



South West

Adult Learners' Week

Awards 2010

co-ordinated by



supported by



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Welcome to the South West Adult Learners' Week Awards

Foreword

Learning South West is an education not-for-profit charity. We believe everyone has potential, and potential can be realised through learning. We are immensely proud to be the organisation that coordinates this special Adult Learners' Week of celebrations, culminating in our winner and nominee event. Here, we share amazing learning stories and celebrate achievements, which we hope will motivate others to join in learning.

The inspirational stories of our regional award winners, and nominees, show how potential is being realised and fulfilled through learning in all kinds of places, and with support from all kinds of people. Adult Learners' Week gives us a chance to recognise these achievements, and the commitment and hard work of all our outstanding adult learners in the South West and those significant 'others' who have supported them.

The individuals we are celebrating today are not only building a better future for themselves and their families, they are also helping to create a better future for all of us in the region. What a great triumph this is.

Paula Jones
Chief Executive of Learning South West



Connecting professionals to transform the future

Learning South West works across the region to give adult learners and young people more choices and opportunities. We work with other organisations and professionals to help improve the quality and accessibility of learning and youth work provision. We are home to the South West Centre of Excellence in Teacher Training and the Regional Youth Work Unit.

We run projects to provide more opportunities for adults and young people to learn and to influence the services that are available to them. We also support the professionals working with adult learners and young people to develop their own skills. We encourage partnership working and provide networks, so that they can also learn from and support each other.

Learning South West is a regional educational charity and membership organisation.

Open College Network South West

Event Sponsor

Open College Network South West (OCNSWR) is delighted to be sponsoring the Adult Learners' Week Ceremony in the South West.

As the Regional Awarding organisation licensed to offer the National Open College Network's range of national qualifications, we have been involved in adult education for over 26 years. A not-for-profit organisation, OCNSWR is passionate about supporting social inclusion and wider participation in education, and is particularly known for the flexibility that its credit-based courses and qualifications offer providers and their learners.

OCNSWR work with a wide range of private and public sector providers in the South West, offering learning in a variety of different training settings from colleges to prisons. The services are easy to use and there is a great team of very knowledgeable regionally-based staff supporting our centres. In addition to accrediting local or national (NOCN) qualifications, OCNSWR is the Access Validating Agency for the South West, offering Access to Higher Education courses for adults wishing to enter higher education or to enhance their employment opportunities.

For further information please phone the Open College Network South West on **01752 831500**, email: **info@ocnswr.org.uk** or visit our website: **www.ocnswr.org.uk**



South West Outstanding Learner of the Year

Tracey Archman

Age 41, Plymouth

Nominated by Mary Tromans, City College, Plymouth

After leaving school at 16 in 1984 with few aspirations, Tracey Archman, now aged 41, joined the Youth Training Scheme and worked as a factory operator at the same time as bringing up four children for 11 years as a single parent.

Despite her eldest daughter being just four, she volunteered for work in pre-schools, eventually taking a full-time job and was immediately bitten by the learning bug. She took every course available, from pre-school practice and childcare development to computers in administration, while volunteering for a range of community support roles.

Now a Community Development Manager at North Prospect Community Centre, Tracey has completed a string of advanced qualifications, including a Level 3 Management NVQ. "I have been active in setting up training sessions with senior staff members to support staff and volunteers – something I wouldn't have done before as I wasn't very confident," said Tracey.

Mary Tromans, her nominator and assessor at City College, Plymouth, said: "Despite being stretched to the limit with cares and responsibilities, she has been an inspiration in her roles at the community centre."



© Positive Negatives

Karim Yazdani

Age 23, Exeter

Nominated by Sharon Lambert, Exeter College

Karim came to the UK at the age of 16 in 2003 from his home country of Iran. His English was minimal, but he had a great desire to learn, so he began with ESOL qualifications to learn the English language and once he'd completed a Level 2 certificate, moved onto learning towards a career. Karim thrived and gained practical catering qualifications and a Level 2 in fitness instruction, believing these would help him find a job. However, in 2007 he decided to follow a more academic route. Karim worked on his written English with further ESOL classes, allowing him to progress on to a Level 2 Progression Diploma. He is now studying for an HND in Business hoping it will lead to a rewarding career.

