

COLLEGE TIMES



SSFC GAINS STEM STATUS



Stockton Sixth Form College has become the first school or college in Teesside to be recognised as a regional hub for a prestigious Science partnership programme led by The Ogden Trust.

The Ogden Trust, founded in 1999, aims to encourage the teaching and learning of Science and, particularly, Physics, across the country. It does this by sponsoring a number of regional Schools Science Partnerships, providing a forum for collaborative activities for students and pupils from local schools.

Stockton Sixth Form College now joins just two other North-East organisations in partnering with The Trust and being tasked with helping to increase the number of students taking Science-subjects at GCSE, A-level and at university, and support teachers of Science in the area.

The college has invited partner schools such as Bishopsgarth School and Thornaby Academy to be part of the exciting STEM activities and on offer in the near future.

Rachel Angus, Vice Principal at Stockton Sixth Form College, said: "Interest in the Science subjects we offer at A-level is on the increase and we believe there is no better time to become affiliated to The Ogden Trust.

"This unique partnership will allow our students and local school pupils to benefit from a wide range of activities, events, scholarships, workshops, visits and trips; all aimed at raising aspirations and heightening excitement in Science."

EDITOR



DEBATE OVER BENEFITS STREET

This November the college's debating society held a heated debate over the controversial "Benefits Street", a reality TV show being filmed in our area documenting the lives of people on benefits.

The show has hit the headlines because of the many negative images that will be cast across the nation without showing the upside of our town.

Benefits Street is an extremely controversial programme; there is a moral uncertainty about filming the lives of those who are less fortunate. Taking up arms on this side were Nathania Ewruje and Student Council President Mitchell Agar, stating that "Benefits Street seeks to stigmatise the town on national TV with millions of people watching" and so the programme's rhetoric would therefore become "the dominant perception of our town."

Mitchell and Nathania argued that we should fight back. "Stockton really is a great place; our community spirit, top university, sporting facilities and other fantastic attributes will be swept aside as a result of the show," they added.

In defence of Benefits Street were Harry Lidford and Matthew Walters, whose contrary argument was that "the show gives a voice to the poor – one that is seldom heard. Is part of the problem for our MPs, head teachers and local authority that we don't always like this voice?"

They also pointed out that "people had signed up to this of their own free will" and that it was "patronising to say some people are too vulnerable to make up their own minds."

At the end of the debate a vote was held and it was decided that students and staff would not like Benefits Street to be filmed here in Stockton. We love our town and we don't want to see its fantastic image distorted.

Mike McGrother, Creative Partner for Stockton Borough Council and community champion, launched the 'Psst...! Positively Stockton on Tees' campaign in November. He said: "There has been an assumption from the producers of Benefits Street that we're a community that needs to be given a voice. To present this as 'factual' television designed to engineer some kind of social benefit is a bit arrogant I think.

"There's an abundance of community pride in Stockton – it's just not our style to go shouting it from the rooftops. But if we're faced with a series that seeks to paint us in an unfair light on national television, we shouldn't take that lying down!

"Through the Positively Stockton campaign, we can dispel the myths that will inevitably be trotted out using the sense of humour, community spirit and understated manner people in our borough are renowned for."

STACEY MCMASTER



STUDENTS APPEAR ON ITV

On Thursday 6th November, a group of Media students were given the opportunity to go to Daisy Chain Farm in Norton and feature in an ITV promotional video.

Daisy Chain, a charity which seeks to support autistic children and their families in the local area, was shortlisted for the chance to win £50,000 in the 'ITV People's Millions', a scheme to help community projects get funding from the National Lottery.

The students who featured in the short film met the charity's animals, and were filmed feeding their resident pig, Pumba. They also had the chance to meet a news reporter from ITV and ask questions about the filming.

The video appeared on the ITV Tyne Tees News on Monday 24th November.

The Chief Executive of Daisy Chain, Judith Haysmore, was delighted with the filming and day's events. She said: "I would like to say a big thank you to the crew from Stockton Sixth Form College who joined right in on the day. They were helpful as well as enthusiastic and an absolute pleasure to have along."

The charity found out shortly after that it won the vital funding needed to renovate its popular barn area – huge congratulations from all at Stockton Sixth Form College!

JAMES GREGORY



POETRY BY HEART!

Stockton Sixth Form College will be hosting a 'Poetry By Heart' evening, where students taking part in the 'Poetry By Heart' competition will recite their chosen poems in the hopes of being crowned champion, winning the chance to represent the college in a county contest.

