

Case Study

Inspirational Mum Wins Top Award

A former drug addict who fought back from life on the streets to win custody of her son has been named as the winner of a coveted prize for exceptional adult learners.

Andrea Taylor (34) has been named as the eastern region winner of the **'Adult Learners Week Open College Network (OCN) 25th Anniversary Award 2007'**. To mark the 25th anniversary of the OCN and the 20th anniversary of the National Open College Network (NOCN)

The panel of five judges unanimously agreed that Andrea was an ideal candidate to receive the unique award for the way she has used learning to visibly improve her life and to help others.

"It is difficult to put into words what adult learning means to me!"

Andrea's childhood was traumatic; her dyslexia went undetected and school responded to her inability to concentrate by moving her around the system. Her eventual decline into drugs and alcohol led to Andrea living rough until the vulnerability of her situation made her determined to start the long journey towards a better life for her and her child.



Tim Pope from The Blenheim Project nominated Andrea for the award because of the huge barriers she has successfully overcome to help herself and so many other people.

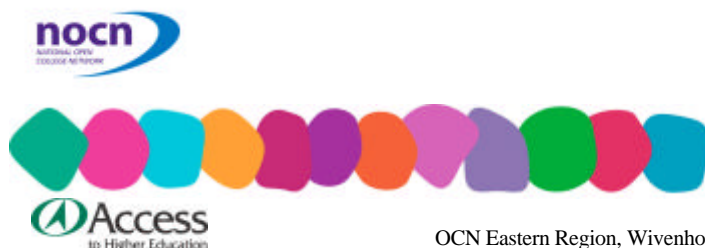
Andrea has put her learning to good use with clients and peers at the Blenheim Project. As a street drugs agency, the Project is often the first time that an addict has used any service. Andrea helps these people to find their own path and helps them with a range of problems, all as a volunteer.

Clearly delighted to have won the award, Andrea said: *"I decided to return to learning as means to integrate back into society, and as I started to gain confidence and skills it became a route to a career and to provide for my son."*

"Had it not been for the many agencies that provide for adult learners, I would not be the person I am today."

Karan Green, Chief Executive of the National Open College Network, said:

"Over the last 25 years, the Open College Network has helped transform the lives of tens of thousands of people across the UK whose skills might otherwise not have been recognised."



The **Diversity** of Learning