



Dazzling moves are spreading city-wide

BY JONATHAN BROWN

A DANCE charity is taking its trademark classes – including male cheerleading – further across Leeds.

Dance Action Zone Leeds, which has been run from Middleton for a decade, is already teaching dance to 300 young people in areas like Gipton, Harehills and Seacroft.

Television appearances, documentaries and music videos have brought the organisation, which now reaches 1,300 young people, into the limelight in recent years.

Ian Rodley, director of DAZL, said: “Our vision for next year is to really make it a city-wide programme but we’re still sticking in areas of deprivation – that is where we started from and want to go.

“In east Leeds it is such a big area

and there’s nothing there, it doesn’t feel like anyone has invested in activities and young people.”

The east Leeds programme boasts eight ‘after school’ groups and 11 community sessions every week after just months of groundwork.

Around 40 of the youngsters are also involved in the competitive Gipton Goldstars, which hosted its first dance show this month.

The 28-year-old director said: “It was just absolutely amazing, it was packed – some people couldn’t get in it was so busy.”

Now based at the Tenants Hall Enterprise Centre, in Middleton, the organisation’s famous male cheerleading troupe has also enjoyed a successful year, after 42 boys turned up to their summer auditions.

And with further auditions in January, the Middleton-based dancers are expected to take on more

new recruits, while the concept will be trialled in east Leeds.

Mr Rodley said: “When they see the boys they get hooked and usually see that it is not what they expected.

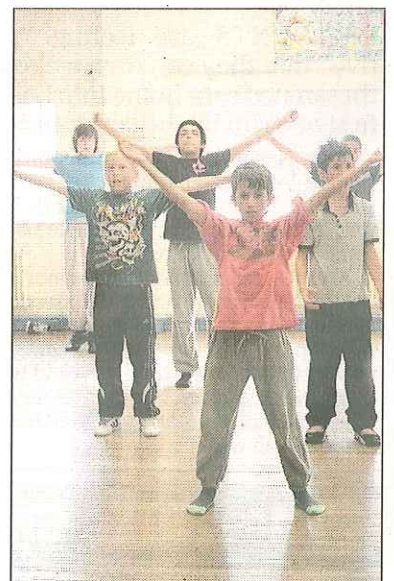
“There are a lot of misconceptions about boys and dance and they are breaking the stereotype.”

DAZL, which has been largely funded by NHS Leeds’s Active4Life programme this year, is looking for corporate sponsorship to help take their work into west Leeds and keep the classes affordable next year.

The organisation has also begun working with young offenders, those out of work, education and training as well as disabled people at South Leeds Youth Hub, in Belle Isle.

DAZL dancers are set to feature in Sky One’s *Got to Dance* talent show, which airs from January 1.

Visit www.dazl.org.uk for details. jonathan.brown@ypn.co.uk





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