

Looking Back...

A special SIP supplement examining the success of the Linked Work & Training Students in Falkirk.

It's hard to believe that it is a year and a half since the third set of Linked Work & Training Trust students started in their posts in Falkirk.

Many of you will have met more than one of the students. If you don't know much about them, their stories are printed in these pages. If you do, we hope you learn a little about the value of this programme, not only to the students but the communities they work with and the agencies who employ them.

programme was recognised earlier this year when LWTTTC was the only Scottish organisation to win an award for best practice in regeneration from The British Urban Regeneration Association.

The award ceremony was held in London and it was my privilege and honour to accept on behalf of the Trust from John Prescott, Deputy Prime Minister. This success can only be attributed to the level of commitment and inspiration among LWTTTC Directors, workplace supervisors, students, staff and mentors. Congratulations to everyone who has contributed.

The BURA judges had this to say about LWTT:

"The LWTTTC model is an outstanding example of a project that builds the capacity of excluded communities to develop and harness their own skills, commitment, experience and confidence to contribute to sustained local economic and social regeneration and demonstrates best practice."

Cathy Peattie, MSP
Chairperson

The quality and value of the



Billy Buchanan Depute Provost, Mary Pitcaithly Chief Executive, Cathy Peattie Falkirk East MSP and others all celebrate the success of the BURA Award.

Safer Communities

Anne Donoghue is a Community Safety Worker, employed by Central Scotland Police working with the Falkirk & District Safety Panel.

Anne was experienced in the care field prior to joining the LWTC programme. Since then Anne has become very interested in how the community can more effectively engage with young people within the community so that everyone feels safer.

This has involved various initiatives including the Development of Childsafe initiative with Falkirk College, distribution of personal and victim support alarms and playing a key role in negotiations with the Boy Racers/Cruisers Joint Working Group.

Anne is a great believer in the Crosstalk Initiative which enables intergenerational issues to be discussed and greater understanding between different people in the Community.

The other innovative development that Anne is working on is the development of a Young People's Community Safety Forum, linking in with the Young People's Strategy Development group and School Councils.

Sergeant Ann Marie Sinclair says:

"Anne has been valuable in extending Neighbourhood Watch networks in the area. She has raised awareness of diversity issues and is working to attract new members to the Safety Panel."

Anne has also secured active involvement of the Safety Panel and Cruisers on the Cruiser Working group. Anne has returned from a placement in Edinburgh with proposals for new initiatives to involve young people in community safety. Anne has been an asset in the work of the Safety Panel and we look forward to this continuing."



Skilled Communities

Lee Stevenson is the Community Liaison Worker for the Dawson Initiative, which is based in a converted flat in the heart of the Langlees and Bainsford community. Lee is employed by the Linkwide (a subsidiary of the Link Group which is devoted to community regeneration) and seconded to Falkirk Council.

Lee's post involves working with the local community of Dawson, keeping them informed about the regeneration process happening there and helping them to communicate their views and needs through various working groups and the local news letter. As well as editing and producing the quarterly Dawson News, Lee is working with other partners on the production of a Dawson Directory (lead organisation is the community council). This will be a guide to all the community groups, facilities and agencies in the local area and will be distributed to all residents.

Lee is involved in various audits, including one to find out the community groups' and activists' training needs, for example, basic book keeping. This will help in the construction of a training programme, which will run in the winter.

Lee is also involved in various regeneration projects such as The Community Campus, which will be a grouping of facilities at the heart of the community. Lee's role in this project is to manage the input of the community groups and coordinating their work so that it contributes to the project as a whole.

Lee also encourages existing groups and agencies to work together as much as possible. One of the challenges Lee faces is getting a working group together that can take forward the production of the local newsletter so that it will be sustainable.

"I have had a very busy and productive year and feel that I am now known and accepted in the area. Locals know where I am if they want articles in the newsletter or support for their self or their group"

Project Coordinator Wraight Sheppard says:

"This morning I was at the Falkirk Council's Housing Headquarters in Denny and noticed the 'Dawson News' on the front counter. The reception staff told me that our newsletter is not just read by Dawson residents, but the issues raised in the newsletter are of interest to people from all over Scotland."

For Lee Stevenson, editing the 'Dawson News' has literally opened many doors and windows into a full range of community organisations and activities. Lee has 'the power of the press' to support her Community Development Role and she is using this to great effect to support the regeneration process in Dawson."



Learning Communities or Initiating Constructive Change

Carolann Wright is a Trainee Community Education worker employed by Falkirk Council's Community Education Service. Carolann is currently placed within the Adult Learning team. Prior to commencing the Link Work Training Trust programme, Carolann was actively involved in various community initiatives in the Camelon area of Falkirk. Since her employment began with the Adult learning team Carolann has developed and delivered a wide range of community learning strategies in various areas of the Falkirk district.

These include;

Co-ordinating, developing and delivering a Get Ready for Work Programme in collaboration with relevant statutory and voluntary agencies.

Family Learning Opportunities

Working with parents and carers in local communities to create opportunities for them to play a more active role in their own and their child's education.

