



really improved and I no longer get put in the corridor or in a different room for acting up in class. Billy has also supported me through some tough times like when a boy at school called me a racist name. Billy came to the school with my mum, and it helped having him there to sort things out."

Every Tuesday night Farooq attends the YCSA boys club. "I was nearly thrown out at one point because I kept talking over people, but Billy taught me that I shouldn't interrupt people and that if I am doing group work in school I should listen to everyone's ideas."

**"I feel proud of everything I've achieved in the last few months"**

"I feel proud of everything I've achieved in the last few months and that's all thanks to Billy."

Farooq's mother, Bakis Bibi, has also seen a change in her son: "When Farooq's behaviour at home and school took a turn for the worse, I asked YCSA if they could help. Billy is fantastic with Farooq and I have seen such a change in him. Farooq talks to Billy about things he can't discuss at home, and I've noticed how mature Farooq has become. YCSA is definitely the best thing that could have happened to him."

Billy adds: "I have told Farooq that he's stuck with me till he's 25 if he wants." And by the sounds of it Farooq has no complaints about that.

**What BIG did**

The Youth Community Support Agency (YCSA) based in Glasgow received £156,817 for its 'Be the Best I Can Be' project which aims to improve the self-esteem and confidence of young people.



Focused on the job

**"It was just like being with your mates"**

me to do something I would be cheeky back, or swear at them. I was referred to a counsellor for my anger issues, but it didn't really help."

At just 15 Craig was in danger of being written off by his teachers until he was referred to the DAY1 mentoring project, known for its successes in helping young people to reach their potential.

**PROUD**

"What turned it around for me was my DAY1 mentor, Jen," says Craig. "She helped me find out what I really wanted to do. We went out and did stuff together – it was just like being with your mates, even though she was older than me and an ex-policelady! Jen took the

time to understand me properly and helped me realise that the way I was acting was really immature.

"The best thing about DAY1 is that they don't see you as a bad person who's going nowhere; they try and see the good side of you. I don't want to imagine what would have happened to me without their help."

Soon things were looking up for Craig when DAY1 arranged for him to go to college and helped him to get his first job as a trainee technician. "That was a turning point for me," he says. "Then they helped me get a four-year apprenticeship with an engineering company, and now I have a

**What BIG did**

DAY1 Ltd is a mentoring project which works in partnership with schools and large employers in the Highlands. The charity received £77,904 from BIG to provide young people between 14 and 17 with a year-long one-to-one befriending and mentoring service.

permanent job as a pipe fitter and welder which I really enjoy. My granddad was an engineer and he says I have done him proud."

But the story doesn't end there for Craig. The staff at DAY1 are so impressed with his achievements that they have asked him to become a mentor to other young people.

"I've just finished my training", says Craig. "I am getting a "DAY1er" soon – a 15-year-old boy. Being a mentor feels really good – I feel so grown up! I think I'll be able to understand a young person because I'm young myself, but I'm also a lot more sensible now than I was at 15, and that's all thanks to DAY1." **BIG**



PHOTOGRAPHY: EMEN WEATHERSPORN

**A bright spark**

**Eighteen year old Craig Urquhart from Inverness is drawing on his own experiences to become a mentor for other at-risk young people**

While some of us look back on our school days with great fondness, others like Craig Urquhart would prefer to forget the whole affair. "I was going absolutely nowhere at school," says Craig. "I was pretty badly behaved and I just didn't want to be there. I didn't want to study stuff I knew I was never going to use in my life, so if a teacher asked