

Manchester Learners Celebrate Awards

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Five Greater Manchester learners have beaten strong competition to be named winners at the Greater Manchester heat of the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) North West Learner Awards.

Lauren Dobson, 16, from Bolton, was named Young Apprentice of the Year. Lauren is completing a Young Apprenticeship in Sports Management, Leadership and Coaching with Sports Coach Training Global Ltd and attends Rivington and Blackrod High School.

Twenty-five year old Jignesh Madhavji, also from Bolton, was named Apprentice of the Year. Jignesh works at Chet's Barbers and trains for his Barber's Apprenticeship at Bolton Community College.

Anna Marsden, 21, from Wigan, was presented with the award for Advanced Apprentice of the Year. Anna is undertaking an Apprenticeship in Engineering with MDBA Systems and studies with Procco North West. Apprentice Employer of the Year was Oldham Council.

In the Further Education awards, Joanna Woods from Bury College was awarded the Further Education Academic prize, and Lun Yau from Pendleton College received the Further Education Vocational award.

The winners were presented with a trophy and vouchers by TV presenter Konnie Huq at a glittering awards ceremony at Manchester Town Hall on 14 May.

Konnie, who has a degree in economics from Cambridge University and spent more than 10 years hosting popular children's TV show Blue Peter, told the assembled audience of the importance of education and skills.

"To us, education and training are basic rights. My parents came to the UK from Bangladesh in the 1960s to give me and my sisters a better start in life, otherwise I would have grown up in a Bangladeshi village with no education. You have no control over where you're born, and everyone here is lucky to have the opportunities available to them in Greater Manchester.

"I've filmed for Comic Relief in Africa where children play schools and pretend they can read and write, because they want so much to be able to do it for real. There are so many people in the world who just don't have the chance to learn or develop skills, and we should value our opportunities every day. Everyone here has done that, and by doing so you have proved what hard work can achieve. Congratulations to all of you."

Jane Bracewell, Area Director with LSC Greater Manchester South, congratulated the finalists and said: "The key to any successful organisation is the people who work for it. The global economic downturn is proving a real challenge to businesses throughout Greater Manchester, and the biggest advantage we possess over other countries is our dedication to developing skills in our workers. Better skills mean better jobs and better lives – there are no losers in learning and I congratulate you all."

The winners in each category could now go on to be named North West Regional Winner, competing against winners from Cumbria, Cheshire and Warrington, Greater Merseyside and Lancashire. Winners in the Apprenticeship categories could also go on to the National Apprenticeship Awards final, which will be held at Old Billingsgate in London on 16 July.

Entrants can keep up to date with all the latest news on the awards and see photographs of the winners and finalists on Facebook, myspace and Bebo. They can be found at: <http://www.bebo.com/LearnerA>, http://www.myspace.com/lsc_nw_learner_awards, or if you're on Facebook search for the North West Learner Awards 2009 group.

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Notes for Editors

The winners in the Greater Manchester heat of the North West Learner Awards 2009 are:

Young Apprentice of the Year

Lauren Dobson, Horwich

Highly commended:

Eyaz Kaduji, Bolton

Myles McGrillen, Horwich

Apprentice of the Year

Jignesh Madhavji, Bolton

Highly commended:

Andrew Fielding, Westhoughton

Kate Roberts, Littleborough

Advanced Apprentice of the Year

Anna Marsden, Wigan

Highly commended:

Chris Jenkins, Warrington

Beth Mills, Failsworth

Further Education Vocational Award

Lun Yau, Pendleton College Salford

Highly commended:

Timothy Auluck, Loreto 6th Form College Hulme

Jade Thorley, Trafford College

Further Education Academic Award

Joanna Woods, Bury College

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Highly commended:
Timothy Talbot, Cheadle & Marple 6th Form College
Steven Lawrence, Loreto 6th Form College Hulme

Apprentice Employer of the Year
Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council

About the 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.

About the North West Learner Awards 2009

The LSC's North West Learner Awards recognise the achievements of further education learners, apprentices and apprentice employers from across the region. The awards comprise Apprentice of the Year, Advanced Apprentice of the Year, and Young Apprentice of the Year, the Further Education Academic Award, the Further Education Vocational Award, plus awards for apprentice employers. Winners in each category are honoured at awards ceremonies in Cheshire and Warrington, Cumbria, Greater Manchester, Greater Merseyside and Lancashire; they then go on to compete for the North West Region Award for their category and those in the Apprenticeship categories are also considered for the national Apprenticeship Awards.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

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