CVS for around 18 months now. Khallum has a passion for both music and young people and this can be demonstrated with the work he is currently undertaking at Gainsborough primary school, where he is mentoring a year 6 student who was on the brink from being permanently excluded, to now where the school is considering reintegrating the young man back to a full time schedule. The effort, commitment and reliability that Khallum has shown to this young person is part of the reason for the positive change, is clearly walking the talk as an inspirational leader.

Khallum has been doing this whilst balancing his music production ambitions. Khallum has recently delivered a music production workshop to young people on the Pembury estate and has recently secured work experience at a top music label. It is a remarkable achievement, given the fact that Khallum manages to do all of the above whilst also looking after his little sisters before and after school.

If Khallum was to be successful, he would use the money towards getting new musical equipment as he plans to launch as a professional music producer before the end of the year and the award will go a long way in helping him establish himself.

Nominated by: Beth Bolitho, Hackney CVS

Winner: Marx kizito

Marx was born and raised in Hackney, He has been able to avoid joining a gang even though many people he was associated with were dragged into the lifestyle. He is well known for being able to go to any part of Hackney and being able to influence those around him to make better life options.

He was raised in poverty and has been a carer for his unwell mother from a young age. Being raised in an area well known for gang membership he hasn't allowed any of these mitigating circumstances to stop him from going to university and achieving amazing grades in his recent exams

Marx's plans for the future > he wants to start up a charity that focuses on helping young people from disadvantaged backgrounds become more financially literate. He also wants to eventually open up his own accountancy firm

Nominated by: Precious Lives

Winner: Maria Coker

Maria is an incredibly special young person- she is inspirational in every sense. Despite personal challenges, Maria has worked incredibly hard to dedicate herself to her studies and to her role as a Peer Facilitator for Immediate Theatre.

Whilst juggling her GCSE studies, Maria consistently co-leads our weekly Youth Theatre at The Edge Youth Hub every Thursday after school; this is where Maria really shines. Even if she has had a challenging day, Maria always arrives with a beaming smile and puts the needs of the group before her own.

As well as the sessions at The Edge, Maria volunteered on one of our summer projects, supporting young people with a range of needs and disabilities.

Maria inspires the group of mainly young girls to achieve their dreams and to fulfil their potential. She leads by example, sharing her own personal experiences with them and advising them on how to raise their aspirations. She speaks positively about her own experience of school and learning, demonstrating to the young people that liking school can be cool!

Nominated by: Charmain Humphrey, Participation Manager, Immediate Theatre

Winner: Darnell Luke

Darnell had a difficult teenage year period and grew up in a challenging area. He has worked tremendously hard to get in good physical shape to develop his football and used his personality to support our work in the community of Upper Clapton.

Darnell volunteered on a Saturday morning @ our Springfield park project for over a year. For any young person to give up a Saturday morning to support, inspire and develop children and young people is always inspiring.

He took it upon himself to work with the 7-8 year olds, take them to our inter-borough and cross-borough events and now jointly manage our U8s team in the Hackney Marshes Youth League. He has engaged children and families who have suffered similar experiences as him and used his experiences, challenges and successes to inspire them.

Plans for the future: Attain success in education as well as acquire youth and sports qualifications to help grow our work at Salaam Peace as well as enhancing what we already do.

Nominated by: Sab Bham, Salaam Peace

Winner: Jennifer Ogwuda

Jennifer was referred to us via Talk Changes, an NHS mental health team and she had low confidence and had been struggling with depression.

She worked hard with us by volunteering twice a week in our retail shop and attending all the workshops and sessions to overcome anxiety and improve her confidence to attend interviews.

She found work through our network as a Sales Assistant at Hawes and Curtis but has a dream of working in the fashion world, so she has continued to work with Circle to build and refine her portfolio and is being referred to the London College of Fashion for support for her entry into this world whilst she maintains working. She has built a network of people to support her mental health and is working towards a career in her dream sector.

Nominated by: Matthew Lewendon - Circle Collective

Winner: Lamide Olusegun

When Lamide joined Hackney CVS in late 2017, there were a number of issues that he was facing - he had recently graduated and was unemployed, he had no interest in looking for a job, he lacked self-confidence especially public speaking, he wanted to start up his own business in animation but did not have the right connections.

The last two years we have seen a tremendous change for the positive in Lamide. We have seen him develop as a young man, entrepreneur and as an inspirational leader for his local community.

For example, Lamide has been instrumental in the Improving Outcomes for Young Black Men initiative, attending scrutiny and stakeholder meetings – he has been able to articulate the barriers and the wants for young black men living in the borough.

Lamide is extremely enterprising, he has developed his own website which contains animation of what he calls lambs. He has also created key rings and a paperback cartoon series about the lambs. It is an ingenious idea and is a glimpse into how talented Lamide really is.

What has been really impressive is his ability to make sense of the advice he has been given and turn it into an idea. Last summer Lamide had the privilege to visit No.10 and during that meeting he was told specifically by the special advisor that he should consider using his talent in other ways to generate an income. Lamide ran with this idea, by offering to delivering arts and craft wellbeing workshops in youth clubs throughout Hackney.

For his determination and drive to succeed, Lamide should receive a Gary Francis award.

Nominated by: Deji Adeosun, Hackney CVS