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News

Homelessness project hosts Champions League trophy

Thursday, 05 May 2011

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SILVERWARE: Anchor House resident Antonio Joaquim with the UEFA Champions League trophy.

A HOMELESSNESS project in East London was given the honour of hosting the UEFA Champions League Trophy yesterday (Wednesday). The award-winning residential/life skills centre, Anchor House, in Canning Town, had the trophy for three hours as part of the handover celebrations with London hosting the final later this month.

As well as centre users, the event was attended by local schools and community members, with performances throughout the afternoon by two professional football freestylers. Richard Luiki, who is captain of the Anchor House Warriors football team, was delighted. He said: "It is such an honour for us to be able to have the chance to see the trophy. "When I became homeless and arrived at Anchor House, I thought it was the worst thing that could have happened to me, but now it looks like all my wishes are coming true." Located in Canning Town, in one of the most deprived areas of the country, Anchor House provides accommodation for up to 180 single homeless people each year. It also addresses the root causes of homelessness through training, education and personal rehabilitation.

Anchor House director, Keith Fernet, explained how sport, and in particular football, has played a huge part in the rehabilitation process for its residents. "Football has been a great friend to our residents," he said. "It has given them the opportunity to meet new people, focus on their health and wellbeing and provide them with new hope. "It has also helped to break down the stigmas surrounding homelessness, race and religious backgrounds."

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