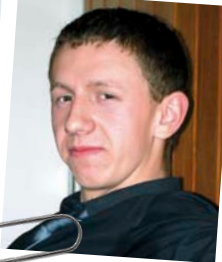


Lee Aitchison, a teenager from Pilton in Edinburgh, testifies to the effectiveness of DIME (Discipleship In Muirhouse Estate), an out-of-school project, run by SU Scotland volunteers, which meets on Thursday evenings).



I used to see fights all the time when I was growing up. Life in my neighbourhood was an intimidating one, with little to do except hang around on the street, which would ultimately lead to trouble and the sound of police sirens.

However, the volunteers at the DIME project offered me an alternative to the life I saw in my community. They built a relationship with me at the Thursday night meetings and weekends away, they shared their faith and offered a different way to live my life (without forcing it on me) and, gradually, encouraged me in my own faith.

In S2 I started to pay attention - I wanted to know what the Bible said about the problems I faced in my community. The leaders challenged me about my behaviour too, and gradually I changed - I stopped swearing when I noticed that it wasn't cool. I often felt that DIME was a 90 minute refuge from all the other options - loitering, vandalism, breaking windows, getting chased - as it encouraged me to listen and think through issues. As a result, I started to attend church with some of the leaders, where I received a warm welcome, and I enjoyed it!

The influence of DIME has completely changed me and my approach to the community. Now I am helping to serve young people as a junior leader in the project, encouraging them to follow my example.