

PRINCE'S TRUST VOLUNTEER PICKS UP TOP AWARD AFTER TURNING LIFE AROUND

A reformed drug addict has been named one of the top learners in the region after turning his life around through a City of Wolverhampton College project.

Michael Davies, whose 10 year drug addiction landed him in prison, has been honoured with an Adult Learners' Week Highly Commended award after getting his life back on track with the help of The Prince's Trust.

The 23-year-old from Dudley joined a 12 week Prince's Trust Team Programme, delivered by the college in partnership with West Midlands Police, at Sedgley Police Station in August last year.

The former heroin and crack addict, who had resorted to theft to fund his £100-a-day habit, and who had been kicked out of his home after stealing from his family, achieved 10 certificates of achievement during the three month programme and has since transformed his life.

Michael said: "Before I joined The Prince's Trust Team Programme I was on the road to nowhere and had been thrown onto the streets a number of times for stealing off my mom.

"I had been a drug addict for 10 years, about six of which had been spent in prison, and had reached an all time low.

"Taking part in The Prince's Trust programme changed my life. The course allowed me to gain a number of qualifications and the confidence and motivation to do much more. I am living back at home, have been clean from drugs for 10 months and am involved in an anti-drugs campaign.

"I want to put something back and use my experiences to let young people know just how scary drugs and prison really are."

Michael now works for a window manufacturing company and is working with other staff as a volunteer coach at West Bromwich Albion Football Club. There are also plans for Michael to go into secondary schools to teach teenagers about the dangers of drug abuse.

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WPC Sonya Hill, from Sedgley Police, who is also a Prince's Trust Team Leader, said: "Mike's life story is one that touched the hearts of so many people during his course. His determination and drive to succeed was beyond compare. In addition to redirecting his own life, he became a true inspiration to the rest of this Team, and Teams to come. "We are all incredibly proud of him – this is a brilliant example of someone who has not let his past destroy his future."

Sue Wickett of The Prince's Trust adds: "The Prince's Trust Team Programme really does change lives. It's an opportunity for anyone to turn their life around. The Trust doesn't do it – it's the young person themselves who make the changes and Michael is one of many who has become a success.

"We are so proud of Michael and are delighted that he was able to make the changes to his life with the support of the Princes Trust and the City of Wolverhampton College."

The 12 week programme at Sedgley Police Station involved creating a giant mural, depicting their journey on the programme. The team raised funds for the community project by holding a car wash at the Co-op in Sedgley and packing bags at Marks and Spencer in the Merry Hill Centre.

Michael will pick up his award and a prize of £100 at the Regional Award Ceremony in Stoke on Trent on the 21st May.

Notes to editor

Adult Learners' Week is the largest celebration of learning in the UK, and is managed by the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education.

Now in its 17th year, this year's event takes place from 19 to 25th May and brings together a wide range of private, public and voluntary sector bodies to inspire people to pursue adult learning.

Prince's Trust Team is a 12-week personal development programme, which enables 16-25 year olds – the majority unemployed - to develop their confidence, motivation and skills through teamwork in the community. Nearly 70% of unemployed participants find work or enter full time education or training after completing the programme. For further information about The Prince's Trust Team Programme, visit www.princes-trust.org.uk, call 0800 842 842 or contact the City of Wolverhampton College on 01902 836000.

The photo shows (l to r) Prince's Trust Football Development Officer Jamie Roberts, Michael Davies, West Bromwich Albion Social Inclusion Manager Ryan Maye, and City of Wolverhampton College's Progression Manager Kieron Weatherstone.