



Nottinghamshire
County Council

Adult and Community Learning Service

On Course

Monthly update of Good News stories

April 2008

Welcome to our third issue where we share with you some of the impact that ACLS courses, working in partnership with providers, have on individuals and groups.

Mansfield

The Ashfield and Mansfield YMCA are running, with ACLS funding a 'Personal Development' course. Its learners are all residents at the YMCA hostel for the homeless in Commercial Gate. The course is designed to enable the various needs of the learners to be met flexibly and covers topics such as,

- Confidence building
- Team working skills
- Budgeting

and

- Employability skills

The overall aim is to give learners a sense of purpose, to move them towards employment/training opportunities and independent living.

Karla Cook (Training Skills Development Manager Ashfield and Mansfield YMCA), said "These learners are amongst the most difficult to reach, having a lot of barriers that have to be overcome. It's not been easy but the funding from ACLS has enabled us to work intensely with learners with some considerable success."

Since the course started:

- One learner has succeeded in gaining a place on an access course at West Notts College and plans to move into nursing. She is currently seeking employment as a Care Assistant to gain relevant experience in her chosen career.
- Another, who through the course developed improved job search skills, has secured an interview to gain entry to the Army.

- Others have improved skills to enable them to sit the Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) test which will help them move into employment in the Construction Industry.

Paul Naylor (Area Manager Mansfield and Ashfield YMCA) "I'm proud of our learners' achievements, people who previously had little hope, with the support of our staff and ACLS funding, now have a sense of purpose, confidence and a positive outlook".

Forest Town

With funding from ACLS Garibaldi College has worked in partnership with West Nottinghamshire College to put on the "Keeping up with your children" Numeracy and Literacy Courses for parents.

The courses have led to giving the parents an opportunity to gain a qualification by doing the National Tests.

Linda Tasker, Carol Smith from West Nottinghamshire College, Kev Brennan the Literacy Co-ordinator and the English Department have worked together closely to develop the Literacy Course to really link into the students curriculum, whilst improving the parents' literacy skills and preparing them to take the National Test. The parents have had a Year 8 lesson presented to them by the English teacher to give them a deeper understanding of what the lessons are like for our young people, and how they have changed over the years! Later in the course they will also get the chance to observe an English lesson in action.

On Saturday the 17th May the group of parents, their children, Linda, Carol and a teacher from Garibaldi College are going to Stratford Upon Avon to visit shakespeareance to complement their learning.

One parent, Jayne, really found her confidence and now not only has she become an exam invigilator for the college, but has impressed so much she is doing a short term piece of work as a support worker for a student.

Linda Tasker said, " Jayne told me she just loved being in school and got a real "buzz" when she was in. These opportunities have opened up for her and hopefully will lead to Jayne having career choices she may not have imagined."

Bassetlaw

Greenacre Day Service, since September 2007, has been funded by ACLS to deliver a Horticulture Course. Those taking part have learnt about a wide range of techniques including:

- Land preparation
- Harvesting

- Weed identification and removal
- Dead heading
- Composting
- Crop rotation

The course is based at Greenacres Allotment on Cheapside, Worksop. One of the benefits of this has been improved community links as the group has engaged actively with other allotment holders.

Those taking part now have improved social and team working skills as each task is broken down into bite sized chunks for completion by individual team members.

Katie Fisher (Community Access Worker) said "Learners have really benefited from the course and are very positive and enthusiastic about it. Learners have proudly taken produce home to cook and eat, and another learner now helps out on the family allotment".

Newark and Sherwood

SureStart Sherwood Children's Centre supports children under five years, and their families and carers, across the villages of Bilsthorpe, Blidworth, Clipstone, Rainworth and services are currently developing in Edwinstowe.

Funding from ACLS has enabled tutors from West Nottinghamshire College to run a series of courses at the Centre.

Michelle England, Sherwood Children's Centre Community Involvement Worker feels that building confidence to learn starts by making parents feel comfortable in the Children's Centre and with leaving their children in crèche and this can take some time. "People don't tend to walk in off the street and ask us for a literacy course, if they are confident and want to learn they will go straight to a college. People tend to come to us primarily for their children, this leads to friendships and that's when the non-vocational courses are useful to give parents some adult time. Once they realise that they can enjoy learning and its not necessarily like school confidence grows and they start coming to the Children's Centre for themselves as well as their children. The courses are where people start thinking about their future, they ask about volunteering and further training and we can put the support in place as they move through the process and sign post to other opportunities outside the Children's Centre, so that when their child reaches five they're already on the way to where they want to go!"

