

## Press release

14 November 2007

### **Hackney youngsters get history lessons from Carnival founding father**

One of the founding fathers of the Notting Hill Carnival, Alex Pascal MBE visited Trelawney Estate in Hackney last week as part of the year long recognition of the Bicentenary of the abolition of the slave trade.

Young people from the estate were able ask him questions and take part in activities including carnival workshops, African drumming, poetry and dancing.

A trip to Hackney Museum and the British Museum was also organised for the young people so that they could gain an understanding and appreciation of the historical and cultural context of the African-Caribbean experience in Britain.

Tyrique Thomson, 8 years old said “The British Museum was very interesting. I learnt a lot about different countries around the world and how slavery affected many people”.

One of the popular sessions led by Alex Pascal was the carnival workshops. In these sessions, young people were taught native songs and dances and an understanding about the history of the carnival in Britain.

“The fun and informative sessions encouraged young people to take part and gave them the confidence to ask questions and voice their opinions” said Shakira Mahajan, one of the organisers.

She added “Judging by the range of cultural backgrounds of the young people and families who took part, it is clear that we were able to engage all parts of the community in the celebrations”.

### **Ends**

**Press queries to Olaide Oyekanmi on 0208 356 3522, 0777 2565514 or email [Olaide.Oyekanmi@hackneyhomes.org.uk](mailto:Olaide.Oyekanmi@hackneyhomes.org.uk)**

### **Notes to Editors**

The project on Trelawney estate in Hackney aimed to:

- unite young people and brings families from **diverse and cultural** backgrounds in an **enjoyable** and **harmonising** environment.

- develop the awareness and understanding of **self - expression** and **preserving identity** in young people through the mediums of poetry and dance.
- increase awareness of the historical and cultural elements of African-Caribbean literature.
- develop an understanding, awareness and appreciation of the historical and cultural context of African-Caribbean dance, poetry and Slavery in general.

The week long project was organised by local youth group Tapestry with funding from the Hackney Youth Opportunities Fund.

Information and advice about the Hackney Youth Opportunities Fund is available by contacting the Hackney Youth Service on **020 8356 7404**.