

Campaigners fight to save law centre

Staff, supporters and former clients of a community law centre vowed to "fight and fight" to ensure the charity's survival in the wake of government cuts to legal aid, at a reception at the House of Lords last Thursday.

The bash was hosted by one of the charity's patrons, Lord Low of Dalston, as part of a campaign to raise awareness of the Hackney Community Law Centre and its work before the budget - which provides free legal advice and services to people who can't afford to pay for it - is slashed next April.

The centre's newest patron, former *Blackadder* star Tony Robinson, was unable to make it, but other high-profile supporters, including Hackney North and Stoke Newington MP Diane Abbott, attended.

Both Ms Abbott and Lord Low gave speeches slamming the cuts and pledging their support, while former clients explained how the centre's lawyers had helped them.

Pledge

One man, who said he'd been wrongfully evicted by Hackney Council, told the guests: "If it wasn't for the law centre, I'd be homeless. They're just brilliant - so support them."

Chairman Ian Rathbone, a Hackney councillor, gave a passionate speech arguing "the very principle of democracy is at stake" if access to justice is eroded.

Cllr Rathbone, who has been involved with the centre for 16 years, added: "I'm going to fight and fight and fight until the very end, however long that takes me."

"If it's another 16 years, it's another 16 years. We have a job to do. And somehow we're going to do it."

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Actor flying high to be the Paralympics with trapeze

Disabled artist elated to be starring at opening

by Chloë Mayer
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An actor with a learning disability has won the role of a lifetime - he'll be soaring above the crowds at the Paralympic opening ceremony after training as a trapeze artist.

Dayo Koleosho is the only aerial performer with learning disabilities being paid for his part in the thrilling stunts in the show, which will take place at the Olympic Park on August 29.

The 28-year-old, who lives in Farleigh Road, Stoke Newington, with his mum, brothers and sister, is no stranger to the limelight - he's appeared in the BBC medical drama *Holby City* and travelled to Birmingham last year to shoot an episode of *Doctors*.

Dayo said: "It's absolutely brilliant and I'm thinking,

'wow!' - to perform in front of so many people, that is so major."

Dayo completed two months of intensive aerial training at Circus Space, a charity which trains people in circus skills, and impressed Paralympics bosses so much he was selected to perform in one of the biggest shows on earth.

'Brilliant'

"I'll be honest; the circus lessons were difficult at first but once you get the hang of it, it's good," Dayo told the *Gazette*. "And I'm not scared of heights!"

"It's been brilliant and I'm enjoying it. I'm very happy to be taking part. I don't know exactly what I'll be doing yet though."

He has just begun rehearsals on the top secret Paralympic opening ceremony, which is being billed as a

theatrical spectacular set to rival the much-anticipated opening ceremony for the Olympics.

Dayo said his family has not seen him in action and he can't wait for them to be surprised when they watch him perform.

Dayo attends Access All Areas, a charity in Hoxton Street that runs a theatre project for adults with learning disabilities, and he thanked the organisation for putting him forward for the Paralympics and for their support.

The organisation's artistic director, Nick Llewellyn, said: "We're a small local charity and for one our members to get a part in such a wonderful experience is brilliant. We're ecstatic!"

"The eyes of the world will be on him and we hope his career goes from strength to strength."



Dayo world

Community proud of giant street mural brighter

A gigantic new piece of street art which has appeared in south Hackney is being "embraced" by the community.

The blue mural fills the entire two-storey wall on the side of Namo restaurant on the corner of Victoria Park Road and Shafton Road.

Begun in the early hours of Sunday, June 24, the piece took artists Astek, Shades and Rekit just a few days to complete.

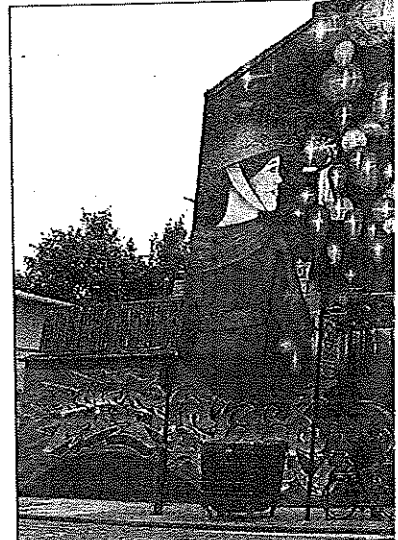
Restaurant owner Linh Vu said: "They offered to do it for us and we thought the area could do with more brightening up."

"It's very dramatic and very bold," she said. "I think

initially local people weren't sure. We got mixed reactions because a Banksy was there and they were territorial about it. But the Banksy has been defaced so many times and what was left wasn't really art.

"I think now everyone is quite proud of it. It's a part of the village and all the local people have really embraced it. For all the cars approaching the area that's the first welcome they get."

Namo manager Rachel Gardham said the street art, which shows a night-scene from Ho Chi Minh City, reflects the restaurant's fusion of Vietnamese and English food. She said: "I just think it's incredible."



The two-storey mural on the side of N

Children in a spin after being taught circus skills at school

Children at a primary school had no need to run away to join the circus when it came to them on Monday.

As part of Healthy Schools Week at Springfield Community Primary School, Castlewood Road, Stamford Hill, pupils aged seven to 11

"We often talk about the different ways people can be very smart. For those children who don't get the opportunity to shine in the classroom it's a great way to make them more confident."

Healthy Schools Week is an annual event at Springfield