

A taste of Spain helps raise cash

YOUNG apprentices enjoyed a taste of Spain to help raise money for charity.

Young Modern Apprenticeship students from St Anne's Academy and Middleton Technology School, who are studying catering at Hopwood Hall College, held an evening of Spanish cuisine at the college's training restaurant in aid of the Rochdale Children's Moorland Home.

The Mayor and Mayoress of Rochdale, Councillor Peter Evans and wife Helen, were invited to the restaurant, for an evening of tapas and sangria that was prepared and served by the students.

Liam Bridgeman, 16, a Young Modern Apprenticeship student who helped organise and run the event, said: "We chose the Mayor's charity because it helps children and we wanted to raise money for people our own age."

"The Spanish evening followed on from the success of another event we did last year that raised money for the NSPCC. We hope our efforts this time will raise around £500 for the children's home."

After desserts and coffee, the Mayor spoke to the students staff and diners about his involvement in the charity and emphasised that vital funds are always needed for it to continue helping young people in the area.

The Mayor said: "The preparation for the event was superb and the enthusiasm and team work was a joy to witness. I applaud the results."

Helping you to get motivated

by Helen Clifton

GRANDMOTHER-of-two Liz Leech says she had always been skinny up until her early 40s – but then she started putting on weight, despite leading an active lifestyle.

Although the 65-year-old former classroom assistant attended a weight loss clinic at her local GP's surgery, she felt a lack of motivation and nothing was really helping her change her lifestyle.

But, since meeting up with her local health trainer Michelle Duffy in mid-February, Liz has lost half a stone – and feels much more positive about herself.

"I just needed encouragement. I have always been fairly healthy, but I just wanted the motivation that Michelle gives. She asks what I want from her rather than saying 'This is a diet,'" she explains.

Former classroom support assistant Liz, 65, who lives in Middleton Junction, has one son Stephen, 42, and two grandchildren Philip, five, and Harriet, three.

She met Michelle in November 2007 at the official launch of the local Primary Care Trust's (PCT's) health trainer scheme.

Trainers like Michelle offer one-on-one support and healthy living

advice over a 12-week period, helping them access solutions, and supporting them to make permanent changes to their lives.

"I go on my health walks around Hollin estate, and I met up with Michelle in November and had a chat with her. I decided to take it further," Liz says.

"She encourages me to walk more often. Now I got out for at least half an hour a day, and I also do my daily food diary."

Her son Stephen is a church warden at St Gabriel's Church on Greenhill Road – and Liz leads a busy life helping out with the activities there.

But, she says, despite having a full life, it is sometimes easy to forget to exercise.

"You can just let your health slide if you are not careful."

"If I am not going anywhere I sit in front of the TV, and it is surprising how long you are sitting down. So now I go for a 20-minute walk outside, just to get some extra exercise."

"We have still got to enjoy ourselves, but be sensible at the same time."

"I generally feel better, I feel bet-

Michelle Duffy has been helping Liz out MI1727A08



ter for the extra exercise. I am more conscious of what I shouldn't be eating."

Michelle Duffy has been a health trainer since June, when she started her nine months' training.

She emphasised that Liz's weight loss is significant because it has happened through lifestyle changes, rather than a quick fix diet that doesn't work in the long term.

"Liz is doing really well. She's made some really big improvements," she says.

"She's lost weight, she's feeling really positive. But it is because she has now got a healthier lifestyle rather than being on a diet."

Michelle adds that the key to achieving success with anyone who wants to become more healthy is patience and support.

"I think it is about making people feel comfortable, and not demanding that they make changes. I think a lot of people struggle with lifestyle changes, and they feel nervous."

"We are understanding and encouraging, rather than forcing people to eat loads of lettuce."

"Some of my family members have had heart attacks, and I wanted to be able to give something back from what I have learnt."

And Liz has nothing but praise for Michelle's professionalism.

"They are extremely helpful and friendly. I would recommend anybody to give it a go," she says.

"There is no pressure, they just give you help and encouragement."

INFORMATION BOX

Many people have difficulty changing to a healthier way of life, or don't know where to start.

Rochdale's health trainers can help you make the first steps.

They can set up an action plan to help you on the right path towards giving up smoking, taking more exercise, eating more healthily or whatever it is you want to achieve.

Health trainers are based at the following addresses:

Rochdale Centre of Diversity, Dean House, Station Road, Rochdale OL11 1DS
RoFTRA, 14/16 Newgate, Rochdale, OL16 1BA

CVS Rochdale, 156/158 Drake Street, Rochdale, OL16 1PX
Health Living Initiative, Rochdale, 2 West Street, Rochdale

New Heart for Heywood, 156/158 Drake Street, Rochdale, OL16 1PX

For more information about the health trainer scheme, call 0161 655 1739.

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