



**Report on**

# The 5<sup>th</sup> Leyland Health Mela

**Saturday 17th September 2016**

**Venue: Academy@Worden, Leyland**

This event was organised by the National Forum for Health and Wellbeing (NFHW) and was jointly sponsored by the Rotary Club of Leyland and Academy@Worden, Leyland.

or festival) provides an opportunity to mobilise the community to take an active and enjoyable part in securing its own health and wellbeing. Over the years the scope of the Health Mela expanded to become a multi-ethnic event taking in all sections of the community.

In 2012, the Rotary Club of Leyland became partner and sponsored their first Health Mela organized by the NFHW. Since then Rotary has participated at Bolton, Manchester, Bradford, Fylde Coast, London as well as in India. The experience of direct service to

the community was compelling and fulfilling. The Rotary District of Cumbria and Lancashire has taken this as one of their community projects. Rotary International has now provided funds to hold several such events in other hard to reach communities within the district. Since inspiring and successful events have been held at Carlisle and Carnforth this year.

Another major milestone for NFHW has been the acquisition in 2013 of a permanent office in the Bolton One building at the Centre for Research in Health and Wellbeing at the University of Bolton. This now functions as the home base of the organisation. In 2014 having won the E3 business award NFHW was named as the Social enterprise of the year.

## Introduction

The origins of the Health Mela concept date back to Preston in 2001, when a group of healthcare professionals and executive members of the Preston Gujarat Hindu Society (GHS), led by Professor Romesh Gupta OBE and Ishwer Tailor JP MBE DL, set up the Lancashire Gujarat Health Users Forum. This was aimed to improve health education and access to health information for the local south Asian community. The event was planned to promote healthy living and built on the idea that a Mela (a gathering



## The Breakfast Meeting

Every Health Mela starts with a breakfast meeting that is held before the formal opening of the mela. It provides a platform where the chief guest and the invited community and regional health leaders can discuss a specific local health issue. This year's theme for the meeting



## The Health 'MOT'



Visitors of all ages were invited to take a Health MOT and 87 took advantage of the range of health test and professional health counseling opportunities on offer.

Total no counseled:	87
Referred to GP:	24
Raised BP	(>149) – 6
Raised glucose in people without diabetes (>7.0 mmol)	- 5
Raised Cholesterol	>6 – 8
Raised Glucose & Cholesterol	- 4
Raised BP, Cholesterol & Glucose	- 1



was **'Health & Education- the essential foundations of community wellbeing'**.

Councillor Mrs Linda Woollard, the Mayor of South Ribble, opened the proceedings by expressing her delight that so many people and organisations had got together to offer such a wonderful opportunity for health improvement to the people of South Ribble.

Professor Rob Campbell, former Pro Vice Chancellor of the University of Bolton chaired the breakfast meeting. Chief Guest Mr Stuart Heys, Chairman Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust welcomed the opportunity to collaborate with local schools. He further indicated that engaging with the local schools would be an important role for the Trust's Health Academy.

Honoured Guest David Eva, Chair Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust made the point that "all the research shows that health literacy – understanding your health condition – understanding how to make yourself healthy is absolutely key to helping people get better – or to prevent them from getting illness. It is absolutely essential that this type of activity takes

place and I congratulate the National Forum for Health & Wellbeing and Academy for leading in this way."

Mrs Seema Kennedy, MP for South Ribble, made special efforts to attend the event despite her very busy schedule. She endorsed the initiative and praised the NFHW and the Rotary Club of Leyland for this novel approach towards improving the health of the local community.

Mark Allanson, Pro Vice-Chancellor (External Relations) of Edge Hill University also attended the meeting along with many other senior academicians and clinicians from the surrounding area.

During the meeting, the audience engaged in a lively debate regarding the important links between health and education and discussed ways to develop these at local and national levels. It was recognised that voluntary organisations such as NFHW, Rotary and the local schools can play a significant role in improving the health and wellbeing of the local community.

The meeting ended with recitation of prize winning essays written by the school children.

## The Health Mela

The Mela was officially opened by Mr Stuart Heys who told a story about the journey of a patient through the NHS and the social services. He highlighted the complexity of providing care, particularly to the elderly. He praised the NFHW for bringing many professionals together under one roof. He endorsed the idea that this sort of joint event can improve the healthcare and simplify the complex processes of health delivery. After the formal opening ceremony, the audience was entertained with a lively dance display by Worden's award winning students team. Visitors then had the opportunity to visit stalls representing more than 60 organisations including NHS Trusts, voluntary bodies and other health related groups.

More than 500 visitors of all ages visited the Mela and were spoiled for choice by the very wide range of activities, entertainment and exhibitors on offer. Children played on the bouncy castle, took their favourite soft toy for a check up at the Teddy Bear Clinic and queued at the face painting stall to get a realistic looking wound applied to



alarm their unsuspecting parents, family and friends. Students combined with exhibitors to ensure that the Health Mela was a roaring success. Throughout the day visitors were welcomed, guided and entertained by a team of enthusiastic cheerful and very well informed volunteers from Academy@Worden.

## Health checks at the Mela

The Health Mela provided visitors with the opportunity to take a comprehensive series of health checks and counselling in a friendly and informal environment. The tests were carried out by the Blood Drop team from the Lancashire Teaching Hospitals. Health checks and counselling was carried out by the medical and M Pharm students of the University of Central Lancashire under the supervision of Dr Abhay Vaidya and Professor Satyan Rajbhandari.

## The activities for children

A number of activities such as the trampoline, rowing and cookery demonstration by the school, to encourage healthy exercise and healthy

eating, turned out to be very popular. The smoothie Bike was in constant demand throughout the day as visitors pedaled their way to a nutritious and refreshing drink. The children of the school contributed towards fruit collection as part of a non-uniform day. The students wrote the poems and essays on health and wellbeing and took part in competitions. There was a dedicated workshop for children on Oral Health by Drs Anjali Gupta and Mayank Morar.

## Reiki

Visitors could avail themselves of a Reiki taster session provided by the Holistic Living Group of Preston. Ten volunteers were involved in the Reiki taster session. Sixteen people took advantage of the sessions and all had amazing relaxation experiences.

## Comments on the day

Commenting on the Health Mela, distinguished Guest, Seema Kennedy MP said "... a fantastic and informative event. It is clear that looking after our own health and wellbeing will only be of more

*importance in the years to come. I look forward to working with these groups at future Health Melas."*

Chris Catherall, Academy@Worden Headteacher reflecting on the day's events added "*As you will have seen from the commitment and quality of work of the young people present at today's event, health is a topic which truly engages our students. We will build on this foundation, extending the role of our partner schools and colleges to make future events even more influential in securing the health and wellbeing of our local community."*

Summing up the events of the Health Mela, Professor Romesh Gupta, OBE, Chair of the National Forum for Health and Wellbeing and past President of the Rotary Club of Leyland said, "*What a day! Under one roof – enthusiastic High School Students, senior national and local politicians, representatives from Primary schools, Colleges and the University sector, Chairs and Chief Executives from NHS Trusts and other health related statutory organisations, plus a huge range of influential representatives from the voluntary sector and elsewhere. All of them focusing on their complementary roles in the promotion of community health and wellbeing. NFHW sees this as a model. We will use it to build an inclusive structure involving health and education sectors together in community engagement and the promotion of personal and family health and wellbeing."*

## Publicity

The event was systematically publicised using social media and news releases to media outlets, including newspapers, radio and television. This helped promote

## Our Partner organisations in the Health Mela

The major partners associated with this Health Mela were:

- Academy@Worden
- The University of Central Lancashire
- The Rotary Club of Leyland
- Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust
- The Gujarat Hindu Society
- South Ribble Borough Council
- Roche diagnostics
- The 'Blood Drop' team from Lancashire Teaching Hospitals
- The 'Health Olympics Team'; Medical students from the University of Manchester
- The University of Bolton
- Chorley & South Ribble NHS CCG
- The Holistic Living Group, Preston
- The Creative Communities Group UK
- The North West Ambulance Services NHS Foundation Trust



## The National Forum for Health and Wellbeing and the Health Mela movement

Involving communities in a meaningful way in the pursuit and promotion of their own health and wellbeing has been the primary objective of the Health Mela since its inception in 2001. The National Forum for Health and Wellbeing has worked in accordance with this principle, enabling it to develop a realistic structure and reach the hearts and minds of urban communities. Partnerships with local Rotary Clubs, Universities, Schools and other organisations help to spread the message and the concept. These ideas can also assist other groups who are considering putting on their own Health Melas or similar events.

much helpful local coverage both before and after the event. Advantage was also taken of local health domains such as pharmacies and doctors' surgeries and posters and flyers were distributed to these areas. Flyers were also widely distributed in the local area. With the help of the school, posters were displayed in a number of locations across Leyland and Radio Lancashire hosted a special programme on the event.

We had the support of the Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust and the Lancashire Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust. They played an important part in making the public aware of the Mela by cascading information to their own contacts.

### Feedback from exhibitors and visitors

The feedback from the visitors and the exhibitors was very positive and encouraging. All the exhibitors indicated that would like to participate in the next event in 2017. The involvement of the school, staff, students and governors was highly appreciated.



Overall, the Leyland Health Mela was seen to have delivered on its promises. It served as an excellent platform for networking and provided an opportunity for healthcare students to interact with exhibitors and members of the public to discuss health related concerns and to gain experience in providing medical information and guidance. We can all learn from each other in this type of engaging and inspiring environment.

### Acknowledgements

Thanks must go to all the members of the NFHW, Rotary International (in particular members of the Rotary Club of Leyland), the staff and students of the school, partner organisations and everybody else who contributed to make this event a success. The 100% commitment of all the participants is remarkable. The time spent preparing and presenting their work hasn't gone unnoticed. Their contributions are highly valued and we hope that they will continue to support us in future.

We record with thanks the additional support in the form of test materials and equipment which was provided by Roche.

If you or your organisation/community would like to get involved in this exciting journey, please contact the Secretary at the address below for details.

**Sarifa Kabir, Secretary, NFHW**  
**Centre for Research in Health and Wellbeing, University of Bolton,**  
**Deane Road, BL3 5AB**  
**Email: sarifa.kabir@nfhw.org.uk**

[www.nfhw.org.uk](http://www.nfhw.org.uk)

Working towards healthier living in partnership with:

