

A Brighter Future for Blackpool Duo

Date of issue 29 January 2007
Publication number NWR-163

Two young people from Blackpool have been given a chance to turn their lives around, thanks to an innovative approach to training by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) in the North West. The initiative is part of the LSC's commitment to reducing the number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET). The approach includes a number of 'energiser' courses, designed to provide learners with a taste of future career options.

Robert Woodley and Lanette Rawcliffe, both of North Shore, left school in 2006 with limited options. Coupled with problems at home their situation looked bleak, to the point that both Robert and Lanette found themselves homeless. Finding out about the practical energiser sessions that were being run in the town proved a pivotal point in Robert and Lanette's lives, allowing them to see a way back into education, training and the world of work.

Both Robert and Lanette took part in the Prince's Trust 'Get off the Bench' course in Blackpool last November. Here, they gained an exciting insight into the world of football coaching with inspirational tuition from the coaches at Blackpool FC and Bolton Wanderers. Robert also enjoyed a week long energiser course at Myerscough College, where he tried his hand at a range of subjects from landscaping to golf and even motorsports!

Since the energiser courses, Robert and Lanette have found a new enthusiasm for their future careers, regularly attending the 'Directions' programme which focuses on building

employability skills such as interview techniques and writing a CV. Just weeks later, with the help and support of their Connexions advisor, Ian Carr, Robert and Lanette have now enrolled on a 14-week army preparation course that started earlier this month. The intensive tuition, which is run by Avenir Training, will provide them with a strong grounding should they choose to go on and enter the army. Robert comments, "The energiser courses helped me to realise that I really like to be active and work outdoors. A couple of the other lads I met were going on the army prep course and it sounded like something I would enjoy." Lanette adds, "I am excited about the military training course, it will be a fresh start for me and I'm really looking forward to a new challenge."

Organised by The Prince's Trust in partnership with Connexions, the energiser courses are funded by the LSC in the North West and form part of a national programme of support for young people across the country. The courses will continue to run throughout the year and will bring in specialist mentors to help young people identify the right career or training route and will also include a job club offering excellent links to local employers.

Ian Haworth, Director of Area for the LSC in Lancashire comments, "Robert and Lanette are shining examples of how effective these courses are in changing the fortunes of young people with limited options. Thanks to some excellent partnership work in the area, these opportunities have been quickly developed so that young people start to benefit as soon as possible."

Ian Carr, Community Personal Adviser at Connexions Blackpool concludes, "Lanette and Robert are living proof that young people often just need the opportunity to shine. They have lots of potential and the energiser courses have helped them to realise their hopes for the future in a practical and productive way. It has been a pleasure to work with them both and I wish them the best of luck in their future careers."

For further information on opportunities available to young people in the Blackpool area, please contact Connexions on 01253 754840.

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.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

For more information contact

LSC website: www.lsc.gov.uk

All media enquiries please contact:

LSC

Debbie Newell on 0161 261 0434, deborah.newell@lsc.gov.uk

The Write Angle on 01772 250505

Emma Lyons: emma@writeanglepr.co.uk

Stephanie Lord: stephanie@writeanglepr.co.uk