

Derwen News

Derwen College Termly Newsletter

Summer 14

Right Not A Fight

Of many exciting projects Derwen students have been involved with recently (of which more later), this was one of the most significant.

Daniel, Simon, Sally and Luca joined 80 other students from 12 national specialist colleges in the first event of Natspec's *Right Not a Fight Campaign* – lobbying outside the Houses of Parliament.

The campaign asks why people with learning difficulties have to fight for an education which meets their needs. The students chanted, waved banners, leafleted passers-by and talked to MPs and peers who came to listen.

It's a message also carried by staff and students who attend transition events the length and breadth of England and Wales. They encourage other young people with similar needs and aspirations not to give up hope of attending the college of their choice.

This year the message has been getting across and every day the college receives confirmation of funding for new students for September with many regions from across the country represented.



“Without a shadow of a doubt the skills I learned at Derwen stood me in good stead to get my job, working at our local housing association in the stores department. My advice to the leavers of 2014 would be – take the skills you gain at Derwen on the next step of your life, and keep learning.”

*Neil Stallard, ex-student,
addressing graduation ceremony
2014*



Flash mob at the fete - despite the rain

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Joe and his winning floral basket with a carnival theme

Derwen Farmers' Market

Throughout the term, a team of staff and students have taken the Derwen market stall to farmers' markets, Whitchurch and Oswestry town markets, food fairs, village fetes and county shows.

It means getting up and setting off early but complaints are rare. The students enjoy selling plants, fruits and veg grown on campus, home-made cakes, breads and biscuits, cards, crafts and gifts.

But most of all they like telling all their customers about what they are doing at Derwen College.



Chanelle at the Orangery market

Skills Competitions

Following on from the success of Hospitality & Retail students, who last term brought home gold, silver and bronze from the Welsh National Culinary Championships Table Laying Competition, Derwen students have again achieved great results in skills competitions.

A team from Art, Media & Business Studies won the Gift of the Gab Competition at National Star College in Cheltenham for their presentation on communication.

A multi-departmental team competed in the Footsteps to the Future competition at Hinckley & North Warwickshire College and pulled off two first places and a third, together with the prestigious Best College award.

In national competitions devised and hosted here at Derwen, our students took four individual and one team winners' trophies.

Most recently, teams from Catering and Land Based Studies competed at Seashell Trust, in Manchester and won the Ground Force competition.

Why are skills competitions important?

Skills competitions are widely available in mainstream education. It is widely acknowledged that they raise learners' aspirations and achievement levels. This has a positive longer term effect on employment options and outcomes.

What about inclusive skills competitions?

Derwen College is leading the way with skills competitions for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities.

We are working closely with World Skills UK and North Warwickshire & Hinckley College to ensure young people with learning difficulties and disabilities, who are studying a vocational skill, also have the opportunity to take part in competitions.

Other Summer Term Highlights

Nation Union of
Students Annual
Conference - Jo and
Robin , the first ever
learner delegates
from a specialist
provider

WISP Dance Club
perform at Coleg
Cambria

Fusion Arts Music
Project

Workshop and
performance with
Wigmore Hall's Ignite
Ensemble at
Whittington Music
Festival

dot (derwen on tour)
taking their signed
song and dance
workshops into local
schools



Doug and Jonathan working in Llangollen

Work Experience

Learning through real work is our specialism at Derwen. So external work experience and community projects are vital in helping our students gain the skills they need to get a job after Derwen.

The college has many valuable partnerships with large and small businesses in the area.

Floral Displays

Land based students, for example, have been busy in Oswestry and the surrounding towns and parishes all summer.

The department won five different tenders for floral display work and have supplied many local pubs with hanging baskets. Llangollen Town Council, who welcome visitors from all around the world to their International Music Eisteddfod, engaged the college to design, supply and plant a range of displays.

The students and staff grew the plants associated with all the projects as well as for sale in our own Garden Centre. Groups of students went out on a rotation basis to maximize their talents and expand on their skills learnt in college.

Premier Inn

Our partnership with Premier Inn is exciting and going from strength to strength.

Three members of Derwen staff trained at their Chester North location in the housekeeping department so they can support Hospitality students in their work placements there.

The number of placements is due to increase in the coming terms, with several other Premier Inn hotels becoming involved. The scope of the placements is set to expand too and may encompass service in the restaurants and reception work.

Next term, students will be able to practise their skills in a room set up on campus with equipment and livery supplied by Premier Inn.



Elizabeth has a work placement at Premier Inn



Wheels for All



Powerchair football



Pedal Go-Karting



Cricket competition

Sports Programme – now includes football, swimming, cricket, powerchair football, cycling, new age kurling, boccia, dodgeball, tennis, badminton, martial arts, athletics, skiing, netball, water polo, dance, walking, belly dancing, keep fit, pedal go-karting and basketball

Plans to include next year – wheelchair basketball, cheerleading, street dance and hip hop

Good luck to all July '14 leavers

Quote from an email received from parents of a leaver:

“We will miss Derwen too. The support The Derwen Team give, to both students and families, is fantastic and much appreciated. Not looking forward to ‘being on our own’.”



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