



Leading learning and skills



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Euro funding helps Corby teenager discover fringe benefits of skills training

A caring teenager from Corby, who left school aged 15 to recover from Meningitis, is looking forward to a career in hairdressing after attending a European funded project to develop her skills.

The project 'Brighter Futures Plus', managed by the Northamptonshire Learning and Development Partnership (NTDP), has been awarded over £587,978 from the European Social Fund 2007-13 (ESF) and the Learning and Skills Council East Midlands. It is helping people like Sara Bennett, progress into jobs. ESF is investing £376 million overall to boost skills and jobs in the region.

Sara, 17, lives with her mother and brother who she also has a caring responsibility for as they both have mobility problems. Due to her own health problems she left Pope John Catholic School mid way through year nine and was home tutored by her mother but unfortunately did not gain any recognised qualifications.

Spending so much time at home and losing contact with many of her friends, Sara lost a lot of confidence and her self-esteem was at an all-time low. In a bid to change her life, she contacted Connexions who put her in touch with Youth Works CIC who deliver the Brighter Futures Plus on behalf of NTDP. This was a huge step for Sara who had barely left the house for nearly three years and only had a small network of family and just a few friends.

Over 20 weeks, Sara attended the Youth Works CIC BF+ programme delivered at the Connaught Youth Centre, Corby. Whilst on the programme

Sara achieved AQAs Level 1 in Applying for a Job, Deaf Awareness, Recruitment and Selection, and her City and Guilds Literacy Level 1. She also completed a two day work placement in the Connaughty Centre café to learn new skills including cooking and dealing with customers.

From here she progressed onto a local Entry 2 Employment course and has secured a place at Tresham College to do a hairdressing course which she starts in September 2009.

Sara said: “Because I left school I lost contact with many of friends which really began to get me down. I don’t know where I would be now if I hadn’t had the support of Brighter Future Plus, in particular Carol who has helped me every step of the way.”

Carol Copeland, Director, Youth Works CIC said: “Through assessment, Individual Learning Plan and review I got to know Sara well. She was articulate and bright but low in self confidence and self esteem. Her interaction and communication with her peers was initially strained, appearing far more comfortable with adults.

“However throughout her time with us Sara became so much more confident and became an important and vocal part of the group. I am delighted she has done so well with her education and wish her well in her future career.”

NOTES TO EDITORS

Photographs of Sara Bennett and Carol Copeland are available from Gaby Hateley at COI News and PR or <http://nds.coi.gov.uk>

For further information about Brighter Futures Plus contact Sue Krumfort on 01604 671472

The European Social Fund (ESF) programme for England 2007-2013 is investing £376 million in the East Midlands.

More than 50 providers across the region are already offering over 90 projects designed to boost skills and job chances for individuals.

ESF will focus on the following priorities:-

Local communities – helping to cut unemployment, up-skilling communities and helping them to become more sustainable in the long term, particularly those who have lost their jobs because of the current economic downturn.

Social minorities and excluded groups – helping long term unemployed, people with disabilities, ethnic minorities, lone parents, the homeless, ex-offenders and people lacking the basic skills needed to get a job aim to develop a highly and appropriately skilled workforce.

ESF is managed by three co-financing organisations in the region – the Learning and Skills Council East Midlands, Department for Work and Pensions and a Local Authorities Consortium (Lincolnshire County, Derby City, Derbyshire County and Leicester City councils). Government Office for the East Midlands oversees the programme.

For general information on ESF see <http://www.esf.gov.uk/>

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