

## NEWHAM COLLEGE REACHES FOR THE STARS



**African American astronaut, Major General Charles Bolden met 300 students from Newham College of Further Education in a bid to encourage students to study and work hard to make the most of their lives.**

The master class at Stratford Circus was attended by students from the College and was sponsored by the colleges' Science Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) Challenge project.

The STEM Challenge project at Newham College is in partnership with the Windsor Fellowship, and is funded by the Learning Skills Council, London East and the European Social Fund. The programme aims to develop the employable skills of young people aged 14 to 19 years (specifically, students from BME communities, females and students with disabilities) by giving them an insight into the career opportunities in the science, technology, engineering and maths sectors within the London East region.

Astronaut Charlie Bowden, spoke about his own career progression from marine cadet to astronaut to major general. Showing slides of his four missions to space he said *'the world looks so beautiful and peaceful when you see it from space – it's our challenge to make it as peaceful on the ground.'* He also explained how fear of failure nearly prevented him from applying to the astronaut corps – he picked up the application and didn't apply thinking it wouldn't go anywhere. It was only when he was encouraged to apply two years later that he tried again ... and succeeded. He told Newham students – *'don't be afraid of failure; take every opportunity and don't limit yourself.'*

Charlie explained that studying science and engineering had led him to what he thought was the best job ever.

He later said *'I really enjoyed the opportunity to meet the students - it was exciting to see the interest that they had in the space programme and in science.'*

Students from Newham College then joined Charlie Bolden at a VIP lunch and conference at the prestigious Royal Aeronautical Society with Baroness Amos, Leader of the House of Lords. The SPACE FOR INSPIRATION conference – *'Reach for the stars'* was organised to help celebrate the anniversary of 50 years in space.

Baroness Amos, Leader of the House of Lords, said *'this is a very good opportunity for our young people to develop their interests and enthusiasm in science, technology, engineering and maths programmes.'* *'Space offers a unique opportunity to focus on breaking the boundaries in terms of science. It is about innovation and inspiration. I hope Newham students will feel inspired. Good Luck.'*

Dannie Alborough (an engineering student at Newham) summed up the day:  
*'Charlie's seen so much – you need to take note of what he says.'*

Akua Biama Akuama (a GCSE science student) said *'I came away inspired to do what I can – when I can and to take all the opportunities that I get.'*

Adeyinka Alimi (a GCSE science student) said that he *'now needed to plan his life – and really go for it!'*

Jacquelyn Caulker, Science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM), Project Manager at the Centre for Innovation and Partnerships (CIPS) at Newham College said: *'Charlie spoke to us from the heart and it was an honour to have Charlie visit and provide inspiration to our students. We are hoping to link Charlie's experiences in the field of science to motivate young people to consider science and technology subjects as a career for themselves. We will also be considering the role science places in building such large capital projects as the Olympics'.*

Charlie finished the day with a visit to Number 10, Downing Street at a special reception to celebrate the anniversary of the abolition of slavery.