Let's meet one of the learners and hear their story:-

Laura is 20 years old with two children under five years. She has been coming to the Children's Centre since summer 2005 when her oldest child was around 10months. She regularly attended various child centred activities at the Children's Centre but it was two years before she enrolled on her first college

delivered adult learning course. She booked onto the Mixed Crafts course as a result of encouragement from Children's centre staff but even then she didn't want to go and future learning was the last thing on her mind! "I was just nervous all the time, I didn't think about that!" It was the fact that she would be able to have a couple of hours break from the children and adult company that made her turn up that first week. However, by the end of that first session she couldn't wait until the next week. As the course progressed her confidence improved, she got to know the others on the course and enjoyed her adult time. At the end of the course she couldn't wait to do another one and eagerly took part in the Introduction to Patchwork Quilting that followed.

In January 2008 Laura enrolled onto the Storybook Weaver Course because she wanted to improve her English and hoped that the course would help her to write better. She felt fine about attending because she knew the other people who would be doing the course but she was worried about her story and was really nervous about using the computer. At the end of the first session she was even more doubtful and didn't know if she would return the next week because the computers had really put her off. Everybody else seemed to have a story idea except her. Over the next few days she spoke to Children's Centre staff who helped her with the idea for her story and explained that if she really didn't like the computers then it was ok to write the story on paper, it was the writing that was important. So, a little calmer, Laura went back the next week....and the next and completed the course....after having used the computer package to the full!! She realised that she could do things if she had a go and she explained that she sat down at the computer because everyone else was doing it and it wasn't as hard as she had thought.

She feels that without the support of the Children's Centre she just wouldn't have attended any learning but now she feels that she may have the beginnings of the confidence to attend learning in other venues in her community. As a direct result of her learning journey over the last few short months Laura's confidence has improved, she feels good about attending the literacy course now and is interested in volunteering with the Children's Centre and improving her numeracy skills.

Ashfield

"It was a great way to learn about things and then help my son to understand things too. It gave me one to one time with my son whilst my daughter was being looked after, which was great."

That's what one mum had to say about the 'Happy Families – Healthy Course' run at Huthwaite Childrens Centre.

The course was especially created by Capacity Building and Learning Coordinator, Christine Lee with support from colleague Lisa Carnell as part of a curriculum event organised by ACLS.

The purpose of the course was for parents and their children to learn about healthy lifestyles. It included topics such as:

- What do we need to make us healthy?
- Food needs and food wants
- Good food not fast
- Physical health
- Being safe

Each session included a separate activity for parents and one for children with a joint activity to enable parents and children to work and learn together. For example in week 7 'Clean Living' the adults looked at food hygiene, whilst the children were given water play activities, including washing pots and pans. Children also worked to create a funny germ picture. The joint session enabled parents and children to produce a sock puppet to represent a germ. This provided a medium for parents and children to discuss related issues.

Christine Lee said "The ACLS curriculum event gave us the time and space to create the course that then allowed us to deliver learning that was tailor made to meet the needs of our learners."

Gedling Newstead

New College Nottingham (NCN) ran a pamper taster day at Newstead Childrens Centre on the 21st January to try to encourage parents to beat the new year blues and to take part in something for themselves. Eight learners came along to the session and had a really great time learning about manicures and massage. Pairing up and making new friends students were encouraged to use the techniques on each other which created a lot of fun and enthusiasm.

Due to the overwhelming success of the day NCN have developed a full length course for the centre to start on the 29th April for 6 weeks. This will enable learners from the taster day to develop their skills further and provide an opportunity to welcome new students to come along and take part.

For further information on any of the items in 'On Course' or about ACLS generally please contact us.

Telephone: 0115 977 2185

E:mail: acls@nottscc.gov.uk

Post: ACLS, Floor 3, County Hall, West Bridgford, NG2 7QP

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