The recital will take place on Wednesday 17th December, with poetry and English lovers from college and local partner schools invited to come along and support the hopeful poets.

"Poetry By Heart" is a pioneering national competition which encourages pupils to learn and recite poems by heart. Each school or college hosts their own opening contests to choose a champion to go through to the next round.

During the evening, all contestants will recite two chosen poems; one published before 1914 and one published from an anthology of over 600 years of poetry. With the help of students and staff acting as mentors, pupils are learning the poems by heart and developing methods of performance to bring their meanings to life.

The aims of the competition are to build confidence whilst learning to respond and analyse the poetry, turning it into a performance; "Poetry is composed to be performed," said English Literature and Drama teacher Nicola Mejia. "The night will appeal to all poetry lovers and help students bring another dimension to poetry that usually goes unseen."

We are all looking forward to the recital night and wish all students taking part good luck!

ZOE MCLONE



SKILLS MINISTER VISITS SSFC

Stockton Sixth Form College welcomed Skills and Equalities Minister Nick Boles on Friday 7th November.

Mr Boles joined Conservative MP for Stockton South James Wharton to meet with Principal Joanna Bailey, before touring college facilities and meeting with students.

Nick Boles MP holds a role shared between the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and the Department for Education (DfE). His responsibilities include further education, vocational qualifications, apprenticeships and careers advice and guidance.

The Conservative MPs learnt how college staff are preparing for radical changes to post-16 qualifications for 2015, including expanding the range of vocational courses available to local students and working closely with partner schools to prepare pupils for studying linear A-levels and reformed BTEC qualifications.

The college showcased how free college meals are offered to eligible students; an initiative brought in by the Coalition government in September 2014 which currently benefits over 150 learners.

Joanna Bailey, Principal at Stockton Sixth Form College, said: "We are extremely fortunate that the Minister took time out of his busy schedule to come and visit Stockton Sixth Form College, it was an excellent opportunity for us to showcase the transformational journey the college is making."

Nick Boles MP said: "It was good to visit Stockton Sixth Form College, which is doing a whole range of innovative things and great work ensuring key skills in English and Maths are supported. I was also really pleased to join students for lunch and try my first parmo! It was great and won't be my last."

James Wharton MP added: "I wanted to bring Nick to see the good work students and staff are doing, with the recent Good Ofsted grade this is a local college going from strength to strength and as the area's MP I want to give all the support I can."

EDITOR



BUSINESS STUDENTS RUN CHARITY STALL

Students from Stockton Sixth Form College ran their own pop-up retail stall in Stockton town centre in November, with all proceeds being donated to a North East charity.

The wannabe entrepreneurs sold handmade Christmas gifts and festive goodies at Stockton Sparkles market, after the retail unit was kindly donated by Stockton Borough Council.

The group, part of the college's Social Enterprise enrichment team, put forward the idea as part of the Alan Shearer Foundation's annual Young Social Entrepreneur competition, which sees schools and colleges go head-to-head to turn £250 seed money into the most profit for charity. Last year the competition raised over £20,000 for local disadvantaged children.

Laura Etherington, a second year student, said: "The idea of the competition is to help enhance our business and leadership skills whilst raising vital funds for charity. I have been part of this enrichment project for over a year now and I think it will really help me stand out as I look to apply to university."

First year student, Subhaan Ali, said: "I study Business at college so putting my classroom knowledge and entrepreneurial skills in to practice was a really unique experience. We wanted to raise as much money as possible as we know how much difference we can make to an amazing local charity."

Principal Joanna Bailey said: "It is so important for students to learn and develop skills which will allow them to be successful in their next step. The college's enrichment programme focuses on doing just that, and, as ever, our Social Enterprise students have thrown themselves in to their next challenge."

"We are exceptionally proud of their enthusiasm and willingness to make this opportunity a success."

EDITOR



TOP 10 CHRISTMAS GIFTS FOR STUDENTS!

Whether you're struggling to find a present for your friend or you can't think of any more suggestions for your list, these unique, affordable gifts will help guide you as Christmas fast approaches...

HOT COOKIE USB CUP WARMER (£9.99, WWW.FINDMEAGIFT.CO.UK)

What happens when you're so engrossed in your work that you forget about your drink and it goes cold? Well while you're working on a computer or laptop, plug this cookie shaped coaster into the USB port and this present will keep your cup warm while you continue working! Genius.

