

TUESDAY'S AGENDA

Teenagers who care for artistic future



Children and adults in care are showcasing their art at a special exhibition. **SUE WADE** finds out how their hobbies have helped them to come to terms with life.

As he came out of school, Danny Worthington thought his mum would pick him up and take him home as usual. He was particularly nervous about seeing her because they had a troubled relationship and had been arguing earlier in the day. To his relief, she was there at the school gates. But she didn't take him home. Instead she took her 12-year-old son to social services where she dropped him off with a letter and drove away. Convinced she would return to get him, Danny waited in a children's home to find out when he could go back home. But that day never came, and, now aged 17, he has spent the past five years of his life in care. Despite his difficult start in life he has grown into a mature young man. He has been back in touch with his mother, but they are not close. While in foster care he discovered a love of photography which has helped him come to terms

with his past and express his feelings. Now his work is to go on show at a special art exhibition which showcases the talents of children in care. He said: 'I had no idea what was happening to me when I went into care. I'd had a ruck with my mum in the morning before I went to school and when she picked me up she dropped me off at social services with a letter and left me there. I went into a children's home and thought I'd just be staying there for a while and would be back with my mum in a week. It was an emotional time but luckily after staying in a few different places I was placed with the family I'm with now. I have a lot to thank them for. When I get behind a camera all my worries just go away. I feel more

HOW TO BECOME A FOSTER CARER

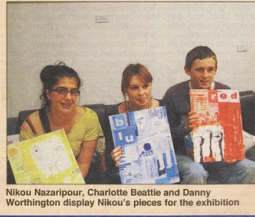
There is a shortage of foster carers in Portsmouth. The more foster carers the city has the fewer children will require placements in children's homes. Full training is given to individuals and families who are selected to become carers and an allowance to cover the child's living expenses is paid. For more information, call (023) 8282 9846, go to www.portsmouth.gov.uk, e-mail fostrating@portsmouthcc.gov.uk or write to The Family Placement Team, 12 Chaucer House, First Floor, Lambard Brunel Road, Portsmouth, PO1 2DB.

confident and everything I don't want to think about goes out of my head. I love taking pictures of everything and for the exhibition I submitted a picture of Pompey v Bolton, another of the Spinnaker Tower and one of a Hovercraft. I don't know if I would have discovered photography if I hadn't been in care. I've been really lucky and have been in a good foster home for the past three or four years. They're my family now. The exhibition which Danny's work features in is called Flourish. The show, held in Brighton, is an opportunity for children and adults in the care system

Dark colours left behind in favour of vibrancy

Nikou Nazarpour submitted three connected pieces of work for the exhibition using mixed media. The 21-year-old from Southsea is currently applying to universities to begin studying a degree in illustration next September. She went into care when she left home at 16 and looking back she remembers her art as being very dark at the time - but now she fills her work full of vibrant colours. She said: 'I decided to leave home because of family problems and I don't regret the decision. I've always enjoyed art

and I decided to use the primary colours of red, blue and yellow and used mixed media including stencils, spray paint for the work I submitted to the exhibition. I don't know where I got the idea from, it was just something in my head. Roundabout the time I left home my work usually involved dark colours and was full of angst but now I love colours and their vibrancy. It's amazing to see not only your work, but everyone else's on display as well. You know how hard everyone has worked to get ready for the exhibition.



Nikou Nazarpour, Charlotte Beattie and Danny Worthington display Nikou's pieces for the exhibition

Danny Worthington with his photo of the Pompey v Bolton match which has gone on display in Brighton



One of Charlotte's pieces of work

'If I hadn't gone into care I don't think I'd be thinking about being an interior designer'

Stripes, spots and circles were the themes of Charlotte Beattie's work. The 18-year-old from North End, Portsmouth, has been in and out of care since she was about four-years-old because of family problems. After spending time in children's homes she was relieved to finally find a stable foster family who she has spent four years with. Now at Portsmouth College, she is studying art, graphics and textiles she hopes to go on to become an interior designer. She said: 'I decided to work with cotton for the

exhibition and used a mix of blues and browns to produce one piece with stripes, another with spots and another with circles. I was really pleased when I found out my work was going to be used in the exhibition. If I hadn't gone into care I don't think I would have gone to college or be thinking about being an interior designer. I'm proud to have been in care. People just hear about kids in care and think they're right dies but that's not true. You just have to look at us to see that's not true, we're trying to do something with our lives.'



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