

YOUNG FOOTBALLER SCORES A PLACE IN UNDER 10s MANCHESTER UNITED SQUAD

Manchester United fan Aliza Angus is living every young football fan's dream having been selected for the team's under 10s squad.

The nine-year-old from Cheetham has grown up playing football in the street with local boys, but her exceptional skills weren't picked up until she enrolled on a football programme at the Cheetwood Centre on Allesley Drive.

The centre was reopened in 2008 by the Big Life Centres charity and since then has launched drama, football and multisports programmes for local children. It was while on a football course that Cheetwood staff noticed her talents.

Centre Co-ordinator Hayley Kinsley, who coaches football, said: "Aliza is a natural footballer, she picked it up straightaway. When I saw how good she was, I knew she should go for trials at Manchester United."

Three weeks of trials took place at Manchester United's community training ground, The Cliff, in Salford, where Aliza competed against 133 other girls to be picked for the under 10s team and is now a striker.

Aliza said: "I've already been to Sheffield to take part in the FA Futsal football tournament, and we came second and won a silver trophy. I'm used to playing football against boys in the street or at school but now I'm part of a girl's team."

Manchester United's Girls' Centre of Excellence Director Emma Fletcher said: "Aliza looked really sharp in the trials and we are looking forward to working with her and developing her skills. Last season was the first for our Centre of Excellence and it was really successful, with three of our girls being picked for the international squads. We are hoping to build on that success this year.

"For me, offering opportunities to young people who perhaps wouldn't get the chance to play football at this level is what makes my job satisfying. We aim to develop our links with schemes and centres like Cheetwood, to give more girls that all important lucky break."

Aliza's mum Rose said: "There was absolutely nothing for children to do round here until the Cheetwood Centre started the sports programmes; I'm over the moon that she's been accepted onto the team and really proud of her.

"We live very close to the centre and as soon as it reopened Aliza and her sister were using it regularly."

Notes to Editors:

To arrange a photograph of Aliza please contact Dawn Bunnell or Rachael Pilsbury on the numbers below.

The Cheetwood Centre is part of **Big Life Centres**, which is a registered charity (no.1062333) and a part of The Big Life group of social businesses and charities. The centres offer a range of services to help improve people's health and well being.

www.thebiglifegroup.com

Manchester United Foundation was set up in 2006 to celebrate 50 years of the Club playing in Europe. The Foundation uses the passion for Manchester United to benefit our communities and improve the lives of young people through: educational programmes, promoting a greater understanding of social issues through education, and by developing unique partnerships with like-minded organisations.

www.mufoundation.org

MU Foundation Girls Centre of Excellence has FA Centre of Excellence status, meaning that we now have the opportunity to develop our players further. The Centre of Excellence provides opportunities for girls to play football at the highest standard, with the eventual view of developing them into international players. If you are selected for the Centre we will provide you with intensive training and support, along with the chance to compete against other Centres of Excellence teams from the North West.

Ends

For information please contact Big Life group Communications Officer Dawn Bunnell on 0161 227 0205 or mobile 07723 997 113 or email dawn.bunnell@thebiglifecompany.com

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