

SCOTLAND

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**Boatbuilding:  
passing on  
the craft**

**Surviving  
loss**

**TV winner celebrates  
People's Millions  
success**

**Change  
your life**

HOW YOUR LOTTERY MONEY IS TRANSFORMING PEOPLE'S LIVES

# Be a sport

At age 13, Vikki Newlands was surly and difficult to talk to. She had decided that skipping school was a much better idea than turning up. Now things could not be more different. Taking up sport has given her direction in her life.

**Z**esty 15 year old Vikki Newlands has a smile on her face. She is delighted to be a role model for children sharing her enthusiasm for sport at Invergordon Leisure Centre. A spell on Channel Four's Brat Camp could not have led to a more startling transformation.

Vikki recalls how desperate she felt 18 months ago. "I felt that I had lost my way with nowhere to turn. I'd been excluded from school and I wasn't bothered about it.

"I had been a keen runner but I stopped enjoying sport. I didn't know what I wanted to do or who I wanted to do it with. Nothing interested me and I was heading the right way to get myself into serious trouble.

"Then in September 2004, I was approached to take part in a new sports programme. I was a bit reluctant at first and didn't think it was for me.

"But as soon as I got there I knew taking part was the right thing to do. It was great. I enjoyed myself for the first time in ages."

Vikki took part in the three-month Positive Options Programme (POP) where she got to try a new activity or sport every week. She tried all kinds of things she had never done before: go karting, learning to canoe and making, writing and producing short films.

The POP scheme is part of the Active Steps Project, funded by the Big Lottery Fund and administered by the children's charity, NCH Scotland. It works with vulnerable and excluded young people aged 8 to 16 offering them support, encouraging them to try new things and challenging them to make plans for their future.

From the beginning Vikki stood out because of her positive attitude and her willingness to address her issues. She quickly became a popular member of the group.

"Over the three months we tried all kinds of activities. I think the scariest was learning to abseil and I was most surprised that I enjoyed playing badminton so much; I've

carried on playing it.

"We learned how to cook healthily and had all sorts of talks. A guitarist in Ozzy Osborne's band came along to talk to us about drug abuse. That was the point when I realised that life had more to offer me than I had presumed. I had to think about my future, even about going back to school."

Since completing the POP programme Vikki has won a Junior Sports Leader Award which involved working through a structured programme over a three-month period including some voluntary work with a local primary school.

Vikki said: "I learned about the rules of lots of different sports and how to teach them and pass on



Vikki Newlands



Vikki Newlands coaches sports classes at Invergordon Leisure Centre

various skills. Playing and teaching other kids to play has really made me interested in sport again.”

Vikki is now taking part in a six-week activity programme set up between NCH and Careers Scotland and is doing so well she is mentoring other less confident young people.

Grahame Cooper, who co-ordinated the project for NCH Scotland, has witnessed the turnaround in Vikki’s life. He said: “This is a wonderful success story. Because we have been so impressed with Vikki’s ability we have involved her in helping us to set up and run new groups.

“In the long-term we would like to

involve her in the structure of this programme with a view to offering her work experience and paid work.”

This recognition is key to Vikki’s self-esteem, but the hard work and determination to change has been down to her. “My life has changed so much in the last 18 months. I now know I would like to get a job teaching sport to disabled children and I am also thinking of going to college,” she said.

“So many more options are now open to me. At one point I thought all I had to look forward to was a crappy job and not much else. Now I know I have a direction and something to offer.”

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Jim Telford repairing a curtain pole

## The niceman cometh

Community First in Moray is helping old, housebound people to get jobs done around the house for free.

**W**hen a simple repair to the washing machine can cost upward of £300, picking up the phone to ask for a helping hand around the house can be a pricey business. And for pensioners on low incomes getting vital repairs done can mean going without heat, light or food just to be able to afford to ask someone to come in and change a light bulb, put up a shelf or fix a doorbell.

It is a situation housebound Eddie Wilson, 82, knows all too well. When his electric fire stopped working he had to find someone he could trust to fix it fast.

"I was lucky I knew all about the

Community First project. It meant that I knew I could give them a call and not only would they send someone round I could trust to see what the problem was but they'd fix it for me as well if they could. What's more I wouldn't have to pay.

