

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## **UK premiere of locally produced film highlighting drug and alcohol addiction in Leicester**

Leicester Recovery Partnership's Jon Roberts has teamed up with independent documentary filmmaker Nick Hamer to capture Jon's work as a Recovery Consultant and his past life as an alcoholic/drug addict. The Dear Albert film's UK premiere will be at Phoenix Cinema in Leicester next month, following international showings in Canada, South Africa and America.

'Dear Albert' has taken three years to produce and aims to highlight Jon's experience to inspire change in the lives of others. It follows Jon's work as he supports Ian and Gary in the earliest stages of their rehabilitation to 'get well or die trying'; providing a hard-hitting and uniquely personal insight into the process of recovery. Debut director Nick Hamer explores Jon's own journey with addiction, especially the struggles he faced saying goodbye to Albert, his street-side alter-ego and part of the elaborate lie Jon and other addicts wrap around themselves to hide the extent of their substance abuse.

Jon offers his insights to addicts drawn from his own challenges throughout the film: "In rehab, one of the things they asked me to do was write a letter saying goodbye to the addict within. Usually these letters start 'Dear Addict'. When I went back to read it I realised that I had written 'Dear Albert'. At that moment I started to understand what was really going on; that my drug use had become part of an elaborate lie. From that moment I decided that I didn't want to be Albert anymore."

This September, Nick and Jon brought their work to the world stage as Dear Albert premiered at the Calgary International Film Festival, before going on to screenings in New York and Cape Town, throwing the spotlight on drug and alcohol addiction and sharing their work with an international audience. It is now being shown in Leicester on the 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th of December at the Phoenix cinema in Leicester.

Since graduating with a Foundation Degree in Drug and Alcohol Counselling, Jon has been supported by Leicester University's Career Development Service and others to develop the Dear Albert project and create a social enterprise of the same name. He now works for Leicester Recovery Partnership, working as part of the city alcohol and drugs service to support more people to achieve long term sobriety.

Jon successfully secured a bursary and mentoring from the Enterprise Inc2 project (part funded by ERDF\*) at the University by pitching his idea for a new recovery social enterprise. It has also been part-funded by Leicester Recovery Partnership's unique Innovation Fund which has been set up to support service user and staff ideas for recovery focussed service development and improvement. This has included a mutual aid programme called 'You do the MAFs' which he runs at Leicester Recovery Partnership to aid the local recovery community.

Documentary filmmaker Nick, who runs Intrepid Media based in Leicester, documents a range of social issues through his work and describes his passion for the Dear Albert project and its legacy: "This project has been my passion for three years, I'm deeply involved in the lives of everyone featured in the film. I'm delighted that a new recovery programme will be opening in Leicester this year; it shares its name with the film, Dear Albert. I'm on the board of trustees".

Jon is now continuing to expand his social enterprise Dear Albert, making an impact with recovery services and individuals across the region: "Part of the Dear Albert mission is to make recovery in our communities more visible, providing the hope to those still struggling and affected by active addiction that recovery is possible. This is an important message to share during this week's Alcohol Awareness Week. Resolving a history of substance abuse will often require medical and professional counselling interventions; but recovery is also very much about a social process. Nick's film is a fantastic tool for getting these messages across. We are building workshops around some of the themes and issues explored in the film so that others can benefit from the work being done."

After the UK Premiere in Leicester and its tour of several international film festivals, the Dear Albert film will be made available for screenings at drug and alcohol treatment services, recovery communities, universities, prisons and rehabs in 2015.

You can watch the trailer and find more information and updates about the Dear Albert film here: <http://www.dearalbertfilm.com/>

Tickets available from: <http://www.phoenix.org.uk/film/dear-albert/>

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#### **Notes to Editors:**

**Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust (LPT)** provides a range of health and wellbeing services mainly for people living Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. The Trust serves a population of one million, has a budget in excess of £267 million and employs approximately 5,400 staff. For more information visit [www.leicspart.nhs.uk](http://www.leicspart.nhs.uk)

#### **Leicester Recovery Partnership**

Leicester Recovery Partnership is a recovery-focused service, delivering confidential alcohol and drugs support to Leicester City, made up of Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust (clinical support), Phoenix Futures (Widening Horizons service user day-service and outpatient) and Reaching People (outreach in the community). Visit [www.leicesterrecoverypartnership.co.uk](http://www.leicesterrecoverypartnership.co.uk)

## **Enterprise Inc**

The Enterprise Inc project is part financed by the Operational \* European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Programme 2007 to 2013. For more information visit: [www.communities.gov.uk/erdf](http://www.communities.gov.uk/erdf)

## **Dear Albert**

The Dear Albert film was directed and produced by Nick Hamer from Intrepid Media: <http://www.intrepidmedia.co.uk/>

Dear Albert is a recovery community and social enterprise which can be found on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/DearAlbertRecovery?fref=ts>

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