



Report on the 4th LEYLAND HEALTH MELA

Saturday 12th September 2015

Venue: Academy@Worden, Leyland



Rotary Club of Leyland
www.rotaryclubleyland.org.uk

This event was organised by the National Forum for Health and Wellbeing (NFHW) and was jointly sponsored by the Rotary Club of Leyland and Academy@Worden Leyland.

Introduction

The origins of the Health Mela concept date back to Preston in 2001, when a group of health care professionals and executive members of the Preston Gujarat Hindu Society (GHS), led by Professor Romesh Gupta OBE and Ishwer Tailor JP MBE DL, set up the Lancashire Gujarat Health Users Forum. This was aimed to improve health education and access to health information for the local south Asian community. The event was planned to promote healthy living and built on the idea that a Mela (a gathering or festival) provides an opportunity to mobilise the community to take an active and enjoyable part in securing its own health and wellbeing. Over the years the scope of the Health Mela expanded to become a multi-ethnic event taking in all sections of the community.

In 2012, the Rotary Club of Leyland became partner and sponsored their first Health Mela organized by the NFHW. Since then Rotary has participated at Bolton, Manchester, Bradford, Fylde Coast, London as well as in India. The experience of direct service to the community was compelling and fulfilling. The Rotary District of Cumbria and Lancashire has taken this as one of their community projects. Rotary International has now provided funds to hold several such events in other hard to reach communities within the district.

Another major milestone for NFHW has been the acquisition in 2013 of a permanent office in the Bolton One building at the Centre for Research in Health and Wellbeing at the University of Bolton. This now functions as the home base of the organisation.



opening of the mela. It provides a platform where the chief guest and the invited community and regional health leaders can discuss a specific local health issue. **This year's theme for the meeting was 'Improving Vision and Reducing Heart Attacks'.**

The proceedings were opened by the Mayor of South Ribble, Councillor Mary Green, who expressed her delight that so many people and organisations had got together to offer such a wonderful opportunity for health improvement to the people of South Ribble.

Chief guest for the day was Professor

Caroline MacEwen, President of the Royal College of Ophthalmologists accompanied by her husband a distinguished cardiologist Professor Stuart Pringle, President of the Scottish Cardiac Society.

Professor MacEwen noted the increasing demands being made on ophthalmology services in the UK, with a 30% increase recorded over the last five years and welcomed the fact that the Mela was providing a platform to promote the importance of eye health. Both Professor MacEwen and Professor Pringle emphasised the importance of getting people to take responsibility for



Breakfast meeting

Every Health Mela starts with a breakfast meeting that is held before the formal

their own health. They expressed strong support for the role Health Melas can play in achieving this.

During the meeting, the audience engaged in a lively debate regarding these important health issues and discussed ways to tackle these at local and national levels. It was agreed that voluntary organisations such as NFHW and Rotary and also the local schools and community can play a significant role to achieve just that.

The Health Mela

The Mela was officially opened by Professor Caroline MacEwen who made a point of congratulating the organisers for holding the event in a school. She emphasised that schools are the heart of the community and as such is an ideal venue for these events. She applauded the partnership with Academy@Worden as an inspirational collaboration that involves students in health education and highlights the importance of living a healthy life styles. She added that regular exercise and eating healthy food are essential for health and wellbeing.

After formal opening ceremony the audience was entertained with a lively display from Worden's award winning team of Cheerleaders. Visitors then had the opportunity to look over stalls representing more than 60 organisations including NHS Trusts, voluntary bodies and other health related groups.

More than 1000 visitors, exhibitors and students combined to ensure that the Health Mela was a roaring success. Throughout the day visitors were welcomed, guided and entertained by a team of enthusiastic cheerful and very well informed volunteer students from Academy@Worden.



