

What Befriending Means to Me: A Young Client Speaks



Back row (l to r): George Crosbie, Rhoda Reid, Russell Clearie, Harry Stevenson, Peter Craig; Front row (l to r): Steven Wright, Mary Jane Rhodes, Amanda McMahon, Grant Burns

COVEY befriending group recently held their annual general meeting with part of the evening given to celebrating the young people and befrienders successful journeys. Attended by young people, befrienders, dignitaries, supporters of COVEY and staff, the event was primarily presented by young people themselves speaking about the difference befriending had made to their lives. One young person was delighted to tell her story.

"Just over a year ago I was introduced to COVEY and their services through the restorative justice scheme. At that time I was getting into a lot of trouble at school, with my family and with the police. I used to hang around the streets, drinking and getting up to all sorts but then in came Nikki who introduced me to my befriender, Jacqueline.

Even the first time Jacqueline took me out I felt comfortable talking to her. After we got to know each other, I felt I could talk openly about almost anything, it was great to talk to

someone who I could trust 100% and have a giggle with, something I felt I couldn't do with my family or friends.

During the year we've done loads of things together like ceramic painting, beauty treatments and trips to the pictures and each time is just as great as the last. It's a few hours out of the house and away from trouble, where I can have a laugh or two and a talk with Jacqueline about any troubles, which always makes my problems seem smaller and easier to deal with when I go home.

Jacqueline helped me start thinking more and eventually I started making the right decisions and changing the things I was doing. Soon after I stopped drinking all my other problems got sorted out. From then on my life just keeps getting better.

Befriending has made such a positive impact on my life, shortly I'll be going back to college for the second year of my vehicle refinishing course, without COVEY I would

probably have got myself into serious trouble and some bad situations by now and might not have been able to get out of and achieve the things I want to for my life.

Part of my journey involves transition befriending. Recently Jacqueline and I have been taking a young boy out with us. It's been going great, every week we take him out to a new place and let him try something he might not get the opportunity to do. It's a great experience and hopefully it will continue.

When I'm old enough, I hope to become a befriender with COVEY, to try and help other young people just like Jacqueline and all the people at Covey have helped me. It has made such a difference to me and my life."

COVEY is always looking for volunteers and wishes to supplement their Board by recruiting members with experience and expertise in personnel, general management, and social work. For more information, visit our website, www.coveybefriending.co.uk