



**CAMERAS, ACTION!** Filming in Potternewton Park, Chapeltown, Leeds, are *left to right*, Nathan Dorling, Nathan Harvey and Lauren Smith **PICTURE: MEL HULME**

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# Teenagers learn new arts talents

**BY KATIE BALDWIN**

**THEY'VE** already been labelled persistent young offenders.

But this summer they're set to get rid of that tag and become musicians, writers, photographers or dancers instead.

These young people are determined to stay out of trouble and are working hard at creating their own arts performance.

They are taking part in the first ever Summer College for the Arts in Leeds, organised and run by the city's Youth Offending Service and arts organisation Lifeforce Productions.

Although the course uses arts activities like music production and digital photography, the aim is to boost the teenagers' literacy and numeracy skills as well as working towards an Arts Award qualification.

Few attend mainstream

school so it is a great achievement for them to attend the college five hours a day, five days a week for the whole of the six-week holiday.

They were chosen for the course, some through their Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme (ISSP), a community punishment scheme for the most persistent and serious offenders.

For Nathan Dorling, Lauren Smith and Nathan Harvey, the course - based at the Host Media Centre in Chapeltown - is a chance to try things they've never had an opportunity to do.

Nathan Harvey, 15 and from Hyde Park, narrowly escaped jail for aggravated TWOC (taking a vehicle without consent).

Instead he was given an ISSP and said the course had introduced him to the world of music production.

"It's been really good and I like making music," he said.

"I like hip-hop, dance, R n B and I'd love to produce.

"It's changed my attitude a bit. I used to be hyper."

Lauren Smith has also come through her ISSP scheme, imposed because of a drugs offence.

The 15-year-old from Scott Hall said she was especially enjoying the music and photography activities.

## Attitude

Eventually these will be used to produce work for the group's final performance on Thursday August 31.

Another budding music maestro is Nathan Smith, also 15, from Rothwell, whose passion is DJing.

He said: "They asked if I wanted to go on this and I've always been interested in music. I thought 'I've not got anything else better to do'."

Amanda Hart, an education

officer for Education Leeds who works on the ISSP scheme, said they had been delighted with the commitment shown so far.

"They have been absolutely brilliant," she said.

"They have been turning up every single morning - attendance has been about 98 per cent. It must be good for them to be part of something positive."

Funded by the Arts Council England and the Youth Justice Board, the Leeds college is one of seven across the country designed to reduce the risk of youngsters committing crime during the holidays.

Lifeforce Productions manager Peter Ashton, who is in charge of the course, said: "There's a distinct connection between offending and low attainment in education.

"We want to say to them 'you can achieve'. That's what this is about - opening doors for them."

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