

“I turned knives into symbols of hope.”



**From hate to hope. One teenager's fight against knife crime.**

**BEFORE YOU READ:**

Is knife crime a problem in your country / city?

“The same weapons that have caused fear can bring peace and understanding.”

**November 4, 2006. Saturday night. Sixteen-year-old Eugene Attram is walking with friends to a fireworks display\*. Eugene's future is bright. He's training to play table tennis in the 2012 Olympic Games and he plays for his local football team. But Eugene never makes it to the fireworks display. Instead, he and his friends get into a fight with another group of kids. A sixteen-year-old stabs\* Eugene. Eugene dies.**

to make it”, says Alex. “Where I come from, carrying a knife is just as common as carrying a key. At the same time, education is the key to solving the problem of knife crime.” Alex points out that there are two meanings of the word ‘key’ – one literal, one symbolic.

What does Alex think is the answer to the knife culture? “Young people need to be educated about the consequences of carrying knives,” he says. “The Government, the media, teachers and parents also need to be educated about the issue. And Alex has taken his cause to the very top – he met Gordon Brown. “We need to change the way young people think about knives,” said the Prime Minister.

**M**arch 24, 2009. Alex Rose is Eugene's friend. He holds a piece of metal in his hands. “It was metal like this that took Eugene's life. But we've transformed it.” The metal is now a pendant\*. It's made from a bit of the metal of 756 knives that were handed into the police in an amnesty\*. A blacksmith\* helped Alex make the knives into pendants in the shape of a key.

“I wanted to create a symbol to show people that there is a way out of knife crime – and I wanted to use knives

**Knife Crime in Numbers**

- **72** = the number of teenagers killed violently in the UK in 2008
- **43** = the number of those 72 teenagers who were stabbed
- **18** = the age at which people in the UK can buy any kind of knife

**DISCUSS IT!**

- Why do you think young people carry knives?
- Would you ever carry a knife? Why / Why not?

**WORDWISE** fireworks display (n) – an event or celebration where small rockets make beautiful coloured lights and loud noises in the air

\* to stab (v) – push a sharp object into somebody

\* pendant (n) – a piece of jewellery that you wear around your neck on a chain

\* amnesty (n) – a period of time when people can give something to the police without being punished

\* blacksmith (n) – a person whose job is to make things from metal



Alex Rose