



PALFREY POETRY

[NEWS](#) [OUR VALUES](#) [ABOUT US](#) [OUR WORK](#) [MEET THE TEAM](#) [OUTCOMES](#) [RESOURCES](#) [CONTACT US](#)

SLAM – BRINGING MENTAL HEALTH TO THE HEART OF THE COMMUNITY



On the evening of 12th July 2017 Changing Our Lives hosted the eagerly awaited 'Poetry Slam' at Palfrey Muslim Girls School. Palfrey is a neighbourhood in the metropolitan borough of Walsall with a population of over 16,000 and of which approximately 95% are Muslim. In the weeks leading up to the Slam, Changing Our Lives had been working with the girl's school and their neighbours Palfrey Junior School on a series of poetry workshops with a focus on mental health and wellbeing.

The evening saw different year groups and classes go head to head battling against each other by using poetry as a medium to talk frankly about mental health and widen the awareness and knowledge that they had learnt through the workshops with their families, faith leaders and wider community members in the audience. All of the entries had worked tirelessly to perfect their acts for the Slam adding drama, song, beatboxing and other creative means of conveying their message about mental health.

The atmosphere was electric and compere for the night poet Dreadlock Alien, former Birmingham Poet Laureate showcased his extraordinary way with words throughout the night. Awards up for grabs included best line, best delivery, most creative approach, most improved poet and overall best poem that went to the Demented Falcons in year 6 at Palfrey Junior School.

Changing Our Lives developed this project to explore the ways that young people across the Muslim community use a creative arts medium to tackle issues around mental health, challenge stereotypes and increase awareness. We know from our local work and national research that mental health inequalities are prevalent within BME communities and myths surrounding mental health continue to impact negatively on people's lives and communities as a whole.

Here's a taste of what the Palfrey community said about the project;

"The poetry Slam inspired me to have an awareness of things. I didn't know about mental health!"

"I've learnt that mental health difficulties can happen to anyone."

"It's amazing how everyone came together and worked together with poetry."

"I never enjoyed poetry before but Dreadlock Alien made it great for me."

The project has been a roaring success and has brought a community together on an issue that has historically brought negative stereotypes and shame to the community. Siraaj Nadat, Quality of Life Facilitator at Changing Our Lives and Palfrey resident said, "We need to talk about mental health more so people in the community become more aware and this will help people support each other with mental health difficulties. Some people in the Muslim community are afraid of what people will say if they mention mental health, but mental health is everyone's business so we need to start a conversation about it. We need to use this work as a springboard for future conversations in our local community."

Mareesha Morris, MP from Sandwell Mental Health Parliament, who was involved in the delivery of this project told the audience, "mental health is just as important as physical health and looking at the work that young people have done producing their own poems around mental health, I strongly believe that young people are the catalyst for change in attitudes towards mental health."

A digital book will be developed to showcase the work of the project, so watch this space. The Muslim community of Palfrey are only just getting started!!!

This project is supported by an Open Access Award from Creative Black Country as part of the Creative People and Places scheme.

[Facebook](#)
[Twitter](#)
[Google+](#)
[Pinterest](#)

Uploaded: July 19th, 2017

[▶ Back to News](#)

[News](#)
[Our Values](#)

Address: 22-24 Hagley Mews,
Hall Drive, Hagley, West
Midlands DY9 9LQ

[About Us](#)
[Our Work](#)

Phone: 0300 302 0770

[Outcomes](#)
[Contact Us](#)

Email:

ask@changingourlives.org



© **Changing Our Lives 2017**. All Rights Reserved

Site by Bronco

[BACK TO TOP](#)