
Beth's Story

Fourteen-year-old Rednock School pupil Beth Weeks has become the youngest Learning Champion for Cam and Dursley's Learning Community (TLC).

And Beth is ready to make a stand on healthy eating issues in her community as she plans to launch a new business based on creating delicious home-made fruit shakes.

"We tried out our Cocktail Crew idea through the summer when we were supporting The Learning Community's Give it a Go roadshows around the school fetes and Dursley town festival," says Beth. "Me and my friend bought lots of fruit and made blended fruit juices, which were very popular. We made some money and donated it to TLC.

"Now we want to develop the idea so we could have a stall at lots more events, encouraging visitors – especially young people – to drink healthy fruit juices. We're on the look-out for an industrial blender so we can really get business-like.

"I got involved in TLC because they did a survey of pupils at Rednock, asking about the sort of things young people were interested in learning. My mum works at the GL11 Community Centre where TLC is based and I asked how I could help.

"There are lots of adult Learning Champions who talk to people about what they can do locally and what help there is available, but I thought it would be a good idea for someone my age to get involved too.

"I know it's sometimes difficult for young people when they leave Rednock to get to college in Stroud, Gloucester and Bristol because the public transport is not good. So I think it's important that we have learning and training places in Dursley and Cam so people can do things locally."

Beth is one of eleven local people recruited as Learning Champions by The Learning Community in Cam and Dursley.

Since the initiative was launched, more than 300 local people have been encouraged to start a learning course for the first time since leaving school with about a third already moving on to Level 2 qualifications. Learners join the TLC Membership Scheme and receive a range of incentives including discounts in local shops, money off courses at Dursley College and free swimming at the local pool.

Strong partnerships have been made with a wide range of local organisations including GP surgeries, Rednock School, GL11 community project, the youth service and Stroud Valleys Project in a bid to create more local learning and training opportunities.

