

Media release

For immediate release
8 May 2009

MPs join Red2Green to celebrate European achievement

David Howarth MP and James Paice MP are joining Red2Green ⁽¹⁾ at an exhibition to celebrate the outcome of the '**Be all you can be**' project; a two-year collaboration between this leading Cambridgeshire disability charity and partners in France, Italy and Germany ⁽²⁾. The exhibition is being held at Red2Green's offices in Swaffham Bulbeck on Saturday 9th May.

The '**Be all you can be**' project was a learning partnership across the four countries looking at educational opportunities for young people with disabilities, and how to support them into work or on to further education ⁽³⁾. Staff and learners took part in four exchange visits to get a better understanding of each other's education systems. They then examined the possibilities of a curriculum plan, with each partner creating a different teacher training module aimed at supporting learners with specific disabilities.

Red2Green's contribution was to create a module for teachers to raise their awareness of working with young people with autistic spectrum conditions, particularly Aspergers Syndrome ⁽⁴⁾. People with this disability often have problems securing work because they find it hard to comprehend social rules which govern the workplace, so Red2Green also created a presentation to offer guidance and support to potential bosses.

David Botwright has undiagnosed Asperger Syndrome which resulted in him having depressive mental health difficulties. He has become a learner and volunteer at Red2Green. He took part in the exchange visits and said: "This project has been a real eye-opener for me, and I've personally learnt so much about how people with disabilities are taught elsewhere in Europe. I took my very first flight and also had the chance to experience the culture and sample the food – something I never thought I'd do".

At the final meeting on Saturday 9th May, representatives from each of the countries will be evaluating the success of the project and looking at how to encourage colleges and universities to use the learning materials they produced.

ENDS

Notes to editors:

(1) Red2Green runs projects across Cambridgeshire providing leisure, educational and work opportunities for over 600 people with a wide range of disabilities and those facing disadvantage, including mental health problems, learning disabilities, physical disabilities and autistic spectrum conditions.

(2) The European partners are:



France

GRETA de Saint-Dié,
14 Rue Thurin 88100,
Saint-Dié des Vosges

Kolping-Bildungswerk

Germany

Kolping-Bildungswerk Wuerttemberg
e.V.
Bildungszentrum Schwaebisch
Gmuend, Graf-von-Soden-Str. 7,
73527 Schwaebisch Gmuend



Italy

Pitagora Secondary School
Via Sandro Pertini,
87036 Rende

(3) The **Be all you can be project** is Grundtvig programme, funded by the European Commission.

(4) Asperger's Syndrome is a relatively recently recognised life-long disability. People with Asperger's Syndrome can be highly intelligent but with low inter-personal skills, which causes great difficulty with social communication, relationships and flexibility. They perceive the world differently and lack the ability to pick-up the every-day rules of social interaction, and consequently fail to thrive in the formal school environment, at work and in social situations. Most are isolated, are branded as 'weird', have suffered bullying and are often at risk of offending or being abused. This often leads to anxiety and depression.

Red2Green has an established Aspirations programme designed to support young people and adults with autistic spectrum conditions to prepare themselves with the social skills and strategies for independent living and the world of work.

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