

CASE STUDY

Leyton United

In Leyton near Jerry's home there are many boys who he called "bad boys". These boys were a problem because they had little to do, but play football in the park. Jerry wanted to take this one interest and build on it.

In 2004 Jerry and his club of young men had had no sponsorship or support for their ambition to become a successful football club. Leyton United applied for its first grant from the East London Community Foundation. Working full time and running the team from his home was a strain for Jerry but the number of boys grew and the club was thriving.

The club soon needed to rent space on all-weather pitches and as they joined the local leagues, the costs began to rise. The members of the teams of Leyton United come from homes where there is little money for extras. Leyton is one of the most deprived areas in the country.

Jerry and his helpers are sometimes act as older brothers to team members as sometimes parents' priorities are elsewhere. The schools now often call Jerry to help mediate with the boys on the team who may be struggling in school or being a disrupting influence.

This club goes the extra step in its support of its players. For example the club felt it had to buy an old second hand minivan to make it possible for young boys who came to training in the evenings to be taken home safely.

One of the keys for Leyton United is that its players learn discipline and respect. No swearing is allowed on the field and in games a player could lose his place for showing anger or disrespect to toehr players or the referee. Players who cannot arrive at the training on time and be ready to practise can also see their opportunity to play in the weekend matches slip away.

Leyton United is good at football. Players from the team are sometimes poached to play on more senior sides in the local leagues and the highlight of this team is when one of the boys is offered a trial with a well known local team. At the moment, over 60 boys are registered with Leyton United. Some of the boys have also begun to earn their coaching badges from the Football Association

Jerry loves football and so do the boys of Leyton United. We believe they get so much more than a well planned and managed team experience in this project.

The Community Foundation has continued to support Leyton United, with five further grants, in its commitment to the growth and maturing of young men in the Leyton area of Waltham Forest.