



## One Punch One Life - Initiative launched to highlight consequences of violence

A partnership initiative aimed at reducing violence is well underway as a number of secondary schools across the county are embracing an exciting new project.

The 'Schools Challenge' is a joint project between Northamptonshire Police, Northamptonshire Education and Work Service at Connexions, the Arson Task Force, and the Fire and Rescue Service. The initiative aims to encourage students to develop creative ideas to help to reduce violence – which is a top priority for Northamptonshire Police.

A hard-hitting film has been produced to support the project. It informs young people about the potential consequences of violence and seeks to promote discussion and awareness amongst students.

The short film is based on the manslaughter of Stuart Martin, which occurred in Wellingborough town centre on Saturday 19 June 2010. It shows the tragic consequences of a single violent act that changed lives forever.

A DVD showing the film will be distributed as an educational tool to all secondary schools in the county to promote the reduction of low level violence and support their anti-bullying strategies.

To date, 16 schools have signed up to the project including Guilsborough School in Northampton, Rushden Community College, Weavers School in Wellingborough, and Brooke Weston Academy in Corby. The project is being launched to Year 9 students and the team have already engaged with over 1000 students.

Shaun Johnson from the Arson Task Force said: "The launch is going extremely well and the film is provoking the reaction we need to inspire these young people. The teaching staff are also very enthusiastic about the project.

"By early February we will have launched this to a minimum of 4000 students across the county."

Students taking part are being asked to produce a creative medium, for example, a film, sculpture, drama, poetry, art, creative writing, design, technology, or music, to be showcased in a 'Dragons Den' type event in July. The winning concept will be chosen by a team of 'Dragons'.

Mike Hales of the NEWS Team at Connexions said: "Connexions and the Arson Task Force have started to launch this project in the participating

schools and this has generated a huge amount of interest and enthusiasm among the students and staff.

"As well as tackling low-level violence, the students will be working as mini-businesses and gaining a lot of employability skills. Connexions are engaging local employers to help and guide the students and help them prepare for the final presentations.

"A number of the schools are using the DVD in assemblies for all their students as part of their own PSHE strategy."

The project supports Northamptonshire Police's aims around reducing violence and Operation Nightsafe in particular, which was set up to tackle alcohol related crime and disorder in the county's town centres.

Chief Superintendent Richard James, Violence lead for the Force, said: "Violent Crime is a priority for Northamptonshire Police and something we take very seriously. We are implementing a number of initiatives to tackle violence across the county, for example Operation Nightsafe was set up to supply a highly visible policing response that supports our strategic aims around violence and alcohol harm.

"The film that has been created to support the initiative highlights the devastating consequences of violent crime, and we are pleased to be involved in such a valuable project."

Operation Nightsafe lead, Chief Inspector Helen Pritchett said: "Northamptonshire Police are continually working to prevent and detect offences of violence and to ensure that the county is a safe place for people to be.

"Consuming alcohol in excess has a significant impact on the behaviour and rational thought processes of people, which the police witness on a daily basis.

"The *One Punch One Life* DVD has been produced by a family who have been devastated by one single violent action. Every action has a consequence and the DVD shows how a life has been taken.

"The support given by the family in the making of this DVD will allow work to be progressed with young people to make them aware of the potential consequences of their behaviour after consuming alcohol, and how easily this can ruin lives."

Mr Martin's fiancée, Katie Harthen said: "I am pleased to be involved in this campaign and think it will make young people very aware of the consequences of low-level violence and the impact it can have on so many lives.

"I feel that being part of this will hopefully make an enormous difference in the attitude and awareness of young people."

Mr Martin's mother, Joyce Martin said: "I really hope that an immense amount of good can come out of this campaign, from a most devastating situation.

"All I can hope for is that it can change the outlook of young people and make them realise that low-level violence could result in a most horrendous outcome.

"If only a few lives can be saved and attitudes changed then it is worth all the efforts made during this project."

The film can be viewed in the Operation Nightsafe section on the Northamptonshire Police website – [northants.police.uk](http://northants.police.uk).

The Police and Fire services are extremely grateful to the family of Mr Martin for their support and participation in the initiative and the making of the film.

Any schools that are interested in taking part can contact Shaun Johnson on 01604 797163.