"It's a wonderful idea and my electric fire was fixed the same day, which in January in Speyside makes all the difference."

Eddie's fire actually only needed a new fuse in the plug but at 82 Eddie's shaky hands and failing eyesight would have struggled with even this simple task. It was to help people like Eddie that April Charlesworth decided to set up Community First in Moray back in 1997.

April, 41, first became aware of major problems pensioners and disabled people were facing when an elderly gentleman came into her office and asked if she knew of anyone who could fix the light in his living room.

April says: "It was over the Christmas holidays, and the gentleman had been sitting in the dark for nearly eight days. It was so sad. This made me think of other cases where disadvantaged people might be in need of similar basic services.

"So with the help of three local volunteers I set up Community First in Moray, a voluntary handyperson's service in Forres to help disadvantaged, elderly and

disabled people with small tasks around their homes. Now, thanks to a grant of £38,659 from the Big Lottery Fund we can extend our services to even more rural areas such as Tomintoul and Speyside.”

Working alongside April is Community First development officer David Townsend, 53.

“Normally we are asked to do small jobs such as changing light bulbs, fixing curtain rails or fitting smoke alarms,” he said. “They sound like small jobs but if you’re old they can be daunting.

“Recently, we visited an elderly lady to fix her door. When we arrived we realised that she was disabled, lived alone, and was unable to cook for herself. She didn’t have a working freezer and often no easy way of preparing hot meals. By repairing her old freezer it meant Annie, 83, could now stock up on a variety of meals. This is one of hundreds of examples where our work can make a big difference to the lives of people who do not have



**Volunteers from the Hands On project help around the home**

the means to use mainstream and often costly services.”

Kevin Richards, 68, is a volunteer handyman at the Hands On project in East Kilbride. This runs a 20-strong team of volunteers who help bridge a gap in this service for elderly and disabled people in and around East Kilbride.

Kevin loves his work and is always looking for new ways to help those who need it most. He said: “I come from an engineering background and love using my hands and this was an ideal way for me to continue to use my skills and help people at the same time once I’d retired.

“I generally do anything that needs doing: from fixing taps, putting up hinges, to dismantling units. It keeps me fit and active and, like the people I help, I also get a lot out of it.”

Kevin’s wife Carole, 64, is also a

volunteer at the project and provides a befriending service to elderly and disabled people.

“Due to certain health problems, I can’t do any DIY so my role as a volunteer involves visiting elderly or homebound people and making sure that they are doing fine.

“It’s heartbreaking when older people who have once been so vital and busy become incredibly lonely and simply have a need for company and someone to sit and chat with.

“One lady I visit regularly is 82 years old. She lives on her own and is finding it very difficult to cope with things after the death of her husband a few years ago. She doesn’t have any friends and family nearby and is a typical example of many people I visit for whom the only person they have any contact with is me.”

# The last of the master craftsmen

**P**eter Matheson believed he had left his boat building days behind when he left Scarfiskerry but his love affair with the industry was destined to continue.

For the last seven years a rough and tumble yard on the Govan Clydeside has been home to Peter, 59, and his wife Pat, 57, since they decided to leave their Caithness home and retired to the city 300 miles away in 1999. And this is where they carry on the craft of traditional boat building.

"I'd hardly even arrived here when the guys at Gal-Gael asked me if I would help them out and teach boat building for them. It's in my blood so how could I refuse?" said Peter.

Thanks to his connections with Gal-Gael and help with funding from a variety of sources, including Awards from All, a year later Peter went on to set up Clydeside

Traditional Boat Builders to pass on his much beloved trade to young, unemployed city folk.

"I've made over 150 boats in my time and every one of them has a different character and style. I've always thought it's a wonderful craft and it's sad to think that there



Ross Sutherland at work on one of the boats

aren't many of us around any more keeping the traditional ways going.

"That's why I started again – that and so I could help people who need to feel a sense of pride – even if it's just in a boat."

Now Peter and his team of volunteers are among the last few craftsmen in Scotland who are keeping the skills and spirit of this wonderful trade alive.