Karim has never let his enthusiasm for learning and the hope of a successful career be shadowed by his uncertain future. **"I always had a dream and a goal, and that is why I have been working hard to achieve them,"** said Karim. He ended, **"I have to say I have had lots of fun, and all these times are unforgettable. Learning has changed me to be a completely different person."**



South West Regional Award Winner



Kay Osberg

Age 51, Falmouth, Cornwall

Nominated by Helen Cahalane and Martyn Clemson, UR Supported Employment - CWLD, Truro, Cornwall

Kay lived at home with her mum due to having a moderate learning disability, but when her mum was taken into care three years ago, Kay began living on her own. Wishing to improve her independence, Kay completed a Link into Learning course, then moved onto higher-level courses. Her learning in the past few years has included qualifications in skills for working life, lifetime skills, time and money management, English and adult numeracy and literacy. Thanks to learning, Kay is now able to complete daily tasks such as opening her post, grocery shopping and managing her money. Her confidence is growing and her emotional well-being has improved enormously.

“I can now live my life independently. I am really grateful for this and I now do not have a support worker as I can do all of the jobs around the home on my own thanks to Link to Learning,” said Kay. Hoping to find a job working with animals, Kay volunteers at Flicka, looking after the horses and other animals, and has recently completed a British Horse Society Horse Owner’s Certificate.

Louise Cox

Age 19, Twerton, Bath

Nominated by Liseby Hobson, BANES, Keynsham, Bath

Louise became pregnant at the age of 14 and left school without qualifications. After the birth of her son, she started at The Meriton School in Bristol – a specialist baby and mother school – and gained GCSEs in English, Maths, Science, Art and Child Development, as well as a Level 1 BTEC in Travel and Tourism. She continued her learning at City of Bath College, gaining a BTEC National Diploma in Business and Administration, and dreamt of becoming a social worker, but didn't think it was achievable. In 2009, a careers advisor inspired her to change direction and she began a national diploma in health and social care, which she hopes to pass in 2011.

Louise is adding to her learning with a placement at a day centre where she works with adults with learning disabilities. Single parent Louise is also very independent and manages to combine her study with bringing up a young son and running a household successfully. **“The whole of my education has made a difference in my life as it has given me a chance to achieve the best I can in what I can,”** said Louise.

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Louise

South West Regional Award Winner



Deborah Stanley-Jones

Age 48, Bristol

Nominated by George Ridd, Filton College, Bristol

In January 2009, Debbie was made redundant from her job as an Inventory Support and Process Manager with Woolworths, in a field-based role, after 31 years' service. Debbie saw it as an opportunity to embark on a new career, and enrolled on a six-week taster course in plumbing at Filton College, which allowed her to find out if this was the right career choice for her. After successfully completing the taster course, Debbie progressed on to a Level 2 basic plumbing course and qualified in September 2009. She then gained some hands-on experience to cement what she'd learned in the classroom, and this led to Debbie setting up her own business, 'Plumbher', in January 2010. Debbie is also studying for an NVQ Level 2 in plumbing with Filton College, alongside running her business.

"Debbie's spirit and enthusiasm, coupled with huge motivation, embodies the ethos of retraining... She has beaten the recession to not only learn her new trade, but to set up her own company," said George, Debbie's nominator. "There were times when I questioned my own capability, but with help, support and determination it taught me never to give up!" reflected Debbie.

Dwayne

Dwayne was sentenced to spend time in a young offenders institution and decided to use it positively to complete a number of courses. Alongside the barriers Dwayne faced being labelled as a young offender, he also overcame the pain and tiredness caused from having sickle cell anaemia and suffering a sudden brain haemorrhage to dedicate time to gaining qualifications. Dwayne studied NVQ3 in Advice and Guidance, allowing him to work with fellow prisoners, offering them advice and support, and helping new inmates to settle into custody. To support this, he also trained with the Samaritans to become a listener and with the Red Cross. Dwayne is also a race relations representative helping inmates with immigration issues.

Dwayne has completed Level 3 in maths, Level 2 in literacy, Level 1 in cooking, as well as an art qualification. **“Being able to study has made a big difference to my life. I didn’t achieve a lot in school so I’m catching up now,”** said Dwayne. He continued, **“I hope to become a youth worker when I’m released and stop others coming to prison and my qualifications will help me get there.”**

“Being able to study has made a big difference to my life. I didn’t achieve a lot in school so I’m catching up now.”

Dwayne

ESF South West Regional Award Winner



Arron Edwards

Age 21, Cornwall

Nominated by Tanya Atkins, The Cornwall Foundation of Promise

Arron was referred to The Cornwall Foundation of Promise – the foundation behind the training programme at restaurant, Fifteen Cornwall – by the police and youth offending team. He was working as a chef, but was getting into trouble with the law, partly due to anger management and drug issues. He was offered an opportunity at Fifteen Cornwall to gain kitchen skills and qualifications and, although he struggled to adapt at first, he went on to gain top grades in the kitchen within his group of trainees, also gaining an NVQ Level 1. He also went on an anger management programme and has tackled his drug issues. Following the part ESF-funded programme, Arron excelled on a work placement at a hotel on the Isles of Scilly and was offered a paid Chef De Partie position. Arron has also recently taken up the position of Head Chef at a local restaurant.

Arron believes the programme has helped him become a different person. He said: “I have learnt many things... I have an understanding of the good things in life now, and that makes me a positive person that only wants to learn more.”



Denise Hodgson

Age 57, Yeovil, Somerset

Nominated by Kate Hill, Yeovil College

Being branded 'thick' at school and told she was not clever enough to be a nurse meant Denise settled for life as a hospital chef and spent subsequent years working in a care home. Denise, however, felt she had more to give and completed an Open University course in mental health. During this time she was diagnosed with dyslexia, which finally explained many of her problems with learning at school. Determined not to let dyslexia become a barrier between her and career progression, Denise has since completed numerous courses and graduated with a Diploma in Lifelong Learning from University Centre Yeovil, in October 2009.

Denise now works as a Vocational Training Manager, teaching health and social care subjects to 14-19 year olds at Yeovil College. Denise said, "I am having such a good time teaching young people, sharing my knowledge and experience; I feel very privileged." Denise ended, "This really is lifelong learning. It has been a hard journey however... This has been an unbelievable experience. I never thought I could do this."



ESF Opening Doors to Adult Learners Award Winner



Energy2work

Nominated by Ann King, Energy2, Swindon

A unique commercial enterprise in Wiltshire, set up to give disabled people skills to meet shortages in local industry, has so impressed employers that they are snapping up the learners for full-time jobs.

Energy2work operates as a local authority-backed staffing agency in horticulture, retail, food, biofuel and recycling industries, offering soft skills training, the Edexcel Workskills Working in a Team Award and eight weeks tailored work experience to an initial 45 people. **“It gives them a challenging programme that takes them outside their comfort zones,”** said Ann King, the ESF project manager. **“Most had no interests or friends outside the family before this.”**

“Feedback from employers showed their surprise at the level of engagement and communication skills of the learners, compared with other work experience placements they had supported,” she said. So far 11 people have qualified and the first four, including someone with Asperger’s syndrome, moved swiftly into jobs.

Employers attend training sessions to see how to get the best out of disabled employees. The learners also have a weekly job club to help improve their employment prospects. **“Energy2work engages with learners constantly through social networking sites such as Facebook and texting. Most will move into employment of their choice, identified through Information, Advice and Guidance sessions and the Energy2Work employment team,”** ended Ann King.



Di Bradley @ The Nightjar

Nominated by Di Bradley, Weston-super-Mare

When Di Bradley reshaped the Nightjar as a community pub for Worle in Somerset, she became the estate's librarian, college head and community education advisor.

Six years on, Di, the landlady, praises her customers for helping the pub flourish as a business and a lifelong learning centre. Hundreds signed up for the free lending library, which encouraged many to read for the first time since school. Other activities include home safety, art & design, IT basics, and signing for the deaf – a challenging course completed by 11 learners.

"We started out trying to change people's attitudes towards estate pubs and the education just grew," Di said.

Many courses attracted funds from the Learning and Skills Council, feedback from participants has shown learning was very effective. **"Because we are a small community we talk to each other all the time, so we constantly know what the learners enjoy and what they don't."**

Anna Lindsay, a regular, said: **"I signed up for the short sign language course last summer and it has made a huge difference to me, as it has enabled me to communicate with my autistic nephew and will help me communicate with deaf patients in my new career as a nurse."**



Outstanding Family Learners of the Year

The Hall Family

Nominated by Sue Mead, Learning for Life, Swindon

A family of three with learning difficulties and disabilities ranging from limited sight to severe brain damage have transformed their quality of life and confidence through the power of computers.

Barbara Hall has very limited vision and is partially deaf. She finds talking on the telephone difficult and had never used a computer before attending an IT course at Learning for Life, in Swindon, which provides learning opportunities for disabled people. Her husband Ken is also partially sighted, with mobility problems, and their daughter Alison, for whom they are constant carers, has been severely brain damaged since birth.

Since taking the course and buying a laptop with an electronic voice, Barbara says her life has changed significantly. **“I can now use a computer with confidence to write letters, emails, shopping lists and surf the Internet.”** Ken took her lead and both are now taking an NOCN accredited course in word processing.

Meanwhile, Alison started with simple exercises, colouring in web outlines, and progressed rapidly to more challenging educational tasks. She is showing improved hand/eye coordination, greater use of language and requires less supervision.

Sue Mead, their nominator and IT tutor, said: **“Learning has made a big difference to their lives. Barbara now uses the computer at home for many different applications and she has made terrific progress.”**



Leigh-Ann Lumsden



Transformation
Fund Award Winner

Age 32, Coleford, Gloucestershire

Nominated by Fiona Taylor, Foxes Bridge Day Centre, Cinderford, Gloucestershire

Leigh-Ann has found great enjoyment and encouragement in music and, by attending music sessions at Foxes Bridge Day Centre, she has learned to play the keyboard. Leigh-Ann has Hallervorden Spatz syndrome, and is a wheelchair user who has enormous difficulty controlling her own movements, especially in her arms. This makes Leigh-Ann's new keyboard skills even more remarkable. Leigh-Ann practises on her keyboard at home, learning new tunes and playing them back to the music group at Foxes Bridge Day Centre each week. She has recently performed at local care homes and received rousing applause from the audience.

In early music sessions Leigh-Ann found it difficult to hold and manipulate instruments. However, perseverance saw her make great progression. "For Leigh-Ann to bring her fingers under control to perform tunes accurately and fluently has been an enormous achievement of dedication and determination," said nominator, Fiona. Leigh-Ann added, "Our music sessions at Foxes Bridge have been an encouragement and inspiration to me. I love music and the practice is good exercise for my fingers."

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Leigh-Ann

Acknowledgements

Learning South West would like to thank all the nominators of the learners for recognising their wonderful achievements. We would also like to thank the nominated learners themselves for sharing with us their learning journeys and achievements.

Special thanks go to OCNSW, for providing their sponsorship, which goes towards making this ceremony such a memorable evening. Thanks also to Lynda Bellingham for sharing her experiences with us and for presenting the awards to the learners. This really helped make the evening special to all those concerned.

Our thanks also go to Woodbury Park Hotel and Golf Club for providing us with such a spectacular venue, and for also allowing guests to visit the Nigel Mansell 'World of Racing' museum.

Learning South West would also like to thank everyone who has been involved in the organisation of Adult Learners' Week in the South West region. Many people have contributed to the campaign in many different ways, and together we have made the Adult Learners' Week Campaign in the South West a real success.

Last, but certainly not least, thanks to our own staff of Learning South West who have helped during this evening at the awards ceremony, we could not have done it without you all!

For more information on Adult Learners' Week in the South West, please contact the Adult Learner's Week Team on **01823 347955** or email **alw@learning-southwest.org.uk**

South West 2010 Adult Learners' Week Award Winners





Winning learners from the South West Adult Learners' Week Award Ceremony 2009 celebrate their achievements



Adult Learners' Week 2010 in the South West was coordinated by:

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