

WorkABILITY Project's Summer Job Forum

The Summer Job forum is part of the WorkABILITY project and the job forum happens each year over the summer months. It is run over six sessions every consecutive Wednesday and the aim is to “understand the reality of work by using creative media”, and that initially helps to support young disabled people between the ages of 16 to 25 gain some understanding of work and this report gives an insight to what and how the Job Forum helps support the young disabled people.

I first started to draw up a leaflet and this is what the leaflet looks like on the front and inside it.

WorkABILITY
Summer Job Forum 2010

Aim of the Job Forum

“Understanding the reality of work by using creative media”

What is it all about?

We are running a Summer Job Forum for young disabled people aged from 16 to 25 year olds with either a physical or learning disability over the summer months of July and August.

This exciting Summer Job Forum will be a fun way of exploring the world of work by using creative media such as forum theatre, arts and crafts etc.

What will happen?

The Summer Job Forum will run on consecutive Wednesdays from the 14th July to 18th August 2010. In the morning we invite a visitor to share their work story in response to questions from those taking part. We are planning for some of those visitors to be celebrities. In the afternoon we have a chance to explore more about what the visitors have said by using their issues in a fun way either by drawing, singing, or drama. Last year for example we had the well known disabled actor Matt Fraser from Cast Offs come to visit and we asked him about his barriers to work and then in the afternoon he helped us to perform Jack and the Beanstalk, a forum theatre play.

Which visitors are coming?

This year we have the following visitors and media themes:

Mik Scarlet, a well known disabled celebrity from the eighties who is a disability access consultant and who has been on the BBC's Disability Programme From The Edge and written for newspapers.

Kay Barratt, a local singing teacher from Cambridge who teaches children and adults with various disabilities to sing.

Larry Pulley from Pulley Graphics who will be working with us using graphic design.

Victoria Wright from Channel 4's Cast Offs and who works for a disabled children's charity.

Plus other more exciting visitors with exciting media themes!

Findings from the Job Forum

The findings so far have been that some people have learnt different things about disabled people, the things that have most come up are confidence in themselves (young disabled people and staff) identifying themselves as disabled people (the story with Mik when he was in a music video and they wanted to hide his wheelchair), using your voice to communicate and present in meetings and interviews (Kay's session).

I think the two that have been most significant so far were the Mik Scarlet and Victoria Wright sessions where the questioning has gone a bit deeper really get a feel of what they feel has prevented them in their lives from working and as their social lives as disabled people in society (Mik- "Crawling downstairs without my wheelchair so I could be just like any other clubber", accessibility in clubs is not always possible")

Hanna shared two things in two job forum sessions, firstly with her saying "My mum thought I would never get a job and live on my own and work has helped me to be more confident and prove my mum wrong" and when Victoria Wright came in saying about asking the question about Victoria's disfigurement and being honest in wanting to ask the question in a suitable not rude way and by not offending Victoria. So there may be something in the way that others challenge not only their disability but the disability of others and how other disabled people perceive people like themselves or having different impairments.

I myself was taken aback by Mik's issue of how music producers wanted to hide his wheelchair and that by hiding it, it made me think that Mik's identity as a disabled person was encroached upon by them taking away a vital piece of his disability that helps him in life, to be a disabled person, his wheelchair. Disabled people need to feel part of society and that's how the world views them, but maybe as Hanna pointed out in Victoria's session that they should not look at the chair, but her as a person.

Kay's session also helped the young people to do a fun and engaging activity that enabled them to come out of themselves by singing and not feel scared of being part of a group. The songs she had made with them and the breathing exercises all helped the young people to think and calm themselves down before doing an activity and really made them feel good

about joining in, even though some may have found the songs difficult to learn. It also made them to think about how they speak in an interview.

Ingrid's session also helped too to learn about how disabled people may be written about in the media , by using the job forum as a way of promoting the work we do and giving the young people a chance to feature in the article given. The quotes we made up were also a fun and engaging way of speaking about how the job forum may have helped them although I and Nigel weren't exactly sure how the headlines related to work. When we did the Victoria Wright session, Hanna was very quick to point out that she was scared to ask Victoria about her disfigurement but Hanna was very good at being honest at asking the question in a very mature way.

The art and craft session also threw up some interesting and productive ideas about how they had felt about things in their past and about how they had felt about "moving on" in life.

