



Sellafield Ltd

Sellafield News

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Michael's made of the Wright stuff

Have you ever wondered what it would be like not to be able to say your own name, ring for a taxi or order food at a restaurant?

Michael Wright, a programme control assistant, Effluents and Encapsulation plants, has had a stammer since he was a boy and was unable to do all those things until a year ago when he joined 'The Starfish Project'.

Last year, Michael came across the 'Star Letter' in one of our publications from Mark Murphy, a contractor working at Sellafield. Mark had a stammer and sought help from The Starfish Project, a non profit organisation specialising in helping people who stammer.

Figures show that one percent of the adult population stammers, around 459,000 adults in Britain, with male stammerers outnumbering females four to one.

Inspired with how Mark had progressed, Michael booked himself on the three day course, run by Anne and David Blight. The project shows sufferers how to control their stammer as there isn't a cure for the condition.

"It was as if a light had been turned on inside me", said Michael.



Star Man – Michael Wright

"You're not just a number on the course; you are made to feel like an extension of a family with everyone relating and bonding with each other. The course prides itself on treating you like an individual."

On returning from the course Michael contacted Carl Lewthwaite, Sellafield Ltd disability advisor, for support and the pair are in the process of setting up a support group on the Sellafield site.

Carl said: "This is great news for Michael and other stammer sufferers. I was very impressed with the drive and determination Michael has shown throughout his training."

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SPRS donations

Two local West Cumbrian groups -- West Cumberland Hospital Urology Department and Jericho Primary School, Whitehaven -- have each benefited to the tune of £750, after being nominated for an award by members of the Sellafield Product Residues Store (SPRS) Project Team. The donation had been made possible as part of the 'Target Zero' Scheme that has operated on the SPRS since September 2005.

The scheme involves all of the contracting companies and Sellafield Limited contributing £250. The Target Zero fund then presents a total of £1,500 to two local worthy causes, chosen by the SPRS workforce.

Damian Burns, Sellafield Ltd, nominated the West Cumberland Hospital Urology Department for the award. The donation of £750 will be used to re-furbish the Urology Department in order to make the ward a more comfortable and welcoming place to stay for the patients.

Damian said: "Last year, the SPRS Project ran a 'Safety Week' at which a variety of safety related presentations, briefings, competitions and activities were held. Amongst these, Brian Walker, one of the nurses at the Urology department, volunteered to come to site and carry out a number of very successful presentations to our workforce on Prostate Cancer. The SPRS workforce felt that nominating the Urology Ward for this award would be the best way of saying a well deserved thank you".

Nominated by Debra Thurogood, who is employed by Gleeds, the donation to Jericho Primary School will be used to help towards the ongoing cost of classroom furniture, including the purchase of tables and chairs for the pupils to use.

Debra said: "With the vast majority of the schools budget being spent on educational items, the school will often fundraise to upgrade the furniture. This money will go a long way to help with some desperately needed refurbishment to the classrooms".



Nurses Brian Walker and Val Wright receive a cheque from SPRS project personnel

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"This is also another example of how you can learn to control your disability and not let it control you. Michael has received great support from his line management during this time. Since Michael has been on the course, we have had some interest from other employees. If we can get this group up and running, I am sure Michael will be a great inspiration to others.

Since coming back from the course, Michael has wanted to push himself out of his comfort zones, and joined 'West Cumbrian Speakers Club' to learn and master the art of public speaking and to push the boundary of his new found confidence."

Michael's next steps include speaking on local radio and then television!

"If, through this article, I can connect to just one person who stammers it will be very worthwhile. I also wanted to highlight that Thursday 22 October 2009 is National Stammering Awareness Day."

For further information on the Starfish Project please go to www.starfishproject.co.uk

VIP Visits to Sellafield

07.10.09: Cumbria County Councillors

08.10.09: Tony Fountain, CEO NDA

09.10.09: Cumbria Tourist Board

For all media enquiries and photographic requests please contact:

019467 85836/85838/85839/85848

Editor:

John Reynolds (85848)

Written by:

Karl Connor (85842)

Andrew Pearson (85838)

Claire Fawcett (85013)

Got a story? Let us know. Please call X85842

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