

PRESS RELEASE

ENCO SYSTEMS SUPPORTS THE YOUNG CARERS FESTIVAL 2007

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The 2001 census revealed that there are over 175000 young carers in the UK. These young carers are aged between 8 and 17 years old.

A young carer, is a person aged between 8 and 17 who has a care responsibility for a member of their family. This could mean that they are caring for a parent with a substance dependency or alcoholism, it could be a sibling with a disability. No matter what the circumstance, these young people bear responsibility and duties that are beyond their maturity, often with little or no help from outside the family unit. This can often lead to difficulties with school and college work or finding time to socialise with their peer groups and learn important interpersonal skills. It almost certainly means that these young people rarely have the opportunity for a break, a holiday, a time when they can get away and forget about their troubles at home, forgetting for a moment that they are a carer and “act their age”.

“We are not born young carers, something in our life changed that means we became young carers”. – 15 year old female young carer YCF 2006

Every year, the YMCA Fairthorne Group and The Children’s Society jointly organise a festival in South Hampshire to enable just 2000 young people a weekend break from their adult responsibilities back home, based in the tented village, everything is catered for including a massive programme of activities to give the young people new experiences, from boating, karaoke, nightclub experiences, sporting tournaments, water fights, 24hr coffee bars, 24hr councillors on hand, creative arts and its very own FM radio station, Express FM.

Express FM Ltd. provide the soundtrack to the entire weekend both on the air across southern Hampshire and online at www.expressfm.net The programming is aimed at young people, the playlist consisting of top 40, R’n’B and dance anthems, with an emphasis on interaction both from the young people at the festival hosting shows and conducting interviews and those listening at home or via the web, without a hugely configurable playout system, much of this “on the fly” interaction would not be possible. ENCO Systems, suppliers of DAD, the broadcast automation system are for the second year supplying the broadcast systems free of charge for the event. Mark Tilyard, Technical Director for the UK said “It’s a wonderful event to be involved with, it really is what radio should be all about: entertainment. ENCO are proud to provide the technical backing to the broadcast, we were delighted to be asked back for a second year.”

Presenters from across the south coast including Stuart McGinley from Spire FM, Donna Alos from GCap's Power FM and Chris Bailey from Ministry Of Sound Radio offer their services each year, for what is truly "hands on" radio. Chris Carnegie, Managing Director of Express FM Ltd and reporter for Original 106 says "this truly is a wonderful event. Every year, when you drive down that long woodland driveway to Fairthorne Manor you feel as if you are entering a good place, a place where new friendships are forged and old ones rekindled. You are entering a place where smiles are manufactured".

Grant Francis, programme director who has worked with Express FM and the young carers festival since its launch in 1999, said of the event "As much planning a preparation goes into these three days of broadcasts as you would expect for the launch of a full time radio station. We produce new audio every year, we have new competitions, new sponsors and a completely new playlist. The kids that attend the festival deserve the best, and that is just what we give them. Express FM also host the on-stage entertainment, and this year, thanks to Chris Bailey, the 'homelands' experience in the main arena which will be truly amazing. I have been involved with the festival right from the start, it really is the most rewarding weekend of the year. Over the last 6 years, I have met some of the strongest, inspiring people you could ever wish to meet. My passion for radio, and the hands on nature of the weekend allows me to leave the festival site bursting with pride."

This is the biggest festival yet, and has been organised with the ideas from young people from across the UK. The festival is organised by young people for young people and its that, that will ensure that YCF goes from strength to strength in the future. Speaking of the future, Glastonbury started with just 600 people this means that YCF25 is going to be massive.

The festival takes place over the last weekend of June. For more information visit www.youngcarersfestival.co.uk and www.expressfm.net

Audio clips and interviews available on request.