



## Talbot Messages from Talbot Teenagers

**Talbot Specialist School asked Clare from ibk initiatives to set up work experience placements for a small number of sixth form students. This was a new venture for the teenagers, parents and school. None of them had done anything quite like this before!**

The young people told Clare what they wanted to do. They had lots of different ideas. Amy wanted to work in a supermarket near her home; Josh only wanted one thing – to work with the police; Milan too was single minded – he wanted to work in a kitchen; Chris pinned his hopes on a kitchen too – one that had masses of stainless steel; and Laura really wanted to work in a clothes shop in Meadowhall.

With their hopes ringing in her ears, Clare went off and tried to make things happen. She started with natural contacts. Josh told her his family had a friend who worked in the police. Clare's friend Anj introduced her to someone she knew who is the manager of an Argos store. And Clare already knew a manager at Morrisons. All these contacts came up trumps!

Where there were no natural contacts, Clare sat with her hand glued to the phone. She didn't stop ringing potential employers until she hit gold. And when she didn't hit gold she came up with some different possibilities. For example, she wasn't able to find a clothes shop in Meadowhall to provide Laura with a placement. Christmas and the credit crunch worked against them. So Clare went back to Laura to explain things. They talked about what was possible and Laura said she would be really happy to give Argos a try. Her enthusiasm for working at Argos is now boundless. Laura keeps her support worker on her toes by excitedly asking if she really has booked that taxi!



Two of these young people are going share their stories with you

## Josh's story: "I want to be a Police Officer"

Josh has long since dreamed of working with the police. In their first session together Clare asked Josh what he found so appealing about being a police officer:

**"Fast cars. Walkie talkies. Stopping crime. Helping people. The Bill!"**

Josh's mum and dad told Clare that Josh had talked about being a police officer since he was a little boy.

"I can't imagine him being a police officer, but I can see he could have a role in the police. Josh is very good at helping people." Josh's Dad

The family were keen for Clare to meet with their friend Kate who works with the police. Several conversations later Kate came to visit Josh, his Teaching Assistant and Clare at school. Soon after

**"He's an asset to the police station. Everyone knows him and he's a part of the team here. We'd like to find a way for Josh to be here long term."**

**Kay, Administrator  
Hammerton Road  
Police Station**

that, Josh started working at the Hammerton Road Police Station every Friday, under the watchful eye of Kay the administrator. It was Kay who made sure that Josh experienced different things. His tasks included washing police cars; sorting the mail; delivering messages; shadowing Police Officers in their various duties; watching an officer deal with the crime reports as they came in; visiting the horses in the mounted police section; and spending time in a patrol car.

Josh's superb people skills and enthusiasm quickly led him to become a valued member of the team. He has been asked to stay on as a volunteer for one day a week during his last year at school. Encouraged by Kay, staff at the station are keen for Josh to continue working with them when he leaves school.

"I want to come and work here every day!"

Josh



**"It's been wonderful and beyond all our expectations. He's just exhausted when he leaves and often falls asleep in the car on the way home!"** Josh's mum

**"His life is the police and he just loves it. He's highly motivated to be compliant and responsible. We're delighted that it's developing into something long term."**

**Josh's dad**

**"It's just fantastic. When he's at school it's all he'll talk about! It has really helped him be more responsible."**

**Emma, Teaching Assistant supporting Josh**

**"I've had work experience students from mainstream schools across the city. Josh stands out from the crowd. He works hard. Everyone really likes him and he gets on with everyone great."**

**Kay, Josh's work supervisor**





Talbot Specialist School

# Amy's story: "I want to stack shelves"

"It was a pleasure supporting Amy on her work placement at Morrisons. Each week she was so excited and showed great enthusiasm to work in the store. ...A highlight during Amy's day was to join other staff in the canteen and to spend her daily allowance on her lunch. The staff on the shop floor made Amy feel welcome and would chat to her. It was also important to Amy that she was allocated her own locker and name badge. All in all Amy was a credit to Talbot School and I am very proud of her.."

Jacqui, Senior Teaching Assistant supporting Amy



Amy wanted to work in a supermarket near her home and preferably one that she goes to regularly with her mum. Clare tried the nearby supermarkets: the first said that they no longer do work experience for anyone, the second said they would be happy to meet with Clare and Amy for an informal interview but could make no promises. A few weeks later a very excited and glamorous Amy, along with Clare and her support worker Jacqui, met with the personnel manager for an informal interview:

**"When I arrived in school to meet Amy there was a real buzz of excitement in the air. Everyone was talking about her interview; Amy was well prepared and looked fabulous. She'd curled her hair and put on her best clothes."**  
Clare, ibk initiatives

**"We think it's brilliant. She can't wait to go and she seems to really enjoy it. We were a bit nervous beforehand and worried that she might get teased or laughed at but she seems to have fitted in really well. She is great with people."**

Amy's dad

**"She's really, really enjoyed it. We are all hoping Amy can continue at Morrisons once she has left school. It's been a real learning experience for all of us- for us as much as her."**

Amy's mum

**"I like working at Morrisons on health and beauty."**

Amy



Amy sailed through the interview and was offered a placement in the New Year. She worked on the Health and Beauty aisle tidying and replenishing stock. She is hoping to build on her work experience and work in Morrisons or another supermarket.

# Snapshots

from Chris, Laura and Milan



Chris has done two weeks at his placement – working in a kitchen attached to the Enable coffee bar. Enable is an

organisation that provides training for adults with learning difficulties.

“I want to work in the kitchen at Enable” Chris



Laura has just started at Argos where she is really happy. Already proving herself as a natural at customer relations,

Laura is working on the jewellery counter, collections department and finding stock in the warehouse.

“Jacqui, are you sure you have booked the taxi to Argos?!” Laura

And we need to keep our fingers crossed for Milan. Clare made contact with The Source – a supported employment project based at Meadowhall Shopping Centre. Staff there are working to find Milan a placement as a kitchen porter in the Oasis – the busy central food court.

“I am good at cooking. It's nice” Milan

If you would like more information about ibk's work please contact Pippa on 07941 106228 or email her at: [pippa@ibkinitiatives.com](mailto:pippa@ibkinitiatives.com)

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## What people are saying around school

“I want to work at the police station on Tuesday” Sam, Talbot Student

“Seeing a small number of students actually go out and do work placements has raised the aspirations of other students and the expectations of staff”

Jacqui, Senior Support Worker

“This project has been fantastic. It has inspired and motivated staff and students alike. We are going to build on this project and expand the work to allow more students similar opportunities.”

Tricia, Head of Post 16

“We are working hard in school to produce better outcomes for our students when they leave. And this is one way of doing just that. Now that Clare has shown us what needs to be done, we are embedding this work within school. Our first step is to give one of our Senior Teaching Assistant's time and responsibilities to take the work forward.”

Judith, Head Teacher

We would like to thank everyone who has been involved in this piece of work: the students, parents, staff and placement providers. We know from experience how hard it can be to find work placements for disabled young people. We have been happily surprised by the enthusiasm and open mindedness of placement providers. We have been delighted that the students have grabbed this opportunity with both hands and are showing us the potential for moving from temporary work experience placements to longer term employment. We look forward to hearing a lot more from Talbot Teenagers. We look forward to seeing them at work around the city!

Clare Mendham and Pippa Murray,  
ibk initiatives



Talbot Specialist School