

JOHN'S STORY

“After everything, I now know what I am doing with my life – and I’m going to try and stick to it.”

John Garrott left school at aged 16 with no idea of what he was going to do with his future.

Suffering from dyslexia and with no qualifications to his name, he enrolled on a construction course to help him learn a trade. But he became disillusioned, left the course, and very soon lost all motivation to continue studying or find a job.

Like many young people in his situation, John, who lives with his Grandmother at Carnwadric, Glasgow, became bored and lost all sense of direction, lying in bed most of the day and staying up late at night playing video games. Boredom even led him to turn to vandalism, as he and his friends faced a bleak future of never realising their full potential.

It was a friend finding out about Tomorrow’s People’s ‘Working It Out’ project that was to change everything for John.

“I had seen it advertised and a friend had recommended it so I thought why not? I’ve got nothing else to do”, says John, now aged 17. “I thought it would be just another course, and to be honest I just went on it because my friend was. But I actually began to enjoy it and learn from it.

“I had been in trouble at school and left with no qualifications, partly because of my dyslexia. I didn’t know what I wanted to do with my life. I was just wasting time and nothing really interested me.”

During his 16 weeks on the Working It Out programme, John and the rest of the group undertook community initiatives that encouraged them to work as a team and at the same time productively help a school or community centre in their local area.

John and his group transformed parts of a local school by painting murals and pictures in the playgrounds and also renovating the shower facilities at a nearby community centre.

By the end of the 16-weeks, John felt like a different person.

He said: “I really enjoyed it, particularly painting the school playgrounds. I made lots of new friends and it was good to work as a team. The course made me want to get out of bed and do something with my life. And I began to believe in myself.”

Following completion of the Working It Out programme, John decided he would like to get a job as soon as possible, and chose to pursue a retail modern apprenticeship.

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With the help of Working It Out's Task Force Leader, Maggie Kerr, John applied for a role as a sales apprentice at a local furniture store. Maggie also helped him prepare for his interview and attended with him. John was successful and has kept in touch with Tomorrow's People since starting at the Brighthouse store.

Maggie said: "When John first came to us he was confrontational and quite disruptive. We noticed that he worked at a steady pace until his peers goaded him and then his attitude deteriorated. When we decided to let him tackle problems and challenges on his own for a while, his work-rate improved dramatically.

"Like many youngsters we work with, it soon transpired that John's confrontational manner was a disguise for a lack of self-esteem. Once he settled into the programme his confidence grew and he learned that his efforts were worthwhile.

"We continued to provide extra support on a day to day basis which helped John to focus on his career plan. We were delighted when John identified what he wanted to do and couldn't have been more pleased when he was successful at interview.

"We have kept in touch to ensure there are no teething problems but he seems to be settling in extremely well.

"John is an excellent example of a young man who just needed a little bit of help to gain the confidence to realise his full potential."

John added: "I was made up when I got this job. And I really enjoy it. I work closely with the manager and my job is to be on the shop floor talking to customers and giving them information and help.

"If you had told me last year I'd be doing this I wouldn't have believed you. Tomorrow's People really helped me get back on track. After everything, I now know what I am doing with my life – and I'm going to try and stick to it."

John joined the Tomorrow's People programme 'Working It Out', which targets some of Glasgow's hardest to help, most at risk young people, aged between 16 and 25. It is a community initiative that aims to encourage disadvantaged, socially excluded young people fulfil their true potential.

Tomorrow's People is a national charity with a 20-year track record of success in helping people out of long-term unemployment, welfare dependence or homelessness, into jobs and self-sufficiency.

It has helped change the lives of more than 390,000 people across the UK who had been resigned to long-term, even life-long, unemployment, since it was established in 1984. On average, 76% of people helped by Tomorrow's People are still in employment 12 months on.

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