

Danyell inspires others with her success story

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A seventeen year old from Hertfordshire who was at risk of dropping out of school without any qualifications has been given help and motivation to re-engage in education and successfully complete both her GCSEs and a plumbing course.

Danyell Rochford, from Hoddesdon, is now hoping to be taken on as an apprentice in the plumbing industry. In the mean time she is using her own success story to encourage and inspire other young people to achieve their potential.

Last January, Danyell was identified as being at risk of dropping out of school without any qualifications. In a bid to re-engage and motivate her, Danyell was referred by her school to take part on an Access to Apprenticeship programme in construction at Hertford Regional College.

Danyell was the only girl in a group of ten on the programme which involved bricklaying, painting and decorating. She rose to the challenges she was set and also gained the respect of her male peers. The course saw her increase in confidence and she became one of the highest achieving students in her group. On completion of the programme, she was presented with a 'Student of the Course' award and returned to school to sit her GCSEs with great success.

After completing her GCSEs, Danyell was invited to return to college to complete a Summer School 'Work Challenge' programme, which is part funded by the Learning and Skills Council and the European Social Fund. The programme is designed to keep

students confidence and motivation high during the summer months. The course saw Danyell organise fund raising events and participate in a community development project renovating a memorial garden at a local wildlife park.

At present, Danyell voluntarily sits on a panel of successful students on the 'Young Ambassador' Programme at Hertford Regional College. She helps to provide ideas and feedback on future projects at the college whilst mentoring other young people who are in need of re-engagement within the education system.

Danyell said: "I've found that I really enjoy being practical and learning new things. I love helping other people in my age group and would like to help people just like others have helped me. There are lots of options open to me now that I have qualifications and mentoring experience. I'm hoping this will get me on track to becoming a full time mentor one day."

Andrea Bennett, Initiative Manager for 14 -19 year olds at Hertford Regional College, said: "I am extremely proud of Danyell. She has been fantastic at motivating other students on the courses she has participated in and has inspired many with her can-do attitude. With the right level of support and guidance, Danyell has made the most of the opportunities presented to her to achieve her full potential and help other young people believe in their own capabilities along the way."

Danyell's experiences at college have given her many viable career opportunities. After completing the 'Work Challenge' programme Danyell enrolled on a Level 2 Plumbing course. Danyell passed the course in March this year and is currently applying for plumbing apprenticeships.

Jeff Wren, Partnership Director for the Learning and Skills Council Hertfordshire said: "There are many different training routes that young people can follow to gain access to their chosen career. The Access to Apprenticeship course at Hertford Regional College and the Entry to Employment programme

are ideal foundations that give learners like Danyell the opportunity to develop the skills, experience and confidence to pursue their goals.”

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Notes to editors

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Hertford Regional College

Hertford Regional College is the largest college in the area and offers the widest range of courses available. Around 12,000 full or Part-time students studied at the College last year and although many students come from the immediate area the reputation of the College also draws students from further afield.

The main College centres are in Ware and Broxbourne and there are also the smaller NextStep centres in Waltham Cross and Bishop's Stortford. Part-time courses are offered at these centres plus numerous other venues, such as schools and community centres, throughout Broxbourne and East Herts.

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 was established in 2001 as a non-departmental public body (i.e. carries out its work at arms length from ministers) and is responsible for planning and funding high quality education and training for everyone over the age of 16 in England, other than those in universities.