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Platinum award helps employers shine

Whitefriars Housing Group proved it had the metal to help apprentices when it collected a special platinum award, beating the cream of Coventry and Warwickshire Training (CWT) employers.

The awards ceremony, organised by CWT, was held at Coventry Rugby Club in recognition of dedication and achievement, and was attended by approximately 120 employers and learners.

The not-for-profit housing group was one of only two local organisations who scooped the special award which was introduced this year to recognise companies that have shown outstanding support toward the apprenticeship programme. More than 400 organisations across Coventry and Warwickshire who employ apprentices were considered for an award, with 48 receiving plaques.

Essentials, a local hairdressers based in Church Street, Rugby, also collected a Platinum Award on the evening.

Pam Griffin, corporate training officer at Whitefriars, said: "It was a real honour to win this award.

“Apprenticeship schemes offer a win-win situation for all concerned. We get dedicated and enthusiastic people and they gain the experience needed to pursue their dream careers.

“So far, within the three and a half years since it started, Whitefriars has guided 73 trainees through its doors. Of these, 13 are still in training, 31 have achieved long term or permanent positions at the housing group and 27 have left for employment elsewhere. Two apprentices have gone on to higher education.

“This is the perfect measure of the scheme’s success and this award is the icing on the cake. My team and I are very proud of our apprentices and our apprentice scheme.”

CWT is a leading provider of vocational training, including apprenticeships for young people. As a subsidiary of the Coventry and Warwickshire Chambers of Commerce, CWT has helped more than 500 adults over last five years and in excess of 2000 young people into work through links with employers and support organisations.

Leading the accolades were Local Learning and Skills Council employees Tim Corkery, performance and standards advisor, and David Lennox, programme manager for work and learning.

Apprentices from across the region were also awarded. The apprentices, aged between 16 and 24, picked up a clutch of awards. Nominations included mother of two Sarah-Jane Rammell who has juggled work commitments, children and training to complete an apprenticeship.

Also nominated was Paul Rice who used his recovery time after a hit and run accident to work towards his qualification. His perseverance saw him achieve his Advanced Apprenticeship within the allocated time.

Whitefriars apprentice Stephen Williams was one of those up for an award. The 16-year-old jumped at the opportunity of becoming a modern apprentice after being put off further education.

The teenager, from Tile Hill, said: "It was great news to be nominated. I'd already won an award at the Whitefriars evening so this was very good. I joined Whitefriars after completing some work experience here, it means I am doing something I enjoy rather than something I don't. I didn't like the idea of further education and this allows me to get experience and earn."

Michelle Liddell, senior recruitment advisor at CWT, said: "The evening took lots of organising but was a huge success and we have received some fantastic feedback. The awards ceremony was held in recognition of the hard work and achievements of our learners, along with recognising the support provided by our employers."

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