

Trading Places Newsletter April 2016



Trading Places is a way for us to increase our efforts to create sustainable work and employment opportunities for people unable to manage mainstream opportunities. We have invited senior executives to work alongside our workforce as colleagues so that they go back to their companies excited at the prospect of doing something sustainable. By us getting commercial work it gives us the means to have control over our future without having to depend on funding it also helps us provide employment opportunities and on the job training for people who have been excluded from the mainstream job market due to mental health or other disadvantages.



Helen Wilson Director of Social Value Circle Housing

"I thoroughly enjoyed my morning at Abbeilles, it was a pleasure to spend time with Luigi and his team and learn more about the support First Step Trust provides to people who are in a disadvantaged position when trying to access mainstream employment opportunities. The morning reinforced for me why I do the job I do, which is to support people to access opportunities and help them get ahead. I can see there are many synergies and potential partnerships between organisations like Circle Housing and FST and I look forward to exploring these further." - **Helen Wilson, Director of Social Value Circle Housing**



Denis O'Rourke, Assistant Director Integrated Commissioning, Lambeth CCG

"I really enjoyed my brief time at Abbeilles, the team were really helpful showing me the ropes and teaching me how to prepare various dishes. It was a great reminder of how important work is for us all, giving us a sense of worth and value. Most people given the opportunity and support can work. We clearly need to do much more together to enable this to happen." - **Denis O'Rourke, Assistant Director Integrated Commissioning (Mental Health), Lambeth CCG**



Avnish Savjani Partner Buzzcott Chartered Accountants

"After working with First Step Trust over a number of years the Trading Places experience gave me a deeper understanding of the work that FST does, I was very impressed. It was also a very enjoyable experience, thank you." - **Avnish Savjani Partner Buzzcott Chartered Accountants**



Karen Hooper, Lambeth Collaborative Journalist and Carers' Representative

"It was an inspiring morning and a great opportunity to go behind the scenes at Abbeilles after years of enjoying Lambeth Collaborative breakfasts and carers' Christmas festivities there. What a great, welcoming team. I was moved by Sean who shared the secrets of the stuffed peppers and illustrated how hard work, volunteering and determination got him the job of chef. Chief Luigi too outlined an incredible family story as we baked savoury muffins (Dave's recipe and complimented by Denis O'Rourke's chilli jam). Big thanks to First Step Trust's Abbeilles... a special place that puts hope and opportunity on the menu." - **Karen Hooper, Lambeth Collaborative Journalist and Carers' Representative**



Charlie Mullins OBE CEO of Pimlico Plumbers

"I really enjoyed my day at First Step Trust / SMaRT Garage Services. I enjoyed working with the team of trainees and Bob. SMaRT Garage Services provide real work experience for real people who have real determination to succeed. The garage is a really exciting and vibrant workplace" - **Charlie Mullins, OBE CEO of Pimlico Plumbers**



Denise Holle Investment Director Numbers for Good

“Spending the morning with Luigi, Anthony and their lovely team at Abbevilles was definitely the highlight of my working week. What a pleasure to help out with the baking while getting better acquainted with the people and methods of First Step Trust. It is a very impressive operation. Consuming the results of our labours was quite satisfying too - in particular, the lemon semi-freddo, cheese biscuits and chili jam. The biscuits were also hugely popular at my office where I shared them around upon returning. Now everyone at Numbers for Good wants to visit Abbevilles!” - **Denise Holle, Investment Director, Numbers for Good**



Harsha Savjani Buzzcott Chartered Accountants



Lisa Cunningham, Community Investment and Employee Volunteering Director BITC

“I hugely enjoyed getting into the nuts and bolts of how a busy, community-focused garage operates in its local area. My day spent at SMaRT was fascinating and it was wonderful to hear about the employment support on offer to local people to return to the work place. It’s reaffirmed my belief that companies can find commercial ways to engage with people in the communities in which they do business. Wholly inspirational and I can now change the tyre on my car.” - **Lisa Cunningham, Community Investment and Employee Volunteering Director BITC**



Matthew Pennycook MP for Greenwich and Woolwich

“I was really inspired by the opportunities that SMaRT garages provide to those who would otherwise face exclusion from the workplace. The supportive environment they foster is helping those in need get a foothold in the jobs market, get their careers on track and achieve their full potential. I thoroughly enjoyed my morning as an apprentice mechanic at the First Step Trust garage in Woolwich learning how to change tyres and how to replace a brake cable and I’d encourage anyone to have a go.” – **Matthew Pennycook, MP for Greenwich and Woolwich**



Cllr Jacqui Dyer Vice Chair, Overview and Scrutiny Lambeth

“The quality and standards at FST are very high it’s a model that needs to be replicated elsewhere. It gives so much benefits to the workforce that are engaged in this kind of space. It’s a valid source of employment within the borough or any place they operate. Trading Places has reinforced the value of this approach to work and work ethic. They are training people to actually be more confident in operating within a work environment and equipping people with skills to do so to a high standard. So for me doing Trading Places has just reinforced that First Step Trust is about empowering people.” - **Cllr Jacqui Dyer Vice Chair, Overview and Scrutiny, Lambeth**



Claire Mulry Stakeholder Relationship Manager Small Business Saturday UK

“I had a fantastic day at the SMaRT garage in Woolwich working on Owen. The team were so welcoming and patient. I learned a lot and was so impressed with the quality, professionalism (and cleanliness!) of the garage.” - **Claire Mulry, Stakeholder Relationship Manager, Small Business Saturday UK**