



## Monday Club celebrates five years

By Lucy Chamberlin

The Monday Club, the group started by two mums named Maureen to keep kids off the street and provide opportunities for fun and learning, is getting ready to celebrate its fifth birthday.



Maureen Clemenson joins in the table tennis at the Old Barn. Photo by Lucy Chamberlin

### "The kids make it what it is"

The 239 young people on the books of the Monday Club come from nearby homes as well as further afield in the borough. After the game, I walk back to the club's base at The Old Barn in Tarling Road with Vishal, where Maureen Clemenson and some of the older teenagers have organised a fancy dress, film and pizza night. The Old Barn has a games room, art room and TV room as well as a kitchen, and they are starting to record music there.

Vishal, 28, from Strawberry Vale, has been with the Monday Club since the beginning and had worked with kids before. I ask him how he finds it. "Sometimes challenging, sometimes easy," he says. "I know how the kids work, and they make it what it is. There's a kind of group mentality, and they all learn from each other; if one isn't so confident, they pick it up from the others. They have such different home lives and often not much to do, so it's important they use up their energy out on the pitch."

Apart from the Maureens there are about 10 volunteers, though the inevitable turnover in assistants means new hands are always welcome. Zoe, 16, is one of the older Monday Club

members, and has already completed Barnet Voluntary Services' 100-hour volunteer programme with the club, a hugely valuable experience for her future career plans.

On a breezy July evening, about twenty lively teenage boys are playing football in bright bibs on Martin School playing field, refereed by long-standing Monday Club coach and DJ Vishal.

Maureen Antoinette greets me with characteristic warmth, and almost immediately is sharing round oranges and crisps for half time, breaking up disagreements, discouraging bad language and admonishing everyone to 'pick up your rubbish'.

Christian values are an integral part of the Monday Club (its first home was the Methodist Church) and although a few of the boys are clearly mischief-makers, Maureen A is more than a match for them.



Vishal and Maureen Antoinette on the football field. Photo by Lucy Chamberlin

### Five years of commitment

I ask Maureen C how it all started and if she's still enjoying it. She explains: "It all began, with six kids, on 31 October 2005. I used to see so many kids roaming about and not doing anything, so I spoke to my church minister and he encouraged me to start the Monday Club. It just grew and grew; kids told their friends and before we knew it we had 200 of them! I'm still enjoying it, but we're all knackered, so we're training up the older children to help out. I've got a passion for the kids here; when I see them it really lightens me up!"

### Party time

To celebrate five years of the Monday Club, there will be a party on Monday 20 September at The Old Barn. Des Brown, a popular youth pastor who attended one of the first ever Monday Club meetings, will talk about his experiences with crime, and there will be food and drink for all. For more information, and to start volunteering, contact Maureen Antoinette at maureenant66@aol.com or on 020 8883 5654.

### Did you know...?

Chewing gum while peeling onions will keep you from crying!

## YOUNG ARCHER

### Pupils play host to

## Chinese visitors

Children and teachers from two primary schools in China paid a visit to Manorside Primary School on 13 July. Year 6 children from Manorside took the 25 visitors on a tour of their school in Squires Lane, N3.



Mr Hilborne the Head Teacher of Manorside exchanging gifts with the Xi Yi Primary School

They all had a buffet lunch together after which the Chinese students entertained Manorside children with traditional Chinese dancing, singing and instrumental performances. All the children thoroughly enjoyed the experience of meeting students from another country and finding out about their way of life. They exchanged e-mail

addresses before they left and it is hoped it will be the start of a wonderful partnership.

Manorside also staged an International Food Festival earlier in July that raised almost £1,500 for the school. Children performed dances from different countries, and food donations represented all continents.



Pupils and teachers at Martin Primary School join in the Big Dance.

## Strictly some dancing

By Rachel Ellis

Children and teachers at Martin Primary School put on their dancing shoes last month for a record-breaking event. Teachers, parents and around 450 pupils from every year group took part in the Big Dance on the school field on 9 July.

Despite the sweltering heat, the children performed the dance routine to the soundtrack Schools Pledge Final by Mikey J. The well-rehearsed routine saw the children playing air guitar, punching the air and clapping, among other moves.

Headteacher Helen Morrison said: "It was awe-inspiring to see our very youngest to our very oldest all doing a dance in time together. It was a brilliant way to bring us together as a school community."

The dance was part of a nationwide event organised by T-Mobile to encourage children to exercise, dance and get fit. Thousands of schools up and down the country performed

exactly the same dance routine at exactly the same time, making it the biggest-ever simultaneous dance routine.

It should mean that Martin Primary School, along with thousands of other schools, will be entered into the Guinness Book of Records.

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