I AM SO FREAKING ORGANISED – STICKY NOTES WALLET (£3.99, WWW.THEPRESENTFINDER.CO.UK)

Being organised is important when it comes to revising and maintaining success for your A-levels, especially when revising for mock week! This present includes mini sticky notes, shapes and messages in bright, attractive colours which will not only improve the look of your work, but also help you carry key notes around easily in a handy wallet.

IPHONE BATTERY POWER PACK CASE FOR IPHONE (£9.99, AMAZON)

This present is ideal for anyone who spends a lot of time on their phone (everyone). The case doubles your phones battery life, which we all know struggles to last a full day at college!

FAYE DIXON





FIVE MINUTES WITH... ROB SMEDLEY F1 RACE ENGINEER

We secured the opportunity to ask the Middlesbrough-born Williams F1 race engineer questions about getting in to the sport and hopes for his future.

WHAT MADE YOU GET INTO MOTORSPORT?

My dad took me to the British GP and I was somewhat hooked. I was captured by the engineering beauty and excellence of Grand Prix cars and knew that I wanted to be involved with them on an engineering level somehow.

WHAT ATTRACTED YOU TO FERRARI?

They are a huge team with a big resource and as an engineer that was an exciting prospect. Essentially having the resource both in fiscal and personnel terms to explore different technical areas to gain an advantage over other teams was an attraction. Additionally, at the time when I went there, they had some of the best people in Formula 1 and it was an honour to be part of that group.

WHEN FELIPE MASSA LEFT FERRARI, DID YOU FEEL THAT IT WAS TIME TO MOVE ON AND TRY A NEW CHALLENGE?

Felipe leaving Ferrari had nothing to do with my decision. I had taken it long before that. Williams offered me a good challenge working to rebuild the team to its former glory. That is what we are doing now. I had a good period at Ferrari and will be forever indebted to them but as with a lot of things it was time for something new.

WHAT ARE YOUR HOPES FOR YOUR FUTURE WITH WILLIAMS?

My hope for Williams is simple; I want them to win World Championships again and return to the outfit that they have the potential to do.

WOULD YOU RECOMMEND F1 TO ANY PARTICULAR STUDENTS?

Clearly F1 needs a better business model if two teams have gone into administration in the space of a week so I would recommend that more Business students get involved.

CAN YOU EXPLAIN TO OUR STUDENTS HOW YOU CAME TO HAVE A SUCCESSFUL CAREER IN MOTORSPORT?

Hard work! They should aspire to excellence in whatever their chosen field is. Never give up on what is important to you.

HOW DO YOU CAPTURE THE ATTENTION OF A MOTORSPORT TEAM? WHAT SKILLS AND ATTRIBUTES ARE THEY LOOKING FOR?

Academic excellence is a given but look to do something slightly different that makes you stand out from the crowd.

JAMES GREGORY



NEWS IN BRIEF

DRAMA STUDENTS SUPPORT DAISY CHAIN

An extravaganza of artistic talent will erupt at Stockton Sixth Form College in January when Performing Arts students put on a spectacular show to help raise money for charity.

Performances will include classic musical numbers from Grease, Hairspray and Sweeney Todd as well as some of the students' own creations, with all money raised going towards Daisy Chain.

We are all looking forward to the opening night of the performance. Watch this space for more details!

STACEY MCMASTER

CHILDREN IN NEED

On Friday 14th November, Stockton Sixth Form College was fundraising for Children In Need, with lots of fun activities including wear red day, cake sales and more.

Overall, we raised £150, contributing to the record £32m raised on the night – the most ever made in the charity's history!

Children in Need is there to support groups, charities and communities in the fight to help disadvantaged young people across the UK. Money raised goes to a variety of projects; for example, helping youth centres and keeping young people out of crime.

The successful day was managed by the Charity enrichment team, who have dedicated their time this term to raising vital funds for Macmillan Cancer Care, Daisy Chain and Useful Vision, amongst others.

THOMAS CROFT

RUGBY TEAM VISITS THE FALCONS

The college rugby team enjoyed a day out at Newcastle Falcons to participate in a regional tournament involving other local colleges.

The team played five games overall, winning three and losing two, and were able to watch the Falcons take on Cardiff Blues, getting narrowly beat in a closely fought match.

LUKE FLEMING

MISSED OUR OPEN EVENING?

If you missed out on visiting the college's Open Evening but still want the chance to meet subject staff and view our fantastic facilities, call 01642 612611 to arrange a tour.