



GOOD IDEA

Make-up project highlights inner and outer beauty



Incredible Brilliant Youth aims to raise a generation of “confident, self-assured girls and young women”

Provider London Youth

Name Incredible Brilliant Youth

Summary Combining skills in youth work and make-up art has enabled Teresa Reynolds to develop a programme to help girls and young women learn to look after both how they feel on the inside and their personal appearance

Unable to choose between her passions for make-up and youth work, Teresa Reynolds decided to link the two together and develop a unique service for girls and young women.

She used her skills as both a trained make-up artist and youth worker to launch Incredible Brilliant Youth (IB Youth) in July 2012, with the aim of raising a generation of “confident, self-assured girls and young women who feel able to achieve great things for themselves”.

Supported by the Prince’s Trust Enterprise programme, Reynolds runs workshops at youth clubs across London for girls and young women aged between 13 and 25, teaching them the importance of inner and outer beauty.

Explaining her unusual concept, the 26-year-old said: “A lot of young people use make-up as a mask. They are bombarded day in, day out with images that are heavily airbrushed and with people saying things about their image.

“So I realised there was a big need for a

professional to come in and say it’s okay to wear make-up, but know that you are still the same beautiful person without it. It’s icing, it’s not the cake itself – you are the cake.

“I want to encourage girls and young women to look at the skills and qualities they possess and see themselves in a positive light.”

Reynolds has a “menu” of the various workshops she provides so that youth clubs can “pick and mix” depending on the needs of the girls and young women they refer to her.

The workshops, which last for between one and two-and-a-half hours, cover self-esteem, make-up and skincare, relationships, body image, goal setting, study skills and CVs, as well as interview etiquette and techniques. She also runs a Future Choices workshop, which is designed to help those who are not in education, employment or training.

Many of the girls and young women have low self-esteem, which Reynolds says is sometimes caused by “having trouble at home and problems

making friends”. As a result, her self-esteem workshop is one of her key focuses.

Explaining how she tries to change their perceptions of themselves and boost their confidence, Reynolds said: “We look at definitions of self-esteem and what they think it is. I get them to write a short statement about themselves – exactly how they feel about themselves – and then we talk about language and the importance of being kind to ourselves.

“We all look back at what they have written and examine the reasons why we can be so horrible about ourselves, and nine times out of 10 you will see them crossing things out and changing things. They will then have to write down all the encouraging things about themselves – this gets them to think about themselves and the positive difference they have on the people around them.”

Reynolds also uses her skills as a make-up artist to improve the self-esteem of the girls and young women she works with, as well as to teach them new skills.

“I use make-up as a tool for discussion and to teach participants new skills and age-appropriate make-up looks,” she explains. “I go in with my full kit and I will show them examples of what I have done. The first thing we will go through is cleanse, tone and moisturise – it’s the basis of good skincare and it’s also a good way for me to talk about why they want to wear make-up. We go through the whole process – skincare, foundation, eye shadow, eyeliners and lips – because everyone comes with a different idea of what they want.”

Her unusual approach appears to be working and Reynolds finds it “very humbling” to see the girls and young women she works with – numbering more than 250 so far – grow. She said: “It’s a real blessing to say that when most of them come in they are not really sure what to say or how they feel about themselves, and afterwards they always seem really encouraged.

“It is a real honour to know that I am doing something useful that is making a positive change and that I am making a difference to young people’s lives.”

Reynolds, who sits on London Youth’s advisory board for young people called Dare London, hopes to expand IB Youth and to continue helping young people. She also wants to start working with girls in gangs.

By Laura McCardle



Workshops teach young women skills in make-up and skincare