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SHARON ELMES

YOUTH WORKER APPRENTICE



Essex County Council



WHICH APPRENTICESHIP ARE YOU DOING?

Youth Support Worker.

WHAT LEVEL IS YOUR APPRENTICESHIP?

Advanced (level 3).

WHAT DO YOU DO?

As a Youth Support Worker we always put the young people first, in everything we do, this includes ensuring they are safe at all times. We arrange sessions for the young people asking them what they would like to do, and create a weekly programme. It is important that they have a safe space to come and have fun. We have conversations, and we encourage them to partake in activities, if they want to. Every day is different as a youth worker. One day you could be playing football outside in the lovely sunshine, another day we could all be doing a cooking project, making pizzas or samosas. Every activity that we do is there to empower and encourage them to go forward into adulthood with confidence and a sense of wellbeing.



WHAT IS THE MOST EXCITING PROJECT YOU HAVE WORKED ON?

We have just started a podcasting and DJ session for the young people - it's so exciting to have all the equipment. I have never been involved with a project like this before, so I too am learning new skills everyday whilst on the job. Helping and supporting the young people to share their stories and music is also interesting and fun. When they are all smiling and happy it makes you realise all your hard work setting up a project is worth it, as they gain so much confidence and learn new skills. It's good that we have the resources for them to explore new avenues in life in such a changing world.

WHAT IS YOUR PROUDEST APPRENTICESHIP MOMENT?

This is an easy one, after not being in education since 1987 (yes, you read that right), I started my apprenticeship course. I haven't got the best of skills with regards to laptops and technology. I pondered over my first assignment for weeks as I wanted to get it just right. My assessor came back to me and said it was excellent and that I didn't need to change anything. This made me feel very emotional and proud of myself. You don't need to be good at everything or know all there is to know about technology. Life is about carrying on with your learning and skills, and not being afraid to take a chance.

WHICH FEMALE INSPIRES YOU AND WHY?

Princess Diana has always been an inspiration to me, she was so beautiful and had so much grace. She was put into the limelight and was followed day and night by the paparazzi, the pressure she must have been under was so intense. You could see she loved her children and wanted to protect them, but also never stopped them from having fun, by doing normal activities like taking them to theme parks and enjoying the rides with them. She was also strong enough to accept she was unhappy and change things in her life, which I think is brave. She carried on right until the end supporting charities and even in her death, new laws were brought out to protect people from the paparazzi. She was called the Queen of Hearts and I believe she was.

"TAKE CHANCES AND ONLY REGRET THE THINGS YOU DON'T DO."

