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# Aire Valley Homes Helps South Leeds DAZL

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Aire Valley Homes has donned its dancing shoes and donated £2,500 via its Area Panels to Dance Action Zone Leeds (DAZL) to help the dance-based learning organisation pay for sparkling new costumes, transport to and from competitions and rehearsal space for its group DAZL Diamonds.



Aire Valley Homes, the arms-length management organisation (ALMO) responsible for over 15,000 homes in South and South East Leeds, aims to improve the lives of its residents through environmental and community regeneration projects, a commitment shared by DAZL.

Led through three Area Panels, Aire Valley Homes has ring-fenced money to be used solely for local environmental and community initiatives, which residents are encouraged to take the lead on with funding decisions to benefit local people and their own estates. Aire Valley Homes Outer South and Inner South Area Panels both contributed to the DAZL project.

DAZL was established by the Leeds Primary Care Trust in 2000 to improve the mental and physical health of young people and the wider community through dance by offering classes, putting together groups and arranging performances in South Leeds.

One of the DAZL dance groups, the PeeWee Boyz, an

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eight strong cheerleading squad from an Aire Valley Homes estate in Middleton, have been selected to appear on the Paul O'Grady show in November to showcase their talents. The group was spotted at a local talent contest in Leeds where it won a £1,000 prize.

DAZL gives young people an outlet and a focus for their energy, reducing the temptation to fall into committing anti-social behaviour, which has been identified as a big problem in South Leeds and one Aire Valley Homes hopes to tackle through schemes such as these. One of the dance classes available is Street Dance which engages disaffected and dis-advantaged girls by giving them the time and space to express their creativity and use their energy positively.

The DAZL scheme was recognised as an Innovation in Public Health by the Chief Medical Officer in 2002. A number of members from DAZL recently attended the BCA International Championships dance competition in Coventry and Aire Valley Homes' donation went towards costumes, transport and rehearsal space. The PeeWee Boyz took third place in the competition and two other groups from DAZL took first and second place.

Dot Mounteney, Aire Valley Homes Inner South Area Panel member, said: "The work DAZL does is fundamental to our core strategies for engaging the young people on our estates and building community values in South Leeds. What's great is its work extends to parents and even grandparents, engaging the whole family and giving them a part to play in the project whether it is creating costumes or organising refreshments. By supporting projects like DAZL we are helping to develop communities and reduce antisocial behaviour."

Ian Rodley, Head Coach and Dance Facilitator, said: "The support we have received from Aire Valley Homes has been amazing. Without its help we would never have been able to attend the International Championships earlier in the year. The work we do at DAZL is so important for young people in South Leeds, it gives them somewhere to express themselves creatively and join other young people to do something constructive with their energy."

Aire Valley Homes is an Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO) and an independent company charged with the management of over 15,000 homes in South and South East Leeds on behalf of Leeds City Council. Its responsibilities include repairs and maintenance, rent collection, letting and tenancy administration. It is one of 70 such organisations across the country.

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