

THE PREMIER LEAGUE CONTINUES TO CREATE CHANCES

The Premier League's flagship community initiative continued last week with many Premier League players supporting a range of charities and good causes as part of the Creating Chances 'Places for players' programme.

'Places for players' is a core element of the wider Creating Chances initiative which aims to showcase the huge amount of positive work that top-flight football does within the community.

* Liverpool and England midfielder Steven Gerrard and the club doctor were interrogated by local children when they gave a talk about the importance of diet and healthy family eating. The activity took place as kids' charity KIND used their Creating Chances donation to build a new kitchen for the local community in Toxteth. KIND come up with imaginative ways to help families struggling to cope with many forms of disadvantage, providing residential breaks for kids and giving practical help for families.

* Six players from Blackburn – Derbyshire, Brown, Savage, Reid, Nelson and Pederson – became Reading Stars when they performed poetry for an educational DVD which will be distributed to 500 schools in Lancashire. Twelve lucky children from Longshaw Junior School watched and engaged with the players as they read their short poems and delivered their inspirational Reading Stars message. The DVD will also include match day action to encourage children to read.

* Lucky school children spent the afternoon with Arsenal captain Gilberto for the launch of Arsenal's Geography Double Club. The children got a sneak preview of the redevelopment at Arsenal's old stadium, Highbury, and took part in projects to encourage their understanding of geography. Arsenal's award-winning Double Club is an innovative education and football programme which combines the popularity of football with education.

* Portsmouth and England goal keeper David James had a nerve wracking afternoon judging an art and design competition with the Beneficial Foundation. Children from St Luke's School had to build a car out of recycled material to highlight the important of recycling. The Beneficial Foundation is a registered charity which provides training, education and rehabilitation to people of all ages. The craft centre which David uses for his art projects collects 10 tonnes of non-toxic waste every week for schools and colleges in the local area.

* Xabi Alonso, Liverpool midfielder, took part in an art and painting session with children at the Claire House Children's Hospice, a local organisation which provides respite, palliative and terminal care to over 230 very ill children and their families. During his visit, Xabi checked out some of the organisation's other facilities, including multi-sensory room, hydrotherapy pool, jacuzzi and physiotherapy area.

* Ryan Giggs, Wales and Manchester United midfielder, spent the afternoon at Francis House Hospice in Manchester, encouraging young patients to make the most of the services available to them at the hospice, and encourage them to take part in a range of normal teenage activities.

* Marc Edworthy, Derby County defender, attended the Barnados Lads and Dads event, a scheme which aims to add weight to the argument that children's attendance and attainment at primary school level is increased if their dads are more involved. Marc attended the event with his daughter and took part in a range of team building exercises, such as relay races, to cement the bond between father and child.

* Radek Cerny, Tottenham Hotspur and Czech Republic goalkeeper, became a school pupil for the day as part of the club's Learning Zone programme. The Learning Zone at White Hart Lane is part of the national "Playing for Success" educational initiative. Using football as a motivational tool, youngsters from local schools visit the centre for ten week terms to receive additional support with Maths, English and IT to achieve higher educational goals.