Health Checks at the Mela

The Health Mela provided visitors with the opportunity to take a comprehensive series of health checks. These included:

Eye checks

This year complete vision checks were carried out by a team of optometrists, nurses and consultant ophthalmologists assisted by trainees and medical students. The team included the coordinator Consultant Dr Abha Gupta from Eye Pavilion Edinburgh, Mrs Roxane Hillier, Consultant Ophthalmologist from Newcastle and Mr Bhattacharya, Consultant Ophthalmologist and his team from Lancashire Teaching Hospitals.

More than 35 eye tests were conducted. Several issues were dealt with then and there; 5 cases were referred to their GP for a change of medication and 1 case was referred for further consultant intervention. The medical and nursing

staff and students involved found the experience very rewarding.

The Health 'MOT'

Visitors of all ages were invited to take a Health MOT and 150 took advantage of the range of health test and professional health counseling opportunities on offer.

Total no counseled:	106 (70.6%)
Referred to GP:	39 (36.8%)
Raised BP	>150/90 - 5
Raised glucose in people without diabetes	(>7.0 mmol) - 9
Raised Cholesterol	>6 - 15 > 5 - 57
Raised BP & Cholesterol	- 5
Raised BP & Glucose	- 1
Raised Glucose & Cholesterol	- 3
Raised BP, Cholesterol & Glucose	- 1

The Health Checks and activities for children

The Health Mela at Academy@Worden introduced health checks for children for the very first time. 35 children had their height, weight and BMI checked and were given health advice. In the Teddy bear clinic they learnt about the equipment used by health professionals in health care settings and had the opportunity to check out the health of their favorite playmate.

A number of activities such as the trampoline, rowing and cookery demonstration by the school to encourage healthy exercise and healthy eating turned out to be very popular. The many other attractions on offer included; the chance to try out activities associated



Reiki

The visitors could avail themselves of a Reiki taster session provided by Holistic Living Group of Preston. 10 volunteers were involved in the Reiki taster session. 27 people took advantage of the sessions. The age group participating was between 6 years to 75 years. All had amazing relaxation experiences.



with the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme The smoothie Bike was in constant demand throughout the day as visitors pedaled their way to a nutritious and refreshing drink. The children of the school contributed towards fruit collection as part of a non-uniform day.

A popular, if somewhat gruesome, alternative to face painting was provided by the young artists who offered visitors realistic looking wounds for treatment on the First Aid Injuries stall.

Comments on the Day

Professor Romesh Gupta OBE Chairman of NFHW and President of Leyland Rotary Club said: "In bringing the Health Mela to a local secondary school we knew that we would get our message right into the heart of the community. Our expectations have been completely fulfilled and we are really grateful for the amazing support we have had from the school. The volunteer students did excellent work. They are superb ambassadors for the ideals of community health and wellbeing."

Chief Guest Professor Caroline MacEwen was equally positive: "Many thanks, again, for inviting Stuart and me to the very successful health mela on Saturday. We both found it enjoyable, informative and an excellent day of health promotion. You, your team and all stakeholders deserve full plaudits. The Leyland health mela was an excellent day for recognising that good health is not a passive state, but one which involves active participation and enjoyment. The emphasis on involvement of the entire community was impressive and including eye health emphasised to all ages that our eyes and vision are to be valued and treasured. This health mela is an exemplar of true

community involvement in health promotion and its success is reflected in the numbers who attend and the year on year demand."

Professor Pringle, President of the Scottish Cardiac Society added: "It was real privilege to be involved in the Leyland Health Mela. The NHS is currently stretched with a finite budget and increasingly expensive modern healthcare. This makes it all the more important for individuals and communities to take responsibility for their own health to reduce the risk of heart attacks and other forms of cardiovascular disease.

I had read about last year's Leyland Health Mela and to witness it firsthand this year was a real treat. I was particularly struck by the enthusiasm of the participants and the attendees. What a wonderful example of a community working together with a common purpose for the benefit of all. This was multidisciplinary team working at its best.

Congratulations to all for making this event so enjoyable and successful. I will take lessons learnt back for discussion at the Council of the Scottish Cardiac Society."

