

# Tragedy of New York terror attack results in a multi-cultural triumph for Oldham

**T**HE tragedy of the terrorist attack in America on 9/11 has been used by a grieving widow to create something positive in Oldham.

Dorothy Bogden, of Florida, lost her husband in the north tower of the World Trade Centre and was keen that his memory should live on by putting something positive into communities that had suffered from racial tensions.

She read on the internet about the ambitions of Oldhamers Paul Burgess, 36, and Jason Bromley, 26, of Copsterhill Road.

The pair wanted to set up a series of workshops that would make the performing arts more accessible for all.

Mrs Bogden decided to make a donation of \$5,000 so that they could set up their 'Performance Plaza' company for the benefit of the community as a whole.

A former music and performing arts student at Oldham College, Paul said: "After leaving college we

by Ruhubia Akbor

talked about setting up an organisation and thought it would be a good idea to take it into the community rather than focus on those who were in the industry.

"A lot of schools still do drama but not many have a view to follow it as a career - they are more academic, more theory than practice. People of school age do need to learn the academics but to not work on imaginations is a crime.

"We are offering a place for fun where people can get their minds working. We nurture young people's imaginations."

Performance Plaza covers such varied skills as guitar lessons,



**JASON (left)** on the guitar and (right) Paul and one of the group's tutors, Kaly Newman



drama, dance and more.

Mrs Bogden's donation allowed the group to buy six electric guitars for

tuition for those who do not own an instrument.

Future plans include a '£1 Panto' project to allow every child in the borough to watch at least one pantomime performance without the worry of cost.

In a bid to expand the multicultural aspects of the workshop, the pair are

appealing to people who have skills in performance techniques from across the globe to get in touch.

Eventually, the group hope to move in to their own building, but for now they meet every Wednesday between 7.30pm and 8.45pm during school term at the Hathershaw College of Sport and Technology. The workshops are open to adults and youngsters over 11 years and usually cost £1 unless it is a special free session.

● For more information visit [www.plaza.org.uk](http://www.plaza.org.uk) or call 07867666789.