

New project for young people in Aldershot

At a time when youth unemployment is at record levels a new project in Aldershot is helping young people seriously improve their prospects of employment. BOOST stands for Bring On Opportunities, Skills and Training and is a free fourteen week full time course for 16-25 year olds who would otherwise be doing nothing.

The current Boost group have recently spent a week repainting the toilets and revamping the outside area of a scout hut in Aldershot. The outside space was transformed by sheer hard work and determination, while the new paint job inside is a definite improvement on what was there before.



Members of the hardworking BOOST group

Many of the young people have been unemployed for some time. Some only left school last summer and have had no opportunity to work. Others have been employed but personal circumstances, for example moving to a different area or being made redundant, have led to current unemployment.

The Boost project facilitator, Art Porter, has drawn on his years of youth work experience with Guildford YMCA to devise the course with help from young people themselves. It encourages young people to engage with learning, working towards basic qualifications in Food Hygiene and First Aid, English functional skills level 1 and a City and Guilds level 1. The young people are given group challenges to accomplish that require working together and depending on each other, as well as challenging their expectations of themselves.

Earlier in the course a week on Dartmoor took the Boost Group well out of their comfort zone, testing their ability to follow instructions, stretching them beyond their limits and giving them a well deserved sense of achievement when they

accomplished more than they thought possible. Before the work on the scout hut could start they demonstrated their resourcefulness by raising a staggering £250 by running a market stall selling cakes and bric a brac. They used the money to buy painting and gardening materials and spring flowering bulbs.

The current course is over half way through but a new one will start on 5th March. Anyone wanting to find out more can call Finlay Malcolm on 07717 533066 or 01483 888122.

A vital element of the course is getting some experience of a working environment. Placements can be hard to find and some of the current team are still looking for opportunities. Plantation youth workers are on hand throughout the course to support the young people in gaining their placements. If you can offer something appropriate in the Aldershot area the current Boost leaders Art and Dan Wilson would love to hear from you. Please contact them on 07703 679163.