

Beccy's Story

A troubled home life forced Beccy to leave school without getting any qualifications. And bringing up five children, battling depression and moving halfway across the country to start a new life, meant she had few chances to catch up with her learning until recently.

Her big break came when she heard about the GL11 Community Project in Fairmead, and took baby daughter Tianna along.

"Everyone was really friendly and welcoming and I immediately felt at home," Beccy, 34, recalls. "It was a chance for us both to make friends because there is a free crèche. It's walking distance and there's always something going on. I didn't know a soul before – now I really feel part of the community."

As a teenager, Beccy had a troubled home life. "I was supposed to be taking lots of O Levels, but I just had to leave home and to do that, I needed to earn some money. But I always regretted not doing more at school," she says. "When someone suggested a computer course at GL11 I was a bit nervous, but the teacher was brilliant and made us feel really at ease. I have also done a Health and Hygiene course and now I've got the confidence to do even more."

In Spring 2006, Beccy had confirmation that she had passed her Level 2 Certificate in Adult Learners Support, taken at Dursley Education Centre on Wednesday evenings.

Beccy's ambition is to work either with people suffering from depression, or with children. "Without qualifications, I don't stand a chance of getting the sort of job I want. Learning new things has given me so much confidence – I feel so much better about myself, and I can help my daughter to use a computer which I was not able to do with my other children – now I want to encourage other people to have a go."

The combination of a non-pressured atmosphere, free crèche and learning opportunities right at the heart of the community have proved to be a great success with local people – but there are big issues about how they can move on to further training.

"If they want to take on more challenging courses and get qualifications for decent jobs, they have to travel to Stroud or Gloucester," says Beccy. "Mums would have to organise childcare and the timing of courses is not geared around families. People who are already working but are desperate to do something different, can't get the training they need. It would be brilliant to be able to do more in Cam and Dursley."

The Learning Community (TLC) in Dursley and Cam is campaigning to get more flexible courses and training in the local community, geared to skills that local employers need and local people want.

Beccy has become one of a band of TLC Learning Champions who encourages friends and neighbours to get more involved in learning and training, helping to make the area a better place to live and work.

