

21 May 2008

PRESS INVITATION / PHOTO CALL - All media representatives welcome

Neighbours' Day Sports Spectacular to Celebrate Community Spirit in Birmingham

As part of European Neighbours' Day, Birmingham based Mercian Housing Association - in collaboration with Birmingham City Council and Midland Heart - will be holding a fun packed feast for the eyes and ears in Lozells.

The event, to celebrate community spirit and pride for all local residents, will be held on Wednesday **28th May** at **Holte School**, Wheeler Street, Lozells, Birmingham, B19 2EP, from 11am till 3pm.

The theme for the event is Urban Sports. Mercian wants to show the community that inner city living doesn't exclude anyone from taking part in activities and growing up in an economically deprived area doesn't mean that you can't achieve your dreams!

Opening with a welcome speech by **Lord Mayor Elect Councillor Chauhry Rashid** at **11am**, there will be demonstrations from some great, local sporting talent including; **Rob Walters** and his incredible soccer skills and **Kash 'The Flash' Gill** and pupils showing us the talent that has won him so many titles. Other big names attending on the day are former WBO Heavyweight **Pele Reid** and ex Aston Villa Player **Mark Walters**.

Mercian Housing is also hoping to secure attendance by Commonwealth Lightweight champion **Amir Khan** ahead of his upcoming fight against Michael Gomez to be held in Birmingham in June 2008. A pair of tickets for the fight has been donated and will be the 1st prize in the prize draw on the day.

As well as plenty of activities for the children and the array of stars, there will be demonstrations from the world of dance and martial arts to entertain the crowds, including Capoeira, an amazing Brazilian martial arts/dance, Bboys Attic with an incredible street dance display and Bangra dancers and drummers to end our show with a bang!

PRESS RELEASE

For interested residents, there will be stalls with information available from health organisations including; British Heart Foundation, Blood Donor Service, Health Exchange, Working Links, the local Fire Service, Community Police and advice for first time buyers on getting onto the property ladder from Mercian's HomeBuy agency. The newly launched Aston Pride Mobile Broadband Centre Bus will also be available, focussing on helping local people find employment.

The event highlights Mercian's commitment to developing communities' people take pride in, by providing a great opportunity for residents to meet their neighbours and build stronger links with local people, service providers and Mercian staff.

For more information about the event, please contact Community Involvement Officer, Clare Collinson on 0121 377 8899 or email ccollinson@mercian.org.uk

Media representatives - please confirm your attendance to Vicky Jones on 0121 377 8899 or email vjones@mercian.org.uk

-ENDS-

Notes to the Editors:

- Mercian Housing Association is a leading West Midlands housing provider with 3,300 affordable homes across Birmingham, Coventry and Walsall.
- Mercian Housing offers housing, regeneration and affordable home ownership solutions to many key communities working in close partnerships with local authorities and other organisations.
- Since 2006 Mercian Housing has been appointed as a HomeBuy Agent to deliver the government's National Affordable Home Ownership programme in the West Midlands to enable first time buyers to get on the property ladder.
- The association's innovative services also include the provision of affordable equity loans for home owners to renovate and improve their homes through its subsidiary ART Homes, as well as developing and marketing home ownership schemes for other organisations.
- Mercian's vision is to help develop communities people take pride in. We aim to improve people's quality of life by investing in communities across the West Midlands where people enjoy living.
- Mercian is a not-for-profit organisation established since 1964. Its head office is based in Erdington, Birmingham.

www.mercian.org.uk