

## Library Talk

I first got involved in the Partners For Change project when Rebecca Bolton visited the FOCUS group with the plans and artist impressions of Swindon's New Central Library. The FOCUS group is a group run by Swindon Youth Service for looked after children. At the FOCUS group only a small group spoke to Rebecca, forwarding their ideas. So I suggested to Rebecca that she come along to Swindon Youth Forum. Swindon Youth Forum is a group that was set up for the Young People in Swindon to express their views, opinions and thoughts to get a better Swindon for all. Rebecca thought this was a brilliant idea as it would be great to get a wide variety of opinions about the New Central Library. As communication officer for Swindon Youth Forum I set up a date for Rebecca and David to come along to show us the plans and artist impressions... Here is where it all began...

By showing us the plans, the Youth Forum got involved in designing the 'teen zone' of the library...each of us were given consultation packs to take back to our projects and get feedback...The overall comments were good and the ideas were flowing. However there was one concern, a lot of the feedback suggested the 'teen zone' was too small to hold computers, books, sofas etc so we asked Rebecca whether or not it could increase in size. From our concerns the area increased by 20%.

We also didn't like the name 'Teen Zone' and we decided we would like to change the name. Many ideas cropped up but the main thought was to call it ASBO...This stands for A Sociable Book Ordeal...

As a Youth Forum this was our first major project and it has given us more confidence as an organization as we feel the project was very successful. As a result of the project all the Young People have become more confident when taking on new projects and becoming involved in different groups.

At FOCUS we used the library facilities during our Young Roots project, we were researching cases of neglect towards children in care... from the research at the library we made a pictorial timeline.

So what next... The libraries will still work with the Swindon Youth Forum until the New Central Library is built. Our next big project is the book bar, which will go in the library...

I think young people should get involved in the libraries because it is exciting to embrace a project that will affect and no doubt benefit young people. I also think that by young people getting involved they will raise the profile of libraries and the attitude towards libraries will change. By getting involved in this project I have joined several more groups. The libraries project gave me many opportunities and I very much enjoyed working with Rebecca and David and look forward to taking the project to greater heights.

Thank you