

Couch potato days are over for TV's Ricky

TELEVISION stars joined more than 800 visitors picking up healthy living tips at two town venues.

The Civic Centre and Phoenix Centre were chosen to host this year's Live Life event, which dished out tips and ideas on how to lead a healthier lifestyle.

Ricky Tomlinson and Coronation Street star Tupele Dorgu joined residents at the annual exhibition, which is hosted by Rochdale Borough Council and NHS Heywood, Middleton and Rochdale.

As well as the chance to meet the stars, visitors could enjoy demonstrations on all aspects of healthy living, take free health checks and get advice on stopping smoking and weight management throughout the day last Thursday.

Actor and comedian Ricky Tomlinson, best known as playing Jim Royle in BBC1's The Royle Family, chatted to visitors, signed autographs and entertained guests with his trademark northern humour. It was his first ever visit to Heywood and he said he'd enjoyed it.

"I was so delighted to get such a warm welcome," he said. "I've met some lovely people today. It was fantastic to see all the different ideas for living a healthier life, I've had a great time."

by Lisa Gray

He conceded that his on screen character could do with some lifestyle changes.

"Jim's approach to healthy living would probably be to eat his chips on a plate instead of straight from the paper, or cutting his smoking down to 90 a day," he said.

In real life, Ricky has never smoked and had a heart bypass operation 18 months ago, so has taken some real steps to improving his own health, including losing three stones and getting his daily five fruit and vegetable portions.

During the evening, Tupele, who plays Corrie's outspoken factory worker Kelly Crabtree, called in to meet residents and said she tries to lead a healthy lifestyle. Beverley Callard, who was due to attend, got held up filming the ITV1 show.

"I do try to keep fit, I've done a couple of half marathons, I run every day and watch what I eat, but I've got a sweet tooth so it's tricky," she said. "These kind of exhibitions are fab for pointing people in the right direction."

Over 300 smoothies were given away and children took part in a teddy bears picnic. Ricky Tomlinson presented some of the children with prizes after a colouring competition.



MEETING THE FANS: Above, Ricky signs autographs for visitors to the exhibitions. HEALTHY LIVING: Right, Coronation Street star Tupele Dorgu checks out her five a day.



There was a chance to try out the latest exercise bikes and rowing, tai-chi and spiral dance demonstrations. Nearly 350 complimentary one-day passes for the new Heywood Sports Village were given out, while two raffle winners won lifetime memberships for the forthcoming facility.

Rachel Snow-Miller from NHSMR said: "Live Life has been another big success and once again proved a good way to pass on simple health messages to hundreds of people that they can take home. We've seen hundreds of families attending and lots of schoolchildren too, which is excellent. There were lots of ideas to improve the health and wellbeing of people in the borough."

Councillor Alan McCarthy, Township chairman, said: "Live Life was a good start to making us a healthier town and I hope our residents have benefited from the day."

"Hopefully we've made a small positive impact on lots of people's lives, helping them to be healthier and happier."

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