



## Party time at Plantation

Plantation Café, the alcohol and drug free venue in Guildford for young people, is celebrating its tenth birthday this April, and throwing a party to mark the occasion. Do you remember Biz? Or Michael? Rudi or Dawn? Or perhaps you were around when Barnabus or Ally were in the café? Plantation has become a vital part of the lives of many local young people and if you were a part of Plantation at any stage over the last ten years you're invited to the party.

Plantation opened its doors to young people in April 1998 and has gone from strength to strength since. Various projects run from the first floor, including Motivate and school inclusion projects. In a timely move, local businessman Shahid Azeem is hoping to raise £10,000 for Motivate by running the London Marathon this Sunday – the month of the tenth anniversary. (Do visit his website – [www.justgiving.com/shahidazeem](http://www.justgiving.com/shahidazeem) - to make a donation!)

Plantation came into being after Pete Watts carried out a survey of more than 500 14 and 15 year olds in 1995 on behalf of the YMCA. His report revealed that having a dedicated space to meet was a top priority for young people. A temporary youth café in Portsmouth Road rapidly gained a reputation as a popular place to hang out, and although only soft drinks were sold, young people began to make the place their own. A partnership was developed between various agencies including several local churches, Guildford Borough Council, Social Services and the Warehouse Project and the hunt for a more permanent home began. In time a former tearoom down a side alley in Market Street came to their attention.

The town centre location was ideal, though the property itself was sorely in need of some care and attention. The YMCA took on the project and sought further advice from young people to shape the services to be delivered by the project.

Plantation continues to evolve in response to local needs. The current lease will run out in five year's time and it is time to start planning for the future – a bigger Plantation perhaps?

Cassie, Plantation Café's team leader is organising the party, so please contact her either by phone on 01483 888122 or email her at [cphilpott@guildfordymca.org.uk](mailto:cphilpott@guildfordymca.org.uk) . The celebration will take place in the café at Plantation on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> April from 7.30 onwards. We hope to see you there!