Arthur Jones, District Governor of Rotary Cumbria and Lancashire also complimented the organisers saying: "I join Professor Caroline MacEwan in congratulating the organisers for holding the event in a school and in emphasising the point that schools are the heart of the community and as such is an ideal venue for these events to be located. I take this opportunity to highlight Rotary's commitment to supporting health and wellbeing among the communities we serve and remind you of Rotary's area of

focus and our commitment to eradication of Polio in the world and just how close we are to achieving this aim. I also remind you of how Rotary addresses health issues in the local community by holding Stroke Awareness days in local supermarkets in partnership with the Stroke Association and partners other health initiatives by facilitating events for community based experts to deliver their message. This is a true example of what working together with other organisations in our local communities can achieve."

Mr Chris Catherall, Head teacher of the Academy@Worden, reflecting on the day's event added: "It was a pleasure working with everybody to host the 4th Annual Health Mela. It was a great experience for the governors, staff and pupils of the Academy. The day was full of fun and educational opportunities; children learnt a lot about healthy living and healthy eating. The figures from the health check appear to be quite significant. I will be pleased to host the event next year."

Publicity

The event was systematically publicised using social media and News Releases to media outlets, including newspapers, radio and television. This helped promote much helpful local coverage both before and after the event. Advantage was also taken of local health domains such as pharmacies and doctors surgeries and posters and flyers were distributed to these areas. Flyers were also widely distributed in the local area. With the help of the School, posters were displayed in a number of locations across



Our Partner organisations in the Health Mela

The major partners associated with this Health Mela were:

- **Academy@Worden**
- **The University of Central Lancashire**
- **The Rotary Club of Leyland**
- **Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust**
- **Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust**
- **The Gujarat Hindu Society**
- **South Ribble Borough Council**
- **Roche diagnostics**
- **The 'Blood Drop' team from Lancashire Teaching Hospitals**
- **'Health Olympics Team'; Medical students from the University of Manchester**
- **The University of Bolton**
- **The Holistic Living Group, Preston**
- **The Creative Communities Group UK**
- **The North West Ambulance Services NHS Foundation Trust**



Leyland and Radio Lancashire hosted a special programme on the event.

We had the support of the Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust and the Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. They played an important part in making the public aware of the Mela by cascading information to their own contacts.

Feedback from exhibitors and visitors

The feedback from the visitors and the exhibitors was very positive and encouraging. All the exhibitors indicated that would like to participate in the next event in 2016. The involvement of the school, staff, students and governors was highly appreciated.

Overall, the Leyland Health Mela was seen to have delivered on its promises. It served as an excellent platform for

networking and provided an opportunity for healthcare students to interact with exhibitors and members of the public to discuss health related concerns and to gain experience in providing medical information and guidance. We can all learn from each other in this type of engaging and inspiring environment.

Acknowledgements

Thanks must go to all the members of the NFHW, Rotary International (in particular members of the Rotary Club of Leyland), the staff and students of the school, partner organisations and everybody else who contributed to make this event a success. The 100% commitment of all the participants is remarkable. The time spent preparing and presenting their work hasn't gone unnoticed. Their contributions are highly valued and we hope that they will continue to support us in future.

We record with thanks the additional

support in the form of test materials and equipment which was provided by Roche.

The National Forum for Health and Wellbeing and the Health Mela movement

Involving communities in a meaningful way in the pursuit and promotion of their own health and wellbeing has been the primary objective of the Health Mela since its inception in 2001. The National Forum for Health and Wellbeing has worked in accordance with this principle, enabling it to develop a realistic structure and reach the hearts and minds of urban communities. Partnerships with local Rotary Clubs, Universities, Schools and other organisations help to spread the message and the concept. These ideas can also assist other groups who are considering putting on their own Health Melas or similar events. 

If you or your organisation/community would like to get involved in this exciting journey, please contact the Secretary at the address below for details:

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Working towards healthier living in partnership with:



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