

National Institute of Adult Continuing Education
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Press Release
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For immediate release

LEARNING LEADS TO BETTER HOLIDAYS, NEW CAREER AND AWARD

Graham Kenny, aged 52, from Stafford, is updating his joiner qualifications to work towards a change in his career direction. Graham's remarkable achievement will be awarded with an Individual Learner Award – sponsored by the European Social Fund - from the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE), as part of Adult Learners' Week 17th – 23rd May 2008

After taking French so he and his wife could get more out of their holidays, Graham realised just how much he enjoyed learning. When he was offered the opportunity to work with trainee joiners at Indigo Training – with 25 years of joiner experience - it was an obvious next step in his career and he wanted a teaching qualification to help him. He was advised to update his specialist trade qualifications first.

Combining two-evenings a week at Stafford College, with the full-time working with trainees and part-time self-employment as a joiner he has now taken NVQs in Wood Occupations at Levels 1, 2 and 3 as well as a City & Guilds 3792 certificate in adult literacy at Level 2. He is now preparing to start a teacher training course at college.

Graham says, "I really enjoy working with the youngsters. There are fewer jobs available at the low-skilled end of the trade these days and I teach them the importance of getting as much training as possible all through your working life."

He says, "Learning has widened my opportunities in so many ways – from getting more out of holidays abroad to changing my career. It keeps your brain alive and it brought me into contact with a whole new set of people, of all ages and backgrounds. I really enjoy the whole ethos of coming to college. I like being in the workshops, enjoyed the banter with the tutors and liked it when I can help the other lads on my course. It has never been a chore, it's always been fun."

David Lammy, Minister for Skills, said, "I never fail to be inspired by the stories I hear about learner's achievements. Graham's hard work confirms my belief that improving your skills can be a life changing experience."

He continued, "The benefits better skills bring to learners and those around them are wide-ranging. On the personal level people become more confident and have higher self-esteem, and individuals can develop better job prospects. More widely this can lead to parents being better able to help their children with homework and learner's employers becoming more competitive. Any adults wanting to improve their skills can call 0800 100 900 and find out about the courses in their local area."

Rachel Thomson, Senior Campaigns Officer at NIACE, said, "In spite of the fact this is the 17th annual Adult Learners' Week we continue to be amazed by the quality of the nominations we have received. Graham's story is an indication of how learning can transform lives completely. All of this year's winners have shown a huge commitment, passion and creativity throughout their learning journeys. Their achievements are all the more inspiring due to the challenges they have overcome and they fully deserve to be recognised as outstanding and inspirational adult learners."

James Plaskitt, Parliamentary Under-Secretary at the Department for Work and Pensions, and Minister responsible for ESF, said, "I am pleased that the ESF is again sponsoring Adult Learners' Week which provides a wonderful opportunity to celebrate learning and communicate how it can help people improve their job prospects. I hope that many more people will be inspired to take up learning opportunities after hearing the inspirational stories of the winners of this award."

Ends

To contact Graham Kenny please phone Clare Chick on 01952 691235 or 07950 254279.

For further information on Adult Learners' Week please contact:

Ed Melia, NIACE Press Officer, on 0116 204 4248 or 07795 358 870.

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Notes to Editors

1. Graham Kenny will be presented with an Individual Learner Award – sponsored by the European Social Fund - at the West Midlands Adult Learners' Week Regional Award Ceremony at Kings Hall, Stoke on Trent on Wednesday 21st May 2008 from 10:30am – 12:30pm. Journalists and photographers are invited to attend. More information is available from Ed Melia, NIACE Press Officer, on 0116 204 4248 or 07795 358 870 or ed.melia@niace.org.uk
2. Adult Learners' Week, 17th–23rd May 2008, is the largest annual celebration of adult learning in the UK. It is supported by the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills, the European Social Fund, learndirect, the National Learning and Skills Council, Ofcom - the Office of Communications, the Quality Improvement Agency, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and City and Guilds. More details at: www.alw.org.uk
3. Adult Learners' Week 2008 will include the following national events:
 - Saturday 17th and Sunday 18th May: **Cultural Diversity Weekend**
 - Monday 19th May: **Adult Learners' Week National Award Ceremony** - QEII Conference Centre, London
 - Tuesday 20th May: **National Policy Conference *Adult Learning and Culture*** to be held at the London Chamber of Commerce
 - Wednesday 21st May: Quick Reads Learners' Favourite Award and Voice on a Page to be held at The Globe Theatre
 - Thursday 22nd May: **Learning at Work Day – *What makes learning at work, work*** at the Victory Services Club, Marble Arch
 - Friday 23rd May: **Silver Surfers Day**
4. A national helpline - **learndirect** - is available year-round for confidential advice and information about careers and courses. The call handlers will have access to the NIACE website and can give information about local activities during Adult Learners' Week. Calls are free on 0800 100 900.
5. Events for Adult Learners' Week 2008 are listed in the interactive online calendar at www.alw.org.uk/calendar where you can search by keyword, your preferred date and by the region you live in. Or call **learndirect** free on 0800 100 900 to find Adult Learners' Week events local to you.
6. The themes for Adult Learners' Week 2008 are:
 1. Globalisation and the changing world of work
 2. Environmental Sustainability
 3. Technological Change
 4. Citizenship and belonging in a diverse society
 5. Demographic change
 6. Poverty reduction
 7. Changing expectations and perceptions of the Third Sector

8. Well-being and happiness

The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) is the leading non-government organisation for lifelong learning in England, and exists to encourage more and different adults to engage in better-quality learning of all kinds. It campaigns for, and celebrates the achievements of, all adult learners.