Adult Based Education

Providing adult learners with educational support, information and guidance on issues affecting them. Programmes have included; Identifying Health issues in the community and literacy and numeracy provision.

Whilst on student placement at Caledonia Clubhouse, a community project for adults with mental health problems Carolann developed appropriate learning opportunities.

Carolann is currently developing a programme with adults who have learning disabilities to enable them to improve their IT skills.

Community Education Worker Kate Kane says:

"Carolann has shown great enthusiasm and work commitment proving herself to be a valued member of the adult learning team. Her recent endeavour of developing and delivering the Get Ready For Work Programme has provided the young people attending the course with quality learning opportunities, and the various agencies involved an overview of community learning and development practices."



Sustaining Communities

Charlie Hastie is a Community Learning and Development Worker (Community Capacity Building) with Falkirk Council's Community Education Service.

Charlie is a well known figure in the Dawson area of Falkirk where he has been active in the community for longer than he cares to remember!

Charlie was very proud to receive an award, along with other volunteers of the Hit Squad, from the Queen at Buckingham Palace.

Charlie has been busy across various communities in the Falkirk area particularly the Braes and Grangemouth areas. Working with a range of groups on capacity building initiatives including young people, a Gypsy traveller community, unemployed people and schools and parent groups.

His current work involves:

Kersiebank Community Project - support the Management Committee to develop a handbook about their letting system and procedures, support through the recent recruitment and induction of their part-time caretaker.

Grangemouth Community Education Association - develop and support new Rugsrats and Rattles Parent and Child group.

Community Development & Capacity Building Team - contribute to the development pilot Asset Based Community Development approach in Maddiston.

Development Officer, Nicky Ferguson says:

"Charlie's unique enthusiasm and approach in the Community Education Unit has resulted in over 50 parents with pre nursery children joining the newly established Rugsrats & Rattles group.

Since helping them to establish the group, he has continued to develop confidence and interest in a wide range of learning opportunities for example 1st Aid, Child Protection Awareness, Family Learning."



Developing Communities

Julie Boa has a long association with Denny Community Support Group, which started when she was encouraged by a neighbour to attend the local mother and toddler group.

As the development worker Julie has worked with a range of voluntary and community groups in the Denny area especially the SIP area. To develop confidence and inter-personal skills by enabling access to informal learning as well as more formal education and training opportunities.

Julie is currently involved in a Community Consultation, in partnership with family learning and the wider access to schools project.

Julie has also worked with young people from the SIP area on variety of issues and has currently organised a 5-week play scheme with the young people. They are enjoying activities such as arts and crafts, music and dance, health, sports and circus skills.

"Julie's work contributes immensely to the creation of positive relationships between young people and other members of the Denny Community," observes Andrena Kilpatrick, Chair of Denny Community Support Group.

"Without the flat and the support that Julie gives there would be significantly fewer opportunities for the disadvantaged communities we serve."



Benefiting Communities

Theresa Fowler had been a volunteer and part-time youth worker for 5 years before successfully applying for a post with Falkirk Council Community Education Service and beginning her training with LWTT.

Getting to her qualification was not to be easy for Theresa, shortly after the course started she took maternity leave and had to work very hard on an accelerated programme on her return. During her second assessed placement, Theresa fell ill and the placement had to be called off in its second week. This meant that Theresa had to find the time to complete the remainder of her placement once well enough to return to work.

"Completing my degree really was one of the biggest challenges I ever faced. Working, studying and being a mother to Keiran left me with very little time to pause for thought" says Theresa "The University was very flexible with me but without the support of the Trust tutors, I would have struggled to find the motivation to keep going."

After graduating in July 2002 Theresa worked on the Regener8 internet café for excluded young people before moving on to work within the Youth Learning Team in Grangemouth where she has a broader responsibility for support to youth work across Falkirk.

Liz Paton, Development Officer Youth Learning Team comments

"I noticed an immediate difference in Theresa in comparison to other new graduates. Theresa's vast experience of community development work linked to a very comprehensive understanding of the academic side of community development has made her a very independent and confident member of this team."





Councillor Mary Pollock, LWTT Trust Director and Anne Donoghue, Student Representative meet with John Prescott, Deputy Prime Minister at the BURA Awards in London.

...and Thinking Forward

Students on the LWTT course need to come prepared for a lot of hard work and challenge — juggling study, work and home life is no easy task— especially for those who have been out of learning for some time. That our students perform so well in their work is testament to their own skills and commitment and the quality of support they receive from their workplace supervisors and the course tutors at LWTT.

Results

Employers and placement supervisors have all commented on how our students are able to 'hit the ground running'.

They begin to produce real results in work far earlier than graduates from more traditional models of training.

Relevance

This course ticks so many boxes in terms of current policy agendas, it is a living example of widening access to higher education, it supports community involvement in community planning, it supports the skills agenda, it promotes lifelong learning – paradoxically this has made it difficult to access mainstream funding for the programme.

Demand

The varied benefits of the programme have made it difficult to present a persuasive case that funders cannot question because of the availability of other funding. It is a terrible shame as the project has more than proven its success, through its students, graduates and the BURA award, and the demand for this sort of access to qualifications in communities is immeasurable.

Fiona Craig,
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