Ross Sutherland, 25, first met Peter in 2002. At the time he

**"When I first arrived I had no interest in boat building and could not tell the back of a boat from the front! After a week here, I was raring to go."**



Peter Matheson hard at work on one of his traditional boats

was unemployed and came to the shipyard as a novice volunteer. Two and a half years on, he is now fully qualified in the trade of traditional boat building.

“When I first arrived I had no interest in boat building and could not tell the back of a boat from the front! After a week here, I was raring to go.”

Ross is now starting a career in boat building with Corpach

Boatbuilders in Fort William. “Who knows?” he said. “One day I might even be able to set up my own shipyard.”

And what about Peter? Will he be swapping his tools for that retirement he came to Glasgow for? Unlikely.

“At the moment I’m still enjoying it too much,” he said. “It’s very satisfying for me to create things to my own design and pass the

skills on to the younger generation. It’s also great to know that people like Ross will continue in the boat building trade.

“I’m proud to have been a part of so many people’s lives. Whenever I visit boat shows I smile to myself because I can tell immediately from the wiring, the cutting, to the welding exactly which ones are built by my apprentices. It’s a great feeling.”

# Unmasking your feelings

**Richmond's Hope helps children deal with bereavement. This is one family's journey through grief.**

Meeting the Craig family, you are immediately struck by the strong bond that mum Roseanne and dad Davie share with their five children. A family who appear to be complete. But seven years ago they were devastated by the death of their son and brother, Peter, who took his own life. It is a day none of them will forget, but they have found hope where once there was none.

"Peter was only 12 when he died," said his mother Roseanne, 37. "It was a huge shock to the whole family and I think we all experienced our own feelings of guilt and blame. The problem was we just couldn't talk about it as a family at that time." Dad Davie, 34, added: "Finding someone for the children to talk to was impossible until we found Richmond's Hope."

Richmond's Hope is a unique service which provides support for

children aged four to 12 who have been deeply affected by traumatic bereavement. It operates from Richmond Craigmillar Church in Edinburgh and has helped hundreds of children to express their grief following the sudden and tragic death of someone they love.

After Peter's suicide, Roseanne and Davie were almost at breaking point. Their children had all been traumatised by their loss but it was middle son, seven year old David, who was displaying the most erratic signs of grief.

"David was very young when Peter died," said Roseanne. "He definitely reacted the worst out of all the family and his behaviour changed over night. He was really angry all the time and began hurting himself. Eventually he was excluded from school and we just didn't know where to turn."

That is when a music club, which ran out of Richmond Craigmillar Church, came to the rescue. The

aim of the club was to help children rediscover their innocence and to express their feelings of loss outside of the family. Children were encouraged to sing songs and act in plays to share their feelings. "That was fun," said David, who is now 13. "It was good to have



10-year-old Jordan Craig holds up his mask



The Craig family

something else to think about. It helped me to focus on other things. One of the first project workers to meet David was Donna Hastings, who has worked with all the Craig children over the past three years. "When I first met David he was very angry," she said. "He had so many questions about Peter's death. Why had it happened? Was it his fault? Was the same thing going to happen to him?"

It became apparent to project workers at the church that there were many other children facing the same inner turmoil. So, in 2003, the small music club was transformed into Richmond's Hope – a child bereavement centre which is now open every week of the year. And the service is now in such high demand that it is to be expanded to two other sites in Edinburgh with the help of the Big Lottery Fund.

Jordan Craig was only four when he was devastated by Peter's death. Now 10, he has come to rely on Richmond's Hope as he gets older and wants to talk about and remember his brother. Jordan said: "I like coming here. I get to talk and play. I have just made a volcano which I filled with sad feelings."

The volcano is one of the many play and creative art activities that project workers at Richmond's Hope use to help children express their grief. Donna said: "When a child has someone die they are more likely to act out their distress rather than speak about it. So we use a range of play activities to help children express how they are feeling. For example, they can make memory jars where they associate different colours with different memories, they can make and wear masks which allow them to express feelings they show or

feelings they hide from people, or papier mache volcanoes which encourage them not to let their feelings build up inside."

It was these pent up emotions that six years ago took David so close to the edge. But now, thanks to the love and dedication of staff at Richmond's Hope, this once angry and withdrawn young boy has turned into a confident teenager who now prefers to remember the happy times with his brother. "I loved going out with Peter on his BMX," he said. "We had lots of fun together and I miss him. I've put all my happy memories in my memory jar so I don't forget him."

