

Students complete prestigious qualification

A GROUP of dedicated young people have taken strides towards reaching their full potential with the completion of a prestigious qualification.

Nine participants on the Realising Our Potential project have received their Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Awards, following a two-day expedition in Ennerdale, involving camping, cooking and map-reading. The expedition was led by Richard Wilson and Nick Landles from Cumbria Youth Alliance.

The awards were presented at the first anniversary celebration of Realising Our Potential – hosted by Lakes College and funded by Copeland Council and Copeland Community Fund – which supports people who have a learning or physical disability and helps develop their skills, confidence and self-esteem.

It offers programmes tailored to an individual's needs that are designed around their own interests, including art and craft, gardening, dance, IT, catering, customer service or animal care, and provides participants with work placements, a social activity programme, community engagement projects, and employability and independent living skills workshops.

Those receiving their Duke of Edinburgh Awards were: Mark Bowers, Jenna Horricks, Nathan Martin, Kieran Moore; Shannon Moore, Mikey Evans, Jamie O'Neill and Casey Anne Pears.

Pippa De Gara, Realising Our Potential Manager, said: "It has been an absolute pleasure to work with these young people and watch their confidence and self-esteem grow.

"We've had some amazing results and we hope to consolidate this progress into the next 12 months.

"Many congratulations to everyone receiving their awards; the commitment and dedication you showed during horrendous weather in Ennerdale was admirable, and it's onwards on upwards to the Silver and Gold awards."

The target of 40 people to engage with the project over two years has been exceeded in the first year, and as a result it is hoped to increase this participation figure to 60 in year two. Of these 60, the staff team are working with 16 core participants to help them in move into employment, education or training.

David Moore, Copeland's Deputy Mayor and a board member for Copeland Community Fund, presented the awards. He said: "People are our greatest asset and Copeland Council and Copeland Community Fund are proud partners in the delivery of this project and we are fully committed to helping everyone achieve their full potential.

"Listening to what has been achieved by these young people is truly inspirational. These awards are not given out lightly and I'm full of admiration of what has been accomplished."

Thanks were extended to the project's funders, staff, participants and their parents/carers.

For more information on the course, contact Lakes College on 01946 839300.



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