

News release
11 December 2009
For immediate release

Lifelites congratulates London's TalkTalk Digital Hero

Care worker Bernie Wighton has been bringing a touch of Hollywood to an East London children's hospice and was declared London's TalkTalk Digital Hero in recognition of his efforts.

Using the latest technology supplied by Lifelites, Bernie set up 'Living Films' so that children at Richard House, in Docklands, could write, direct and produce their own short films. 'We started making living digital photo albums for families using a digital camera and computer equipment from Lifelites. Video was an obvious progression,' he explained. 'The film making has built up the children's self-esteem, helped team build and has given young people here opportunities they perhaps didn't have before.'

The TalkTalk Digital Hero awards celebrate people who use digital technology to bring about positive social change. With hundreds of applications received, Bernie faced stiff competition in his London category. The winners were voted for by the general public with more than 30,000 votes cast across the 12 regional categories.

Bernie was presented with his Digital Heroes award at a ceremony at the House of Lords last month (November 24). 'When I heard that I had won the London award I was very humbled to have been voted London's Digital Hero, as I know the other London charities were incredibly deserving,' he said. 'It was wonderful being at the House of Lords, quite an experience once you got through security. It was great to meet other regional winners and learn about what they are doing and it was good to develop new links with them too.'

He was awarded £5,000 of funding towards his Lifelites technology project as well as free broadband for Richard House, London's first children's hospice which opened its doors to overnight stays in 2002.

Bernie, who has worked at the hospice for nearly four years, said: 'A £5,000 grant will allow me to extend my Living Films project to more children and young adults with life limiting conditions and complex health needs, opening up a whole new world of film making for them which will be fun and enjoyable encourage their creativity and build self esteem.'

The hospice houses three PCs and several games consoles, all donated and maintained by Lifelites. 'The young people have a lot of fun, but they also learn a lot of new skills, particularly in terms of using new technology.'

This year, Richard House had its first Oscar ceremony, turning the computer room into a movie theatre for the night. Everyone dressed up and Victoria Wood presented some of the awards. 'The parents were thrilled seeing their children on the big screen - it was a real celebration of life and that is what Living Films is all about.'

'The project is all about creating happy memories now and in the future for children and young adults, their families and friends on film.'

With the dedication shown by Bernie, he certainly deserves to win the London TalkTalk Digital Heroes prize.

E N D S

Notes to Editor: For more information about Lifelites visit www.lifelites.org or contact Neeta Norton on 0207 440 4200.