Hanna's model she made was very good, where she said about herself being a snail and going into a dark hole (in the case of Hanna asking Victoria questions about her disfigurement and being honest. Victoria after when I saw her at where she works said that she thought Hanna was very mature and was impressed in how Hanna had asked that the question and it stuck in Victoria's mind very clearly and she was very impressed, with Hanna.

Lance taught us something different however in the form of Dance, by where he said that if you make mistakes that you can do it in your own style, and that he used dance to make him feel good about doing something at work. We also had another visitor Ian Fraser who said that he had loads of different experiences in work relating to having been an apprentice when he was sixteen in an aircraft environment and saying that when he was working , supporting a family was really important to him.

Lance also showed us some dance steps which he taught us which were very good, and I thought it was good that the young disabled people were good at following them, and working in a team would be in a work situation.

There were also different visitors who had disabilities in the case of Mik Scarlet who had been in a wheelchair because of problems after his spine

collapsed going into an exam and having a bad car accident, Victoria Wright who had a facial disfigurement (cherubism), they were the only two, but the young people had various impairments such as Down's syndrome, ADHD, autism, cerebral palsy, and even diabetes.

Lance's session was particularly poignant because he gave us a real in depth story about how he was beaten by his father to work in the paddy fields picking and packing, I did try and go into depth but it was very difficult to do as I was unsure that Lance wanted to go deeper into a subject he felt bad about but he did say that it was hard work and he felt that he was pushed into it and a challenge to finish the work he was doing. Lance also saying about not worrying if you make mistakes, just do it in your own style.

The numbers of each participant kept growing each day too and so did the standard of work, which the art and craft was very popular as in the case of Larry's session and Victoria's session. Larry's session was to do with making a magazine called "What if" where the young people had to think up articles, stories, models for the magazine. Victoria's session was to do with any barriers that the young people felt they had where they were made pictures and models from plasticine to show their barriers to work (as in the case of Hanna's model) again. The dinosaur model too as well (creativity)

I feel that the barriers I accomplished even though difficult were the administration side of it, and making up some of the paperwork where it was hard because I made mistakes but learnt from them easily with the support of staff.

Photos of Mik's session



Pictures from the Kay Barrett session



Numbers who attended each session

<u>Dates of Job Forum</u>	<u>Number of Young people on each Day</u>	<u>Visitor</u>	<u>Number of staff</u>
Wednesday 14 th July	9	Mik Scarlet(Access Consultant)	6
Wednesday 21 st July	5	Kay Barrett (Natural Voice. Net)	6
Wednesday 28 th July	10	Ingrid Marson (Acorn PR)	6
Wednesday 4 th August	8	Victoria Wright(National Child's Bureau)	4
Wednesday 11 th August	9	<u>Ian Fraser+Lance Mphoko</u>	4
Wednesday 18 th August	11	Larry Pulley (Pulley Graphics)	3

We had 21 different people each day that came.

Mostly all the young people decided to either attend 2 or 3 or 4 sessions with the exception of a staff member who filled in for a young individual by being the young person at the sessions. This was interesting because of the lottery targets and also that we needed to have 25 young people in the summer job forum, but the young lady made the numbers up and made a great contribution.

Quotes from staff members

Hanna- “I particularly enjoyed the Victoria Wright session as I liked being a staff member in it, I liked optimism and how she got on with life and even though I wasn’t in it I heard and thought Lance’s story was very sad”

Jonathan- “I found it interesting, it was nice to meet new people also the visitors who came to tell their work stories”

Andrew- “I thought the Job forum was excellently organised, and well attended. Katie did an excellent job of organising it”

Jeff- “We all enjoyed singing (even I joined in!). It was a good way of us getting to know each other”

Ed- “The most interesting thing was hearing about everyone’s work stories and how they started in work. I enjoyed all the sessions”

Katie -“I thought the Summer Job Forum went exceptionally well, even though I had a few setbacks along the way. I particularly enjoyed meeting Victoria Wright, and Mik Scarlet, two people who I empathised with in terms of facing adversity through their disabilities and who were fantastic in understanding our user driven approach and worked so well with everyone who attended their sessions. Mik particularly had a way of making his session fun and interesting at the same time by adding a sense of humour also by making me feel good at what I do, I remember him emailing me afterwards he was inspired by working with us, in the way he wanted to work with us again in the future”

Patrick - ‘I thought the Job Forum was fantastic and even better than last year’s. There were incredible stories told by each of our visitors, which clearly inspired the young people present. It didn’t matter whether they were disabled or not, working or retired, they all had their own story. The young people got more motivated to search for work and enjoyed themselves, particularly during the imaginative media themes. Last but by no means least, the staff did a brilliant job of organisation, especially Katie Fraser, who led the whole programme from start to finish and chaired each session excellently.’

