

NEWS RELEASE

Monday, June 15, 2009



Cambridgeshire Big Skill winners announced!

The winners of Cambridgeshire's Big Skill Awards 2009 were announced on Monday, June 15 at a glittering outdoor ceremony.

Run by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) in partnership with BBC Radio Cambridgeshire, The Big Skill Awards recognise and reward people who have improved their life or the lives of others through learning.

The winner of the overall award for excellence, chosen from the winners of each category, was Steve Gayfer - who also won the Learners Champion Award.

Steve, a teacher at Cambridge Regional College, has been dubbed "Mr Motivator" by colleagues and students, and is described as "a truly inspirational teacher".

His commitment to modernising the teaching environment has been instrumental in the college receiving the Beacon Award for Practical Teaching and Learning, while students in his specialist area - heating and ventilation – regularly achieved 100 per cent.

Judges were impressed with Steve's commitment over a long period of time, and said his teaching "created a buzz in the classroom which restored fun to learning".

Stuart McCallum, from Cambridge, won the Adult Learner Award for overcoming cystic fibrosis to achieve the best results from a large group of motor vehicle students.

Having missed much of his schooling because of his illness, 22-year-old Stuart had twice failed to complete further education courses, but didn't give up and made it third time lucky at Cambridge Regional College last year.

Tutors decided to put Stuart forward for a more testing course and, despite having some time off because of his medical condition, he is thriving on the BTEC Level 3 National Diploma in Motor Vehicle Technology.

Judges praised Stuart's "perseverance and determination".

"He didn't give up and, third time lucky, he found the course for him," they added.

The winners were announced on Monday in Peterborough at an outdoor awards ceremony that was open to the public to attend. Winners were presented with a certificate, trophy and a £150 experience day voucher by BBC Sport presenter Ray Stubbs, who launched The Big Skill in Peterborough in January this year.

The awards ceremony followed a day-long showcase event outside the Town Hall, where people could try their hand at different skills taught by colleges and training providers in Cambridgeshire, from plumbing to smoothie making and brick-laying to race car driving (in a simulator!) at the showcase stalls outside of the Town Hall.

There were also stage performances throughout the day, compered by BBC Radio Cambridgeshire, including storytelling and stage combat from Cambridge Regional College, hair demonstration and a samba band. Peterborough Regional College put on street theatre performances around the area outside of the Town Hall throughout the day.

The Cambridgeshire winners of the Apprenticeship Awards 2009, also run by the LSC, received their awards at the ceremony. Will Osborne was named Apprentice of the Year, with Cundy Anglia Ltd winning Employer of the Year.

BBC Cambridgeshire presenter Jane Smith said: "It's been a privilege to share the amazing achievements of these determined learners and dedicated tutors from across Cambridgeshire - but what a daunting task to choose an overall winner from such outstanding entries. All the Big Skill Awards finalists should be very proud of their achievements and they are an inspiration to us all."

Graham Brough, Area Director at LSC Cambridgeshire, said The Big Skill had done a great job of raising awareness of the learning and training opportunities on offer in Cambridgeshire.

“It’s been wonderful to celebrate and recognise the real achievements of learners across the county,” he added.

“The Big Skill winners should be an inspiration to others and show that it is possible to overcome challenges and learn new skills that can open doors and change lives for the better.”

The full results are as follows:

14 - 16 Learner Award

- **WINNER:** Lida Karaoglan, from Peterborough
- **HIGHLY COMMENDED:** Jack Bainbridge, from Earith

17 – 19 Award

- **WINNER:** Louise Smith, from Wisbech
- **HIGHLY COMMENDED:** Hannah Meen-Ward, from Whittlesey
- **HIGHLY COMMENDED:** Isaac Twigden, from Peterborough

Adult Learner Award

- **WINNER:** Stuart McCallum, from Cambridge
- **HIGHLY COMMENDED:** Hayley Horrod, from Ely
- **HIGHLY COMMENDED:** Peter Robinson, from Sawston
- **HIGHLY COMMENDED:** Catherine Buyoya, from Peterborough

Skills for the Community Award

- **WINNER:** Hannah Meen-Ward, from Whittlesey

Skills for Work Award

- **WINNER:** April Baker, from Cambridge

Employer Commitment to Skills Award

- **WINNER:** Fenland District Council

The Learners’ Champion Award

- **WINNER:** Steve Gayfer, from Cambridge
- **HIGHLY COMMENDED:** Nanak Singh, from Cambridge
- **HIGHLY COMMENDED:** Tapiwa Katsande, from Cambridge

The Big Skill Excellence Award 2009

- **WINNER:** Steve Gayfer, from Cambridge

Apprenticeship Awards 2009

Cambridgeshire Apprentice of the Year: Will Osborne

Employer of the Year: Cundy Anglia Ltd

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Notes to editors

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The Big Skill 2009

The Big Skill first ran in 2008 and following its success in Norfolk was rolled out across all six counties in the East of England, with support from Ray Stubbs.

About the Learning and Skills Council

The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) aims to improve the skills of young people and adults to ensure that England has a workforce of world class standard by 2020.

The LSC:

- provides free training programmes to young people and adults employed in local businesses
- plans and funds education and training in schools, colleges and sixth forms
- provides advice and supports people wanting to continue in, or return to, education
- provides financial support to young people and adults to allow them to continue in education

About BBC East

BBC East is built around six local radio stations and online sites - Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire and Three Counties (Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire).