

THE SEALE HAYNE SITE

Further Education College: A Step Nearer

Since our last newsletter, this project has grown and moved on, especially with the recent news that our bid for the Seale Hayne site has been short listed for the final stage. Working towards the acquisition of the Seale Hayne site has been a long, drawn out process and we have no certainty that we will acquire it until March 2008, which is the deadline for submitting final and comprehensive proposals for usage, business and financial plans.

Lifeworks is now working as a part of a project team with a range of businesses that will, if we are successful, facilitate the work experience, employment and living aspects of the college in partnership with the education and care that Lifeworks will deliver. This is a partnership for the modern world, delivering education, supported living and sustainable employment in a supportive environment and an environment that will support eco utilities, low food miles, low carbon footprint but in the real world of commerce, employment and leisure. One of our new business partners once said to me: "My drive is to have a successful business, have fun and give something back."

Acquiring a site and setting up a college with real aims of including our students in society in a meaningful way whatever their level of disability, is certainly a long process; however, if we are successful in acquiring Seale Hayne come March 2008, we will be immediately taking applications for admissions for September 2009 and beyond. If you have a child that will want further education in the future or if you know of anyone either in Devon, the Southwest, or anywhere in the country who is searching for F.E., please register your interest with the Business Planning Team now.

Updates on this project may be found on our website, along with downloadable versions of our project brochure and prospectus. Wish us luck and watch out for our progress!

Richard Hanlon, CEO Lifeworks

Raise Money for us with Everyclick.com

Everyclick is a search engine with a difference. It works just like any other major search engine but the difference with Everyclick is that you can raise money for your favourite charity ... The Bidwell Brook Foundation! Just go to Everyclick.com, click on becoming a fundraiser and choose The Bidwell Brook Foundation as your nominated charity ... it doesn't cost you anything but every time you search the internet using Everyclick, you will be helping us to help children in Devon.

Give your mouse a heart

Just by using Everyclick.com as your search engine, you raise money for the charity of your choice.

No charge. Just free giving.

DONATE YOUR OLD MOBILE PHONE

If you receive a new mobile for Christmas, why not donate your old one to Kool Club? The club provides diverse opportunities for socialising and developing friendships, offers support for families and carers, and progresses skills essential for independent living and to enable these young people to be employable.

Old mobiles can be dropped off at participating branches of Lloyds TSB Bank in South Devon and translated into funds necessary to run this invaluable facility. So why not do something special for a Kool Club member and make a wonderful Christmas gift to some very wonderful and special children?

This is an on-going fundraising scheme, so any time you choose to upgrade your mobile, please think of Kool Club and donate your old phone at Ivybridge, Newton Abbot and Totnes branches of Lloyds TSB Bank.

For more information on this fundraising campaign, Kool Club, or any of the other projects run by Lifeworks, please have a look at our website www.lifeworks-uk.org or contact The Business Planning Team on 01803 840744.



• Skills for Living ... Skills for Life •

Newsletter

December 2007

Lifeworks: The Fastest Growing Charity in the West

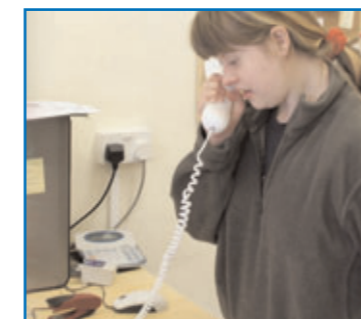
Okay, maybe not the fastest growing, but definitely picking up the pace!

This year has been extremely explosive for us - the award of a BBC Children in Need grant amounting to nearly £90,000 towards the running of our new Life Skills Academy; the donation of a brand new 16-seat specially adapted minibus from The Lord's Taverners; another donation by The Lord's Taverners of a specially commissioned surfboard, 12-feet in length and capable of bearing the weight of two standing adults (the board was used at Breaking the Barrier, a surfing camp hosted by Lifeworks to the benefit of over 100 children with autism and their families in September at Bigbury-on-Sea), and; the enormous success of Breaking the Barrier.

Special techniques to teach surfing to autistic and disabled children were devised in the States some years ago, but unfortunately had not made their way to Britain. We invited some specialist American surfing instructors to come to Devon not only to teach children, but to share their skills with UK surfing instructors. They were more than happy to help us. Somehow surfing enables these usually remote children to connect and become responsive. Families from all around England joined us, along with surfing instructors from across the country. Next year, we wish for the same result for as many if not more children - mark your calendars for Saturday 13th September 2008 at Bigbury-on-Sea and contact us to sign up!

Lis Leader - Lifeworks Business Planning Team

New Kid in the Office



Welcome Katie Glover, year 14 student from Bidwell Brook School who has joined the Lifeworks team for work experience. Arriving full of enthusiasm and keen to roll her sleeves up Katie has been undertaking tasks such as photocopying, filing and internet searches with great efficiency. She has also been helping Nigel answering the phone and keeping the petty cash in order.

Katie has particularly enjoyed working with Mike because he's funny, but Gypsy the Foxhole cat has probably made the best impression.

Well done Katie! We love having you here.

Visit Our New Look Website:
www.lifeworks-uk.org

Our 'new look' website is full of information about the charity, its aims, news, picture gallery, useful links and contact details and is updated on a regular basis. If you need information on how to access our services, would like to help as a volunteer or make a donation please visit our site ... we also welcome comments and suggestions on how to make it a valuable contact place for all those involved and concerned with the care and well being of young people with learning difficulties.



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We welcome comments and contributions to our newsletter. If you would like a letter or an article published, please telephone the Business Planning Team 01803 840744 or email mike@lifeworks-uk.org

Helping to provide a brighter future for children and adults with learning disabilities



Robins: Bigger and Better in 2008

Yes, it's true, we're expanding Robins Respite & Life Skills Centre to include:

- additional living accommodation for the residential section of the facility
- a teaching kitchen for our Life Skills Academy
- additional space in the sitting room, so that the older age group can socialise separately from the much younger children, and that can also be used for the Life Skills Academy programmes
- an extended play area
- soft play and sensory room facilities
- a much needed storage area for administrative records
- an extended garden, becoming more accessible for wheel chairs and including a new water sensory feature for our autistic children
- the addition of a patio covered area for outdoor play whatever the weather

Work began a few months ago and we hope to complete the build by mid-summer 2008. The additional space will enhance Robins' home-away-from-



home environment, and will provide much needed areas for life skills training for all. If you have any bright ideas for us to consider when furnishing the extension, please feel free to share your thoughts with the staff.

Some of you may know that we now operate under the umbrella of OFSTED (the Office for Standards in Education) which continues to challenge us to raise staff training and increase staff qualifications. Rest assured that this is an ongoing process and our training budget is one of our main outlays. By spring 2008, the percentage of staff who are NVQ3 qualified or equivalent will have gone up by one third. In turn the commitment, attitude and work standards of the Robins team have also demonstrably improved much to the benefit of the children and young people who stay with us.

So to the staff at Robins, may I sincerely say: well done! May I also take this opportunity to wish all of you a healthy and peaceful Christmas, and more of the same during the coming year from all of us at Robins!

U T Andrew - Centre Manager, Robins Respite & Lifeskills Centre

We have respite availability at Robins during 2008 for young people of 3 - 20 years old. For more information on dates available please call Tom Andrew on 01803 840479

A WARM WELCOME TO OUR TWO NEW PATRONS ...



Richard Bath

In February of this year, Richard Bath accepted our invitation to support Lifeworks as a patron. Richard has had a long and auspicious career as a journalist, newscaster and presenter for the BBC, ITN and SkyNews. Today, you can catch him on Westcountry Live for ITV Westcountry. Despite a very hectic work schedule and a life split between London and Devon, Richard was very pleased to come on board, and we look forward to any help he can give us in spreading the word about Lifeworks!

Commodore Frank Reed OBE Royal Navy

Please let us introduce Lifeworks' latest patron, Commodore Frank Reed, a man with an enormous heart, incredible energy and a fascinating history in the Royal Navy, who joined us in October of this year.

Within a matter of weeks of coming on board as a patron, Commodore Reed has persuaded the Britannia Royal Naval College to support the charity, both financially and in terms of manpower.



On behalf of the Lifeworks staff and all the children and young people, thank you both for your support

Life Skills Academy - Serious Fun!

The first term of the Life Skills Academy has been a great success with six great students having fun and working hard. They have worked well together as a group and new friendships have been forged. We have travelled on local buses and the train and eaten out in a variety of venues, from the Royal Seven Stars to the fish and chip shop! Wherever we have been, the students have charmed the staff and we have received very special service. The film 'Ratatouille' was enjoyed by all (especially the staff!) - all about a rat who loves to cook. Afterwards we caused some consternation in 'Pizza Hut' when one of the students asked if there were rats in the kitchen! All was explained and the students were each given a balloon to take away. All the students have achieved at least one of their targets while having a happy time with friends. They have enjoyed the facilities at Robins and have been amazingly keen to go to bed! The chores such as making the bed and peeling potatoes have been carried out with good humour and new skills have been learned. We have had good feedback from parents with most of them wishing the project would last longer! Robins staff have worked with us and have been very helpful and supportive.

The term will end with the students' families coming to Robins to enjoy a Christmas buffet prepared by the students. We will all be sad to say goodbye to these students, but look forward to working with the next six in the Spring term.

Mary Dodson, Caroline Mikhail, Jo Gillard



'Kool club is extremely fun and a safe club ... hopefully the team will let me stay for 10-20 years!'

2007 has seen a number of young people leaving Kool Club due to their age, and new members joining. We are currently working with 30 members between the ages of 14-19 with varying disabilities.

New young people have settled in well and wonderful, new friendships have formed. We are currently working on new targets with each member, focusing on all areas of life skills. This year, we've had two residential, both fun and rewarding for everyone who took part. The first one took place at Grenville House in Brixham. Eight young people enjoyed activities including Canadian canoeing on the sea, sailing and cooking, and being sociable. These lucky members enjoyed the whole weekend, gained a great deal of confidence and were incredibly brave to be away from home. They all learned new skills and enjoyed new experiences.

Thanks to funding from the Torbay Youth Service, we were able to run a second residential at Lynridge house, which once again proved an enormous success. This time, we focused on nine of our members and worked on team building skills with the centre manager. The youngsters coped with the tasks in hand brilliantly. During our stay, we also worked on MAD awards. These "Make a Difference" awards were devised by the Torbay Youth Service and are a programme of recognition that certainly make a difference to our members. This has been a fun and beneficial experience for all who participated.

This year, we've also introduced a volunteer scheme, with previous members joining us as mentors. This has proven to be a great success. But rather than me rabbiting on, let our mentors relate their experiences.

Geoff Carter, Kool Club Coordinator

Claire: What it means to be a volunteer at Kool club. To be a volunteer at Kool club it gives me more responsibility and a chance to go to the shop on my own and being helpful. Kool club is fun and safe. It gives young people somewhere to go on Saturdays and Sundays. The staff are kind and helpful.

Brenton: Kool club is extremely fun and a safe club. It is really cool and an excellent way to live. The staff are kind and good with a great attitude. We go out places and do indoor activities with independent basic skills involved. Being a volunteer means behaving at a professional standard, being polite, helping others and showing them the right way to behave. I also help make teas and coffees. Hopefully the team will let me stay for 10-20 years!

Comments from Zoe Wiggington, Kool Club Deputy Coordinator

Lucy Cox is 22 years old and an outgoing young lady with a great personality. Every week Lucy attends Kool Club to lend support for it's new and current members. The mentoring role which was introduced this year is one that Lucy has taken on with a great deal of pride and responsibility.

Lucy was one of the original members who joined back in June 1999. In this time she has made enormous progress, now using public transport by herself to get around, shopping independently, handling money and interacting with people within the community with great confidence, ability and a sense of pride.

Lucy: "I like going to do the shopping and I help Joseph. I like to do the job. I help people cross the road and learn the ground rules. I also helped with the fire drill. I am happy at Kool Club. I like to be there. I do Hoovering, dry up and make tea and coffee. I have changed into an adult and have learned new things."

'We at Kool Club are incredibly proud of Lucy, not to mention all our mentoring volunteers. Not only are they a great help but they demonstrate how much impact the club has on their abilities and friendships. They demonstrate that Kool Club can make a difference to their futures.'

