Environmental champion Maxwell Ampadaga



The founder of charity Sheffield Environmental Movement recognised for his work opening up the outdoors to people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities.

The winner in this year's Heritage category in the National Lottery Awards 2021, Maxwell revered nature since his childhood in rural Ghana. He grew to love the English countryside after moving to Sheffield to study environmental management in the late 1990s.

He went on to found 100 Black Men Walk for Health with two Afro-Caribbean friends, intended to get middle-aged Black men walking – as they are more susceptible to diseases like type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure. He says: "We were offering Social Prescribing long before it had a name."

The project inspired the Royal Court Theatre play Black Men Walking, which explores 500 years of black people in the English countryside, and later evolved into monthly walking group Walk4Health, which now includes other ethnicities, women and young people.

Opening up the natural environment



BBC presenter Clive Myrie who presented Maxwell with his award

In 2016, the journalist, academic and countryside access champion founded the charity Sheffield Environmental Movement, which promotes access to the natural environment to boost the health and wellbeing of Black, Asian and minority ethnic people and refugees. Activities include guided walks, nature photography, foraging and horse riding.

> I get joy from seeing people happy and sharing the benefits of nature with them.
>
> *Maxwell Apaladaga Ayamba*

He says: “I get joy from seeing people happy and sharing the benefits of nature with them. I call it the Natural Health Service and I’m passionate about preventative cures – doing this to prolong life. Just the act of getting a bit of vitamin D makes a huge difference.”

- The National Lottery Fund has supported a number of Sheffield Environmental Movement’s projects, with grants totalling £33,200.

The National Lottery Awards

Each year, The National Lottery Awards celebrate the inspirational people and projects who do extraordinary things with the help of National Lottery funding.

This year, four projects supported by us are in the running for the top prize. Find out more about the nominees.

How we can help everyone access the "Natural Health Service"

Read more about Maxwell's thoughts on inclusion and green spaces in his blog.





How we can help everyone access the "Natural Health Service"