

Guest Of Honour: Cllr. Laguda, Newham Deputy Civic Ambassador

Good afternoon everyone.

First of all, I would like to say thank you for inviting me back again, I am very pleased to join you. As you know, we are here today to celebrate the achievements of some special teenagers: Newham teenagers from black and ethnic minority backgrounds, who deserve recognition for achievement, exemplary, behaviour or their community work.

All too often we hear negative comments about teenagers: they are lazy, they won't get out of bed, they aren't interested in anyone but themselves. Of course I know this isn't true! Today's awards prove it!



There are of course many teenagers who deserve rewards but will not be receiving one today. Although it is very nice to receive an award, and

very important to recognise special achievement, hopefully the pleasure received in achieving your full potential is also a reward in itself.

Chair: Marc Wadsworth

Sisters and brothers give support to the siblings, and they are the unsung heroes of the household.



Music: 57th Dynasty's Paradise

When people look at me, I'm a hip-hop artist. But I take it upon myself, whenever I have a podium, I need to say something positive, especially to the younger generation. The lyricists, songwriters, MC's, whatever you are - keep that in mind. The gun lyrics - that's really easy. But when you're talking about your community and being responsible as a person, then you need to inject that positivity alongside the creativity.



What They Said

I warmly commend the work of Newham Youth Spotlight and BTWSC. Many young people are serving others in their local communities. We need to recognise their valuable contribution. At a time when the media often prefer to focus on the negative, these organisations are speaking out about potential and are actively encouraging teenagers to use their gifts and talents in a positive way. *Stephen Timms, East Ham MP*

I was nominated for my behaviour. Since I started Forest Gate School, I think I've improved. I really have to thank my teachers for trying for me—by not just writing letters home, but speaking to me like I'm their son, or like I'm somebody really important. I know when it comes to me being in the real world, I just have to get back to the teachers and thank them. *Quadria Adeyemi, 16, Year 11*

When I got there, I didn't think I was going to win straight away, because there was a boy there who helped his disabled brother, and I was thinking if he's going to win, then there is not much chance for me. I was completely shocked when I found out I was a winner. I was really shocked to even be nominated. Maybe it was because of my test results or behaviour, I'm not sure. *Harman Bervish-Borges, 15, Year 10*

I think the project is wonderful. I think it's a really good idea to take interest in young people and also to allow schools and teachers to be given an opportunity to recognise successful students. It was difficult selecting the nominations. There were many students that I could have chosen. What I tried to do was choose a range of students for different reasons. Quadria was chosen because I think he is one of our success stories, and I think that he's given clear thought about his future. He's shown that you can turn things around. You don't have to be a perfect student from the first day. Quadria has realised this in time: he's managed to stay in school, and will leave school with qualifications ... Harman is a very good role model for other students because she is always positive. She's a hard worker, she takes a full part in school life ... Chantel is one of those quiet students who works quite hard and just keeps on going ... Cynthia is superb. She has a very full life in and out of school - she represents the school in a positive way, and she works really hard, and is determined. She takes part in theatre groups and

(Continued on page 8)

Guest Speaker: Chief Inspector Leroy Logan

I think this is significant because we don't have that many positive role models or positive images. Also, you're bombarded by many negative things, so it's really encouraging to see all this really excellent work. I don't take it for granted, because the choices you make right now may be one of the most important choices you make in your life.

I was brought up in Islington many years ago. It was a time when we didn't have the bombardment of various games - Game Boy games, Playstations, TV, videos - in fact, one of the highlights of my childhood was the yo-yo, as well as playing cricket and football, and other sports ... amongst a group, you're less likely to speak up, especially if the group is going the wrong way and you want to say something that's not likely to go down very well. Your loyalty is with your friends, and I know that peer group pressure is a really significant factor in a young person's life.

Out of the group of people I grew up with, the majority have done very well in music and literature, but a couple didn't do so well because they were making some choices at the time which started to affect their future - one decided he wouldn't go to school anymore, and started to play up, and unfortunately underachieved, got himself expelled, as it was in those days - expelled, not excluded, and ended up having a really difficult time. To this day, he reflects on some of the issues that he should have dealt with at the time, and I'm sure he believes that there are things he could have done better.

Then there was myself. I wasn't as strong a character then as I am now, because I was mindful of my popularity, and I think that you're got to understand now that you're got to make a decision in your life, you can't go by the popular view. It's not always around 'I'll do this because everyone else is doing it', because you might actually miss your actual purpose in life. Great people are not people who just blend in with the crowd. Great people are people who make decisions, focus their minds on it, and make the right choices from a very early stage. A lot of the time, this is going to be regardless of your background.

So it's not around what happens to you, it's around what you wish your surroundings, how you turn things from a negative to a positive - you know, the glass is actually half full, not half empty. It's around your attitude, because that will make your decisions much more consistent. It's no use your making one decision in a correct fashion and then not following it up. So attitude is really important.

One of the things I found at a very early stage is to walk

with the wise people. I'm a great believer in that. If you walk with the wise you become wise. I used to walk with the people who used to do their home work, who had very focused minds, and as a result of that, started to achieve, whereas before I was at the crossroads. So some of you might be at the crossroads and not clear on what to do.

I think what is really important is to see how other people are achieving, and today you see so many people achieving some significant accomplishments in their lives. They've actually said, 'yes, I'll work toward this. I'm going to keep the focus on what my vision is', and it's really important to keep that vision alive, because if you don't, you then go astray from other people's influences. So you've got to keep the vision - a lot of it is based on your values, and your family values. That's really important, because then you get bombardment from the videos and the lyrics.

57th Dynasty talked about those lyrics, how it really affects your life if you allow it to. But if you take it in context that 'o.k., that's part of life, but I'm focusing on the vision of what I want to do'. I'll just say, by closing, that my vision was to join the Police Service to make a difference, to make a change. As a member of the black community, it was really important that I and other members of staff in the Police Service, weren't just part of the system - we were to make a change, to help other people, to try our best to make sure that the service we deliver is for the greater good, not for the chosen people. I'd like to say that we're doing a lot in the police service.

I always concentrate on the vision of why I'm in the Police Service - I'm not there just to make friends - I'm there to make a change. I think that's what you need to do, and if they do anything to me, I just focus on my vision. If they want to give me a hard time, they give me a hard time. If they don't like me, they don't like me, but the important thing is, what is my vision? What's the principle that drives me? It's a lot to take on, I know, and I can tell you all sorts of things. But if there's anything you want to take from me, from what I've just said, it is to make wise choices from now and decide on your purpose. Don't get affected by what happens to you. Keep your attitude positive so that you don't get strayed by personalities or prejudices.

You've seen three people say, despite all the odds, they're striving for excellence. That is the best example, excellence in whatever you're doing.

Thank you very much for giving me your time. I'm looking forward to hearing more about this award ceremony, and I really want to acknowledge the efforts of the organisation in bringing this together. These are very precious moments, and I think you just need to grasp that moment and see how you can move on to greater things.

