

Emmanuel Baptist Church, Liverpool



A community festival hosted by Eden Netherton in partnership with NWBA, SU and Emmanuel Baptist Church brought hundreds from the local area together for five days of fun, games and good news this August. 'I Heart Netherton' took place under a huge blue and white circus tent in the park in the heart of the Merseyside estate. A kids' holiday club, community fun day, gig and comedy nights, sports and social action projects all helped the team (joined by enthusiastic members of partner church Emmanuel Baptist) to share their faith and bless the community. The brand new Eden Bus for Merseyside was also on hand for the entirety of the event.

"I felt God talking to us about doing this tent event and the vision for "I Heart Netherton" was born,' says Eden Netherton team leader Tom Grant. "We called the event "I Heart Netherton" as our original aim was to change the perceptions of people in Netherton towards their community. That's because we have found that many people, especially the young, have a negative perception of where we live. But as we planned the event, we felt God saying that it was bigger than that. We sense that God was saying that he loved this community and that through the festival, people would come to know God's love for them as a Father. We haven't been disappointed!"



The NWBA and SU helped us to find and train twelve young leaders (15-22 year olds), and as a team they worked their socks off. They were on the go from early morning to late in the evening, serving the church, serving the community and sharing their faith in word and action. As a result of being part of the team, one of the young leaders returned to his home church and informed them he had decided it was time for him to publically declare his faith and get baptised.

The festival was a massive success with every event well attended. Many stories of God working in people's lives emerged during the week. Message Trust bands Brightline and Vital Signs drew large crowds of all ages to the tent to hear their message of hope.

"It was fantastic to hear the bands boldly sharing faith with the people gathered those evenings,' reflects Tom. 'It was so inspiring to then see people being prayed with across the park with God moving to heal people. It was an incredible moment and I could sense the Kingdom of God being built in our midst.' An Alpha course has now begun off the back of 'I Heart Netherton' and the team are exploring new discipleship groups for youth and young adults."

Eden Netherton are now looking for new team members to come and be a part of what God is doing. If you feel God might be calling you – or you would just like to find out more – please don't hesitate to contact **Tom** on **07922 900845** or **netherton@eden-network.org**.

For your thoughts and prayers:

- Part of the purpose of this week was changing perception of an area, but this grew into a much bigger vision - what are the visions / dreams God has given you for your community? And how could you implement them?
- What is the perception of the church in your local community, and how could you effect that for good?

