



Our future. It's in our hands: Sports presenter encourages people to learn new skills for the future by enrolling on a course this September

Following the recent success of The Big Skill Awards in the East of England, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and sports presenter Ray Stubbs are encouraging people who were inspired by the award winners to enrol on a course and to change their own lives through learning.

September will see a whole host of different courses get underway across the region, and the LSC is urging people who were inspired by the award campaign's fantastic stories of learning success to take the opportunity to sign up to a course themselves.

Learning a new skill or gaining a new qualification can help people to find a job, earn more money, move up the career ladder and build self confidence. There are a wide range of courses available with something to suit everyone, from basic English and maths courses for adults, to vocational qualifications and courses for school and college leavers. People of all ages can learn new skills - through part-time or full-time courses or training in the workplace.

Details of the variety of courses available in the East of England can be found by contacting the Careers Advice Service on 0800 100 900 or visiting the website: www.direct.gov.uk/careersadvice. Many colleges and training providers will also be offering taster sessions in September for people to have a go at the course and find out whether it would suit them.

Signing up for a course can cost less than people think. Some courses on offer will be free of charge and many people will also be eligible for funding towards the cost of a course. The Careers Advice Service will be able to provide potential learners with more information about the financial help available including Adult Learning Grants (ALG) and Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA).

Businesses in the region are also being encouraged to find out more information about providing training courses for employees in order to benefit their business, boost the skills in



the county and help people to progress their careers. More information about training options for businesses including Train to Gain can be found via the Real Help Now website at www.realhelpnow.gov.uk.

Run by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) in partnership with BBC East, The Big Skill Awards recognised and rewarded people who had improved their life or the lives of others through learning.

Sports presenter Ray Stubbs, who fronted The Big Skill 2009 said: “The Big Skill carries an important message: Age is no barrier, hurdles can be overcome and the rewards of learning outweigh the fears. I was inspired by the people I met and the stories I heard throughout the campaign. I hope other people were equally inspired and will take the opportunity to find out how they can also benefit from the training courses available to them.”

The Big Skill Awards, held in June, saw many learners from the region rewarded for their commitment to improving their life by learning new skills. Two inspiring examples of learners are Hayley Horrod from Ely and Peter Robinson from Cambridge who both changed their lives by enrolling on courses.

Maths course gave Hayley confidence to take control of her finances

Hayley Horrod, aged 28, from Ely is now able to take control of her finances and help her children with their homework as a result of enrolling on a numeracy course at Cambridge Regional College.

When Hayley first enrolled on her course her skills were limited to adding single digit numbers. She was also extremely shy and lacking in confidence.

Despite having to juggle her time around running a home and looking after two children, Hayley was determined to enrol on a course to improve her maths skills so, for the first time in her life, she would be confident when out shopping, and to be able to help her own children with their maths skills.



Throughout the course Hayley has grown in confidence and has passed two numeracy exams and is now working towards her third qualification.

Literacy course gave Peter the skills to read to his children

When Peter Robinson, aged 36 from Cambridge, first enrolled on a course at Cambridge Regional College he had to depend on others to read for him. Now he is able to confidently read to his own children and to pass on his newly learnt skills to them.

Peter has been inspired by his return to education and is determined to carry on making progress, continuing to improve his literacy skills and moving on to gain vocational qualification in engineering.

-ends-

Notes to editors

For more media information please contact Dawn Humphreys at Tribe on 01603 417722 or email dawn@tribepr.com

Picture caption: Hayley Horrod and Peter Robinson being presented with their Adult Learner Big Skill Awards 2009 by sports presenter Ray Stubbs - alongside fellow highly commended Adult Learner Catherine Buyoya from Peterborough.

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).

