

Shoes put me on the path to success

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By Jasbir Authi, Birmingham Mail



A BIRMINGHAM mum says a pair of shoes helped put her on track for a better life.

Anne Marie McKenzie has size 12-and-a-half feet, and thought she was destined to spend her life in unfeminine trainers or men's shoes under trousers.

The single mum of Jordan, aged 11, and Phillip, 18, could not afford handmade shoes and her confidence suffered.

The former cleaner's life changed when she applied to do a careers adviser course and was told the college would pay for her first pair of ladies' shoes for work.

Anne Marie went on to land her dream job, gain more qualifications, and has now won a Learning Works award from the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education.

She said: "My Christmases all came at once when City College funded my first pair of ladies' shoes. I feel like Dorothy from Wizard of Oz."

Anne Marie, from Handsworth, took her first step to a brighter future after her marriage broke up nine years ago, when she was 27.

She desperately wanted to quit her job as a cleaner but had no money, qualifications, skills or self-esteem.

"I wanted to do something so my sons would look up to me," she said. "I am 6ft 1in, have a shoe size of 12-and-a-half and I could not get nice shoes. I felt quite disadvantaged."

Anne Marie went to see her course tutor and was told the college would buy her a pair of ladies' shoes for her work experience.

Her self-belief rocketed and Anne Marie has landed a job as a course adviser at the college.