Quotes from visitors

Victoria Wright (National Children's Bureau) – “I really enjoyed visiting the young people at Hertfordshire PASS and having the opportunity to talk about my own experiences of being disabled and getting into employment. I found their honesty refreshing and was pleased with how much they wanted to engage and discuss all the different issues and barriers they had experienced. It was a great event and I hope the young people enjoyed it as much as I did”

Mik Scarlet (Presenter/Actor)- “My event at Herts PASS went really well I feel. Everyone who attended the day joined in and worked really well. I hope they enjoyed the day as much as I did and that they got something beneficial from it too”

Collation and thoughts of next year's Job forum

I think judging by this year's job forum the things that have worked well have been the questions to visitors and next year we need to get the young disabled people to ask more probing questions and go even further in their questioning, so maybe we could instead of having visitors on each separate day we could have a day where we invite two or three in , and have groups of people coming to the job forum, I like having visitors like Mik Scarlet and Victoria Wright as they are visitors who have had some experiences of disability and they are the ones I empathise with , so more of them and a few non disabled visitors , or do it sessions as a drop in day , where young disabled people come and experience , doing sessions like the art and craft one.

I think a lot of planning would need to be done if we were to do the theatre sessions, but if that works well, carry on with it, but in my view the theatre sessions and the art sessions go down well with all the young people that attend the summer job forum.

Articles from the press about the summer job Forum Facilitator

Welwyn Garden City disability charity holds job forum

Welwyn and Hatfield Times

Ross Logan

15 August 2010

All over the country, schoolchildren are currently enjoying a six week break from school. But a group of disabled young people from Hertfordshire are using their summer holidays to learn more about working in the media, at a workshop organised by a WGC-based disability charity.

The Hertfordshire PASS Job Forum is being held every Wednesday for six weeks, at the charity's headquarters at Brownfields.

It's been organised by Katie Fraser, student support co-ordinator at Hertfordshire PASS (Personal Assistance Support Service), who herself has a learning disability.

"The forum has been going brilliantly well so far," said Katie.

"The goal of the forum is for people with disabilities to understand the reality of working using various creative media, such as singing, writing and theatre.

"We have also invited people both with and without disabilities to share their work stories."

Last week, Ingrid Marson, director of WGC consultancy firm Acorn PR, spoke of her experiences working as a journalist and public relations consultant.

"I really enjoyed meeting all the young people and was inspired by their enthusiasm and passion for writing," said Ingrid.

"Taking part in the forum made me more aware of the barriers that young people with disabilities face in the current job market."

A few places are still available for young disabled people on some of the remaining summer job forum sessions.

Disabled young people offered insight into the media industry

St Albans and Harpenden Review

Disabled young people across Hertfordshire have been given an opportunity to enhance their understanding of the media industry thanks to a charity's new learning project.

A six-week job forum, run by disabled charity Hertfordshire PASS, aims to help young people with disabilities learn more about jobs in the industry.

Robbie Williams, from St Albans, is among 17 young disabled people from across the county benefiting from workshops with professionals, both with and without disabilities, sharing their experiences of the field.

The 21-year-old from Winchester Close, who attended the Job Forum last Wednesday, said: "The Job Forum is interesting and fun."

Organiser Katie Fraser, support co-ordinator for the charity, who herself has a disability, said: "The goal of the forum is for people with disabilities to understand the reality of working using various creative media, such as singing, writing and theatre. We have also invited people both with and without disabilities to share their work stories."

Ingrid Marson, director of Welwyn Garden City's Acorn PR, shared her experience of writing a book, and working as a journalist and public relations consultant with the group on Monday.



"I really enjoyed meeting all the young people and was inspired by their enthusiasm and passion for writing," she said. "Taking part in the forum

made me more aware of the barriers that young people with disabilities face in the current job market. The course, which started on July 14, will welcome its next speaker Victoria Wright, who featured in channel four drama series Cast Offs, next week.

Disabled Young People Learn about Working in Media

Able Magazine

A group of disabled young people from Hertfordshire have used their summer holidays to learn more about working in the media, at a workshop organised by a WGC-based disability charity.

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