



**Nottinghamshire  
County Council**

# Adult and Community Learning Service On Course

**Monthly update of Good News stories**

**January 2008**

We are delighted to share with you some of the impact that ACLS courses, working in partnership, have on individuals and groups.

## **Ashfield**

### **Kirkby-in-Ashfield**

Life Education Centre have run a number of '7 Steps to Stress Free Parenting' courses with funding from ACLS.

The following gives details of a group of 12 parents whose children attend a local school.

The parents attending the course reported a number of issues including;

- frequent disobedience and tantrums
- regular parent/child conflict
- high levels of stress for parents
- Negative effects on parent/child relationships (for example parents regularly not enjoying their children's company).
- Parents lacking confidence in their abilities

The group worked really well together in the sessions exploring ways of giving their children more positive attention. Parents then started to report successes in the way their children were behaving at home and improvements in parent/child relationships.

For example Sarah has three children (aged 6 and 4 years and 17 months) and at the start of the course stated that her middle daughter Sorcha was frequently disobedient and regularly got more of Mum's attention than her brother and sister by misbehaving. By giving Sorcha much more praise and rewards for the times when she was not misbehaving Sarah found improvements in both Sorcha's behaviour and their relationship. Sarah states "I have seen a vast improvement in my daughter's behaviour whilst on this course. I actually enjoy spending time with her"

**Bringing Learning to Local  
...Communities**

Louise has four children (aged 10, 8, 5 and 4 years) including a son who has recently been diagnosed with autism. Louise said "The course has armed me with many ideas and information on how to better deal with my children. I feel more confident now in what I am doing."

This is what some other learners had to say about the course;

Angela "I have a better understanding of control-both mine and that of my children's"

Yvonne "The course has helped with my confidence in using effective discipline."

Eileen "I learnt how to deal with bad behaviour without losing my temper. I seem to be a lot calmer."

### **Sutton-in-Ashfield**

A Manager at Sutton Centre described how in 1991 she worked with a family where the mother was experiencing difficulties with her 12 year old son, who was frequently in trouble and on the brink of exclusion from school. The relationship was one characterised by frequent tirades of abuse between mother and son, whilst the woman's 4 year old daughter looked on.

Sixteen years later and the 4 year old is now 20 with a daughter of her own and is attending an 'Effective Parenting Course' run by the Sutton Centre. The course helps parents to develop strategies to better manage relationships between parents and children.

A diary style account describes the mothers efforts and progress in improving communication between herself and her daughter.

It gives a poignant example of how one mother is attempting to break a cycle of poor interpersonal skills on the part of a parent leading to poor behaviour and low attainment in school by the child.

At the point this mother joined the course she had started using the same negative parenting style adopted by her own mother. Thankfully, this course has provided an effective alternative approach for her and others to follow.

It provides a demonstration of the way adult learning, delivered in a community context, has the potential to raise educational attainment and help people make improvements to their lives.

### **Bassetlaw**

#### **Retford**

Two learners on courses at Thrumpton Primary School have been singing the praises of the ACLS funded courses run there by North Nottinghamshire College.

Toni Shaw had no qualifications when she left school. Since joining the course Toni says "I'm more confident now and not scared of having a go in case I got things wrong.....at one time I wouldn't have done that. I've found out I know more than I thought I did"

North Notts College Tutor June Borrowdale said "Tonis' self esteem and confidence levels have soared since joining the course and she is now taking an active part in her daughter's education and is a volunteer in a reading project".

Gary Peele joined a 6 week 'Keeping up with the children' course to help support his daughters learning. He says the course has provided him with a "very safe learning environment, where it doesn't matter if you get things wrong". He also says "doing it is 20 times easier than thinking about having a go". Gary was looking for a change of career and started to help out in school on a voluntary basis, he now feels he has found his niche and has enrolled onto an NVQ 2 Teaching Assistants course.

Finally, Gary says "Would I recommend having a go at learning to anyone? YES!"

## **Mansfield**

### **Forest Town**

Geraldine had to leave her job for health reasons and she was concerned about her future job prospects as she had little in the way of qualifications. After discussing her options with an IAG worker she enrolled onto an ACLS course run by West Nottinghamshire College. She now has literacy and numeracy qualifications and has enrolled onto a Word Processing course, she has since been offered a job. Zoe Dawson, Community Development Worker from West Notts College said "Geraldine was very deflated and uncertain when we first met but has since grown in confidence and energy. Isn't this what community learning is all about."

### **Mansfield**

Sue attended a Communication and Confidence Building workshop run by Mansfield Mediation. This is what she had to say about her experience;

"I recently attended this workshop as my confidence was very low following a particularly difficult time at work. I had been off with work related stress for 13 weeks and although I had started back to work on reduced hours I realised that that my confidence was still at a very low point.

On the morning of the first day of the course I would much rather have turned around and gone straight back home.

Within a few minutes of the trainer coming into the room and introducing herself the tension lifted. The most difficult part of the 2 days was having to introduce yourself but in actual fact this was the start of gaining your self confidence and self esteem. The whole group were very supportive and understood how difficult this was for everyone. I soon realised that all the people around the table understood how I was feeling because they felt the same way. I wasn't unique, other people understood.

One of the most satisfying things was that the people who attended came from a wide variety of backgrounds. There were no barriers.

The content of the course was extremely useful. It helped me to understand my reactions and lack of confidence as well as helping me to offer ideas and support to other people within the group.

I would strongly recommend this course to anyone who is struggling with their self confidence and/or communication skills.

I'm so pleased that I was brave enough to take the plunge on that first morning, I haven't looked back since"

### **Pleasley Hill**

8 learners from Pleasley Hill SureStart were presented with certificates after successfully completing Open College Network (OCN) accreditation for the PEEP (Peers Early Education Partnership) course they undertook at the centre. Pictured below are the learners, SureStart staff, Councillor Steve Carroll (Cabinet Member for Culture and Regeneration) and Sue Green (ACLS Manager)



### **Newark and Sherwood** **Rainworth**

Funding from ACLS enabled Tales from the Heartwood, to run a course at Red Oaks Day Centre entitled 'World Story Telling and related Crafts'. The course aimed to raise awareness of different cultures and to develop confidence and communication skills with learners listening and responding positively and appropriately. With their imaginations suitably stimulated participants were then able to produce a range of related craft items.

As a result of the course staff at Red Oaks have adapted internal activities for Day Centre users to help further develop their skills.

Here's what a couple of the learners had to say;

"I enjoyed the course. I liked it all, the puppets, the dream catcher, the dragon and the firebirds"

"It was a nice experience"

**Another edition of 'On Course' will be published in February.**