



**8<sup>th</sup> August 2008**

**Melin helps young volunteer boost community spirit**

A young Abergavenny woman's community spirit has been highly commended by the Wales Council for Voluntary Action. Gemma Cole, 21, from Melin Home's Hillside estate, was commended by the group that champions volunteers following her work with local youngsters.

Despite working hard at her job in a town bakery, Melin Homes resident Gemma found time to help bring her community together by organising events for young people at Hillside. The Wales Council for Voluntary Action praised Gemma's help in inspiring her young neighbours to take part in a recent Melin-funded drama project involving an African theatre group. They worked together for ten weeks before staging performances at Deri View School aimed at boosting community spirit and cultural understanding. Gemma said: "I have enjoyed volunteering and would encourage others to do the same, even if you think you can't achieve anything it can be something very simple from just getting a music box on the street and teaching youngsters a few dance moves, as soon as others see what's going they want to join in. "People working together builds up the moral of the community," she added. Karen Green, Melin Homes Community Development worker for Abergavenny said: "Gemma has been a great support and her understanding of young people in the area made it easier for all involved. The work she has done in her free time has now inspired her to go to university and study Youth and Community work."

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**Caption:** Melin Homes resident Gemma Cole's volunteer work is highly commended.

**Notes to editors;**

Melin Homes is a not for profit landlord providing quality homes and services across Blaenau Gwent, Monmouthshire, Newport, Powys and Torfaen. For further information please visit [www.melinhomes.co.uk](http://www.melinhomes.co.uk)