Inspiring community leader wins prestigious award
Page 2

Steve Foster, an inspiring community leader, was the winner of the night at the Shining Star Awards presented by Birmingham City Council.

Steve has made a genuine difference to the lives of individuals that require support.

TEWKESBURY’S BIG WEEKEND
Sixteen people raise money for local charities.
Page 3

NEW FOUND FREEDOM
Chris makes the leap to move out of his parents house and into his own apartment.
Page 6

SPOTLIGHT ON ART
Joey exhibits impressive art pieces at Blackburn College.
Page 7
Shining star awards

Steve Foster, an inspiring community leader, was the winner of the night at the Shining Star Awards presented by the Directorate for People from Birmingham City Council.

The Shining Star Awards celebrate the successes and excellent work of people that make a genuine difference to the lives of individuals that require support. Steve picked up two awards at the ceremony.

Gordon Strachan, Service User Involvement Officer at Birmingham Council tells us: “I nominated Steve for a special category in recognition of his multiple contributions, but more so for his remarkable resilience in overcoming a cluster of exceptionally difficult life challenges over the past few years.”

Steve volunteers for the Service User Involvement Team of the Supporting People Programme. This responsibility includes monitoring the quality of services (as an expert by experience) with the aim of improving them. Steve is also a committed member of the editorial panel for Peoples’ Choice magazine and regularly contributes towards the production of the publication for service users.

In addition to this, Steve represents the visually impaired community as vice chairman and founding member of the Citizens’ Panel – devoted to improving the prospects of the city’s most vulnerable people.

Steve explains: “I started volunteering to gain a better understanding of the services we use, in the hope of being able to make a contribution to improving them. On a personal level I have built lots of good friendships through volunteering.”

Gordon continues: “Steve is very good at putting people at ease and is an invaluable member of the team. His selfless commitment and the amount of his own time he gives up to volunteer only contributes to his already inspiring story.”

Steve has overcome some difficult life challenges of his own over the last few years, including recovering from a serious road traffic accident. He also cares for his mum who suffers with dementia. He tells us: “My support worker Stephen is excellent. We both respect and have an understanding of each other. He has helped me overcome a lot of challenges over the last few years.”

His support worker Stephen, tells us: “Nothing sets Steve back in life, he required a lot of support after his accident but his optimism and courage shone through. He is now nearly fully recovered, maintaining the highest levels of independence. I couldn’t think of anybody that deserves these awards more.”

Tewkesbury’s local community joined together for a weekend of music, parades and attractions at this year’s big weekend. Sixteen people from Mythe and Coach House were sponsored to race along the river as part of the weekend’s annual boat race, a popular highlight at the event.

The teams took to the river in two separate boats for the race and did brilliantly, successfully raising over £80 for local charities.

Dan Pugh, Team Leader tells us: “We went to the big weekend last year and all of us had an excellent time. This year we wanted everybody to get involved, so we organised a boat race for individuals and their support staff.”

On the banks of the river, hundreds of onlookers, including family and friends of the racers, cheered on as they raced against each other. The festival was packed with fun filled activities and after the boat race everybody went on the fair ground rides and soaked in the atmosphere and excitement of the day.

Dan continues: “Everybody loved it; it is an excellent community event that lots of people get involved in. We were able to make the day a huge success for everyone and we are all looking forward to taking part again next year.”
There was a need for external care, but letting somebody outside the family into Rosaleen’s life was a difficult choice for Delia and Maureen. They were daunted by the thought of unfamiliar people providing support for Rosaleen and didn’t know what to expect, they told us: “We needed the extra support but also needed to be sure she would be happy, safe and well-supported.”

Regular communication ensured that Delia, Maureen and Rosaleen were happy with the change and the plans put in place for support. It was important that Rosaleen had a good relationship with the people supporting her so that she felt comfortable. Before the staff team started to support Rosaleen they spent a lot of time with the family to get to know Rosaleen and to learn how she liked to be supported.

Delia tells us: “Once the support was set up it was really positive, it gave us a break and peace of mind for Rosaleen’s safety and security. The communication through the whole process has been fantastic.”

Delia continues: “This was a big change for Rosaleen, as she has always been supported by family. Now, she enjoys having the girls around supporting her and has built up really strong relationships with her new support team. They have brought fun, warmth and a sense of stability to Rosaleen’s life.”

“They have brought fun, warmth and a sense of stability to Rosaleen’s life.”
Chris has developed a love of cooking and when we visited he was in the middle of preparing a well-loved favourite – beef stew. Cooking was something Chris was unable to do previously due to accessibility but with his new home tailored to meet all his needs he is learning new recipes all the time.

Chris continues: “I am now much more independent and feel in control of my life, I try to keep busy.” He loves grabbing a drink at his favourite new local with a few of the other guys from Scholes and likes to stay active through swimming.

Chris’ support worker, Anne explains: “Chris has achieved a great deal since moving into Scholes Croft. He is continuously developing new skills to maintain his home and his independence has significantly increased. He is an inspiration and shows what can be achieved with determination and positivity.”

Anthony’s home

Finding a place to live where he could feel settled and at home was on the top of Anthony’s wish list. In November his wish came true when he moved to Scholes Croft.

Anthony tells us this is the first time he has felt settled and says he values his independence and space: “It is a relaxing environment where I only get the support I need to let me enjoy my independence.” For Anthony it is an ideal location close to his family so he can still go on regular fishing trips with his brother. Anthony’s favourite pastime is hunting for bargains in the local charity shops and looking for cool things to kit out his apartment with. This includes a full sized air hockey table which takes pride of place in his living room.

Anthony explains: “My confidence has increased, I would have never socialised with people before. I moved to Scholes Croft, but now I am happy to call the other tenants my mates. It’s a whole new world for me.”
Congratulations Elizabeth O’Neil and Elizabeth Bracken for taking part in the Race for Life with their support staff Sarah and Elizabeth.

Collin, Andrew, Michael, Paul, Michele, Cath, Adrian and their support staff spent the day at our Lancashire Area Office enjoying a lovely coffee morning. The trip was the first of many and gave everybody the opportunity to get to know the staff that work behind the scenes at their new local office.

Jonathan travelled on his own to Australia to visit his family and enjoyed a game of crazy golf.

Alasdair enjoys a day out on a boat as one of the many fun filled days he has planned over the summer.

Find out more, keep in touch or share your story:

Head office:
The Lifeways Group
56 Southwark Bridge Road
London
SE1 0AS

facebook.com/thelifewaysgroup
@LifewaysGroup
yourstory@lifeways.co.uk
www.lifeways.co.uk

CALL: 08450 739 620

we listen
we respect
we deliver