



■ **BAND AID:** Tav Rayat, Lucy Baker, 19 and Henne Patel with their colourful Band-Its

Picture: Damian Halliwell

Big hand for pupils' Band-It business idea

A GROUP of teenagers are targeting a £2m turnover on the back of their Olympic-themed business idea.

The firm, Band-It, was started in Wheatley Park School, Wheatley and produces a series of coloured wristbands, each engraved with one of the Olympic values of respect, excellence, determination, friendship, courage, inspiration and equality.

Primary and secondary pupils collect all seven bands which can then be traded in for a single multi-coloured Unity Band. They are then entered into a draw to win tickets to the Olympics and Paralympics.

All profits go towards sports kit for the schools who take part.

Band-It, run by 19-year-olds Henne

Patel, Tav Rayat and Lucy Baker, is now aiming to roll out to schools across the county with the aim of taking it nationwide in the run-up to the Olympics next year.

Henne, who has just finished her A-levels, said: "The idea is to sell batches of 50 bands to schools which students can collect and swap until they are able to apply to us for a Unity Band."

The idea for Band-It was dreamed up more than two years ago and the team of sixth formers entered it into a competition to find a business idea promoting the Olympic values.

It came second out of 1,000 schools nationwide and this has been used as a platform to launch the business backed by a £2,600 entrepreneurship

loan from Oxford Business Exchange.

A successful pilot at Marsh Baldon primary school saw 250 wristbands sold in four weeks with eight Unity Band-holders created. School secretary Christa Menmuir said: "We loved it because of how it promoted so many of our school's values and the enthusiasm of our children."

The Band-It team has had enquiries from schools as far afield as Leicester and Southampton. And businesses are now being approached to generate sponsorship to give the programme more financial clout.

Henne added: "It is all about being taken seriously — it could be huge. We just hope it takes off."

Visit www.olympicwristbands.co.uk