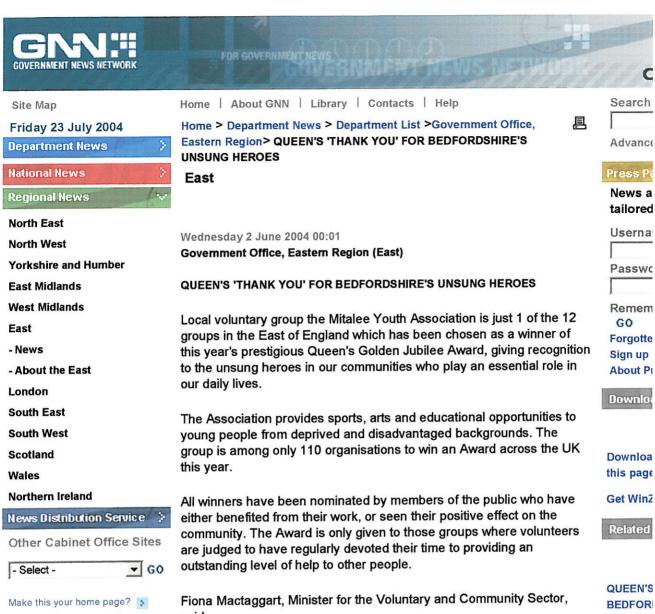
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said:

"This annual award gives well-deserved recognition to some of the unsung heroes of our communities - groups such as the Mitalee Youth Association.

"Community activity such as theirs is a vital resource - it develops the individual, boosts local communities and enriches the nation. We owe all of our volunteer groups an enormous debt and it is appropriate that their hard work is being recognised during Volunteers' Week.

"I hope that local people will now think ahead to next year and give groups that are making a difference the recognition they deserve by nominating them for the 2005 Awards."

Caroline Bowdler, Regional Director of the Government Office for the East of England, who chaired the local selection panel which considered the nominations, said:

"I am delighted that 12 of our groups have been successful in winning this prestigious award. Such was the high standard among the 59 nominations this year that the local selection panel faced a very difficult task."

"We have seen a great variety and breadth of organisations across our communities in the East of England this year and we can all be proud of their extraordinary dedication, talents and achievements."

"I am confident these awards will make a huge difference to the winners and will contribute to encouraging other potential volunteers in our communities to help and support the many excellent causes in the region."

If you know a voluntary group that is really making a difference to your community, then nomination forms for the 2005 Queen's Award for Voluntary Service are available from

http://www.queensawardvoluntary.gov.uk or by calling 0845 000 2002. The nomination period runs until 30 September 2004.

Notes to editors

- 1. Her Majesty The Queen announced on 30th April 2002 the creation of a new, annual Award to mark the occasion of her Golden Jubilee. The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service is the new name for this award, previously the Queen's Golden Jubilee Award for Voluntary Service, which celebrates outstanding achievements by groups of volunteers.
- 2. To date, over 300 voluntary groups have won the Award, including 110 in 2004.
- 3. The Award covers the whole of the United Kingdom, the Channel Isles and the Isle of Man.
- 4. The number of Awards given each year will depend on the number and quality of the nominations received. The Award is made to groups, rather than to individuals.
- 5. Groups must be nominated for the Award. Self nomination is not permitted.
- 6. Further details on entrance criteria and the nominations process are available from http://www.queensawardvoluntary.gov.uk.
- 7. Entries for the 2004/5 Awards are now open, and will remain open until 30th September. The winners will be announced on 2nd June 2005.

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