

Date of issue July 2008
Publication number em-74OLASSphilipkerry-aug2008.doc

Successful Project Leaves Smiles all Round

After 32 years at the same company, Philip Kerry, a 61 year old Welder from Ilkeston, lost his job before committing a one off offence. With over 43 years welding experience under his belt, Philip was confident he would find another job quickly. Having attended numerous job interviews Philip was confronted with issues of changes in legislation, making it necessary for him to have a formal qualification before he could be considered for new employment.

As Philip's lack of qualifications were not enough to secure a full-time job, he was referred to the Successfully Moving into Learning and Employment (SMILE) project, co-financed by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and the European Social Fund (ESF). The project is managed by EMFEC who work in partnership with 12 regional further education colleges and Derbyshire & Nottinghamshire Chamber of Commerce. EMFEC set up and delivered vocational skills training and work placement opportunities to ex-offenders and offenders in the community to help improve their employment prospects and boost the local economy.

Ruth Wheelhouse, SMILE project manager, comments: "The hard work and commitment of everyone involved in the SMILE project has resulted in employers across the East Midlands recognising the value of employing ex-offenders and offenders in the community and utilising their skills. A vast proportion of beneficiaries have progressed into

employment, not only as a result of training but because they are motivated and have a positive attitude.”

“Like Philip, ex-offenders and offenders in the community attend a course of learning which gives them a recognisable achievement or qualification. They are then supported into employment or a work placement. Of the 413 offenders that commenced a training programme, 350 successfully completed it – that’s a 84% achievement rate.”

Philip commented that the SMILE Project has helped him to develop a new routine and sense of purpose which has helped him move through a very difficult period of his life.

Elaine Bee, a Learning and Skills Broker at EMFEC said, “Philip enrolled on a course with Castle College and achieved five welding certificates. He is currently working towards Level 2 and has assisted staff and acted as a mentor to students by imparting his years of knowledge and practical expertise. Philip is a great example of how successful the project has been.”

Philip said: “I enjoyed all of the practical welding on the course and also assisting the students. It gives me a sense of satisfaction to be helping other people. The staff at Castle College are brilliant and very supportive.”

“The course has changed my life for the better. It has opened new doors that I would never have thought of doing, such as mentoring young people, or even the possibility of working as a welding tutor at Castle College. I have overcome my lack of confidence and am improving my basic skills too.”

Ends

For further press information please contact: -

Redbrick Communications: - Lizzie Carr or Helen Shorrocks, **Tel: 0115 910 1500**
LSC East Midlands: - Linda Penrice, **Tel: 0116 228 1849**

Notes to editors:

- The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. We are responsible for planning and funding high-quality vocational education and training for everyone. We have a single goal: to improve the skills of England's young people and adults to world-class standards. Our vision is that by 2010, young people and adults in England have the knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. Established in 2001, we work nationally, regionally and locally from a network of offices across the country.

Notes to Editors: -

Learning and Skills Council

- The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. We are responsible for ensuring the availability of high-quality education and training for everyone. We have a single goal: to improve the skills of England's young people and adults to world class standards. Our vision is that young people and adults in England have knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. We work nationally, regionally and locally to deliver this ambition on behalf of learners and employers. Visit www.lsc.gov.uk/inourhands