That is why Richmond's Hope is so special. Lives have been changed, families have been rebuilt and children like David have a future full of hope, happiness and love to look forward to.

## Gaining Momentum



Marnie Thomson today

**M**arnie Thomson was 11 years old when her life changed forever. Like most girls, she loved playing outside with her friends and had lots to look forward to. But a blood clot in her brain left her temporarily paralysed and in a wheelchair.

Marnie, now 28, said: "I was in hospital in Edinburgh for three months following my stroke. I had to use a wheelchair for a while and when I went back to school I found it really difficult as I'd missed so much. I felt as if I didn't fit in and was an outsider."

After leaving school, Marnie attended Borders College and studied office administration but found it difficult to find and hold down a job.

She said: "I had a few part-time jobs but found I couldn't stick with them. I then went back to college to study health and social care but I was still having difficulties. I had no confidence and couldn't socialise with such a large group."

That is when Marnie found Momentum, an organisation that

encourages disabled people to identify and achieve their goals. They have an Integrate programme, which offers counselling and information to children and adults with acquired brain injury.

"The support I received there was fantastic," said Marnie. "My confidence increased so much that I was keen to move on to employment."

In 2003, Marnie progressed to Momentum's Pathways programme, a full-time rehabilitation programme which supports adults to return to work, further education or training following a brain injury. Staff help people to manage the effects of their brain injury by giving training in memory skills, concentration, and confidence-building. Coaching is given in interview and job seeking skills, and work placements are arranged to help people prepare for returning to the workplace.

In 2004, an award from the Big Lottery Fund enabled Momentum

to extend the Pathways programme to the Scottish Borders. Marnie, who lives in the village of Tweedbank, said: "Before I started the Pathways programme I didn't have any structure to my week, so even just getting into the routine of attending the centre from Monday to Friday every week was a big step."

"As well as learning new computer skills and taking part in group and one-to-one sessions, I began to realise that I had a lot to offer to other people."

A work placement followed and, in July 2005, Marnie became a part-time employment support worker. She now works three days a week at Momentum's brain injury service based in Kelso.

Marnie said: "A big bonus for me was the opportunity to meet new people and socialise – people who faced similar problems – and to be able to share those experiences."

"I've also realised that if I can come through a brain injury and look forward to the future, then anyone can."

# And the winner is...



Sitting on the edge of her sofa Grace Martin was finding it difficult to concentrate on anything the news presenter was saying.

She recalls those nervous moments. "The television was turned on but as far as I was concerned there was no one at home.

"Then about halfway through Scotland Today the presenter moved on to the winner of the phone vote for a £50,000 Lottery grant.

"While we knew that ours was a good project and thought we stood a good chance, once it came down to waiting 24 hours for the results I'd turned into a gibbering wreck.

"My project is a small local concern and we were up against a big national charity – no one locally but us thought we stood a chance of winning. People had been passing me in the street and saying 'Well done, hen, for putting Wishaw on the map but you stand no chance – but I'll vote for you

anyway'. In the end it was those votes that counted."

When, at last, the announcement came, the news took a moment to sink in. Then the phone began to ring and Grace's world began to go a little bit mad.

"I had a crazy 24 hours with friends, family and colleagues on the phone," she said. "We couldn't believe that we'd won but we had

and it meant that our little project in a community park would now be able to go ahead."

After a wait over the winter months work begins on the Greenhead Moss Earthship this April. For a group who were delighted just to make it to the shortlist this is a TV vote that has made their Lottery dream of a unique eco home come true.

Grace Martin



## Bigtimes Scotland

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The Big Lottery Fund seeks to minimise its negative environmental impact and only uses proper sustainable resources

## Our mission

We are committed to bringing real improvements to communities and the lives of people most in need.

## Our values

We have identified seven values that underpin our work: fairness; accessibility; strategic focus; involving people; innovation; enabling; additional to government.

The Big Lottery Fund is committed to valuing diversity and promoting equality of opportunity, both as a grantmaker and employer. The Big Lottery Fund will aim to adopt an inclusive approach to ensure grant applicants and recipients, stakeholders, job applicants and employees are treated fairly.

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Clydside Traditional Boat Builders