

Teen Trib



Just one page... just two minutes of your time, and certainly not wasted! This page has been written by teenagers, about teenagers, with teenagers – but for everybody! Read about what it really means to be a teenager today. A group of six teenagers, we have volunteered our time to give to you the real news, the real views, and the real teens in your area!

'Just because we are young, it does not mean we can't cope'

by Chantal Hodgson and Nicola Flowers

TEENAGE parents are increasingly stereotyped negatively by the older generation. However most young parents are doing a fantastic job bringing up their children and this stereotyping is making life unnecessarily difficult for them.

We have spoken to a number of teenage parents to get their views about the way adults have treated them throughout their pregnancy and now they have a child.

One young parent said: "Adults stare at me if my baby cries as if to say 'she can't cope' when I know I can."



Another teenage parent told us "people looked at me like I was a pathetic teenager" during her pregnancy and now her daughter has arrived she still gets the odd

comment but she don't take it to heart as she knows she is a good mum to her daughter. Isn't that the most important thing?

The negative stereotype of young parents is reinforced furthermore by the media; newspapers, TV shows the popular Vicky Pollard from Little Britain, and the reality series culture of shows like the Jeremy Kyle Show.

Surely it doesn't matter if the age of the parent – adult or teenager, the welfare of the child is what really matters.

Adults may have a stable job and education behind them and teenagers may have had to drop out of school. But teenagers have the chance to do their education

again at their local college.

It is difficult to be a young mum, as they may not have the support from people that are close to them – their parents, or the child's father. If the father does not stay with them then they may have to face bringing their child up alone, but contradictory to the stereotype, many mums now are in a stable relationship and the man loves the child as it is their own.

It is hard to be a young parent as you may have to take time out of school or college. It may be easy as you may have an education.

Either way the decision to take responsibility for a child is not childish – real young parents

should be praised. Young fathers are criticised often by adults because they may not be committed to the mother.

However, many young couples stay together and they love their child. If the mum is not with the dad then they may be with another man, who loves the child as their own. Just like an adult, the real teenage parent puts the child first.

Age does not define what kind of parent you are – maturity is what matters most. With adults stereotyping young parents it is putting unnecessary pressure on them which is unfair as all they want to do is look after raise their child to the best of their ability, as any parent would.

Students find it a struggle

by Jenny Kirby and Gary Hughes

IN today's global financial crisis, there are few people who aren't suffering in one way or another.

One of the worst groups affected are graduating university students, unable to find work and already under the burden of a mountain of debt.

This begs the question of whether or not the university path is still the best or most advantageous to go down in the long run. Many are taking note of a different option, and what many are calling a 'comeback' of an old system – the apprenticeship.

Dayle Hammond, 18, from Ash Green, left school two years ago, but despite achieving well above average GCSE grades and being the head boy at his school, decided to move into an accountancy apprenticeship instead of attending college like the majority of his friends.

"I knew what I wanted to do, and if I went to college for two years I'd have just ended up back here, so I decided to bite the bullet and do it straight away," Dayle said.

Though still learning the proverbial ropes, he is already on a salary of around £11,000 per year, and guaranteed a job and once his five-year training is completed, at which point Dayle will have the equivalent of a postgraduate degree. But unlike the waves of university students that find themselves thousands of pounds in debt, Dayle's company pay for all of his training.

The key problem that university graduates face in today's economic situation is that their degrees are becoming less and less impressive when compared to the valuable work experience of other applicants.

There are several ways to get into an apprenticeship. The most accessible would be via the internet, through sites such as www.apprenticeships.org.uk, but it can be just as simple as knowing or meeting someone with the right connections.

And as someone who is currently in the process himself, Dayle offers sound advice to people interested in apprenticeships: "Get advice from people who have been there and done it and, more importantly, as much experience as possible."

THE WEIGHT DEBATE

by Stephanie Harrison and Chantal Hodgson

AS A society we tend to pity those with eating disorders yet scorn those who suffer obesity. Are they not caused by the same social pressures, anxieties, and tribulations?

A local teenager commented that when she sees an obese person, she can't help but think "the cookies will be there tomorrow – just have one". In fact it is these opinions that are increasing the problems for, and dangerously alienating, both sets of individuals.

Obesity has many root causes; personal issues, bullying, right down to medication itself. Obesity is not just a matter of eating. Recent aims to reduce smoking, improving health, somewhat ironically cause weight gain as appetite is restored.

The same root causes can be linked to anorexia. Major life transitions, including bullying again cause the sufferer to take control in the only form they feel they can – their diet. The fact "a history of sexual abuse is seen in 3 out of 10 people with anorexia" just reinforces the gross misconceptions about the illness.

Teenagers also spoke out about the

concerns that obesity is not given the appropriate regard, commenting "many people cannot help being obese. Genetics, social pressures, stress, living up to the glamorous magazine models, as much as causing weight loss can cause weight gain, yet this is merely bracketed as a voracious appetite".

Health Minister Gillian Merron says that current trends indicate "1.5 million children and 25 million adults are overweight or obese" sparking a furious media swoon around obesity – Merron emphasises this when she says "Obesity is one of the biggest health challenges we face".

However, this is coming at the expense of the issue of public health as a whole. Leading charity organisation 'Beat' warns of the dangers we have as a society of not only alienating the issue of eating disorders, but increasing their incidence if attitudes persist.

Teenagers themselves admit "eating disorders cause more harm" yet B-eat statistics from 2009 indicate "only 15% felt their GP understood eating disorders and knew how to help". This is why professionals are neglecting the fact that anorexia is the leading cause of death in young women aged 15-24.

The issue that society needs to address

is not why people are falling victim to these problems: the causes are known. The research calls for a greater appreciation of our roles as individuals – particularly professionals – in ensuring that the attitudes of society don't accentuate the trends.

"The responsibility for change depends solely on the maturity of our attitude" says one 16-year-old teenager.

"I personally feel that any weight issue is a disorder – under eating and overeating both require equal attention, and frankly, they just aren't getting it. The incidence of both extremes is bound to increase unless we change our attitudes now".

Shards are making a big noise on the music scene

by Tom Law

WITH the shock Christmas number one going to rock band Rage against The Machine, it appears that rock and indie music is making a comeback!

Whilst there are bands from the local area doing very well, such as The Enemy, there is plenty of local talent in Nuneaton that is overlooked.

One such band are The

Shards. Comprising of vocalist and guitarist Kyle Boswell, bassist Dale O'Reilly, drummer Jack Carver, they often gigs at the crew in Nuneaton, and the Kazbar in Coventry, where they have supported The Strikes.

Influenced by the latest wave of alternative rock, the band has a unique sound, and a loyal following. Kyle can also be seen playing acoustic music in Nuneaton town centre, along with singer/

songwriter Jon Binns. Jon's influences come from a wide range of music genres, including folk, indie, rock and country. Jon has had a passion for music from a young age and has sang in many bands before, but has now switched to solo work.

So if you ever need some musical inspiration or a good time, check them out on MySpace and Facebook or go to a gig and support your local talent!



■ The Shards