



# the **RESPECT** project

## Graduation Evening Speech by a participant in Thurrock Project Spring 2016

This whole journey has honestly been like a giant roller coaster ride of emotions. We have all had our ups and downs and a couple of loops. When the ride first started off we were scared and felt sick but once we were finished we were smiling. I have gained so much from it that will last a lifetime. All the things I have learnt from this project I never knew I would ever learn or skills I never knew I'd ever need. At first I was nervous and not too sure what to expect. I may have not been very prepared but I was willing to dive in head first. When the ride began my emotions became overwhelmed and I honestly thought about calling it a day and going home. But with the devoted help from not only new found friends but also from amazing staff members, who made sure we were safely strapped in, I found confidence and a positive ready to go attitude I never knew I had in me. The greatest thing about this ride was not knowing what to expect and the whole point was to step outside of your comfort zone, trusting your own mind to guide you through until you conquered your challenge.



I can speak for all of us in saying that we are very proud of each other and are also very thankful for all the support. We all completed challenges we thought were impossible and difficult. But we can say we accomplished our challenges, faced our fears and made it out still smiling. A roller coaster is similar to a mountain in the way that getting to the top is optional but getting down is mandatory. Even through the tears and pain we have, all gained an amazing experience and extraordinary knowledge, but also confidence we may have all needed. Thank you to all staff members who helped us accomplish this, but also the staff who put this together, because without you all we would not be here right now to feel this sense of achievement. Thank you friends for helping me accomplish this and also for believing in me.

Just one last thing is a quote I believe we should all remember and take home with us tonight. 'There is only one thing that makes a dream impossible to achieve; the fear of failure'. But we didn't fail, we achieved.



# the **RESPECT** project

An alternative education programme for Year 9 students to re-engage them with their own education



## **BOYS AND GIRLS CLUBS OF WALES**

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**Mel Williams**  
 Student Achievement Leader Y10  
 The Grays School Media Arts College

*"M was part of the Respect Project earlier this year whilst he was still a Year 9 student. Since Year 7 it was clear that M found social situations difficult and as a result his behaviour became problematic. These behavioural difficulties continued despite offering intensive support strategies, and M was frequently excluded from school and his educational future was looking bleak.*

*Despite this M was, at times, a considerate and helpful student who responded positively to responsibility.*

*So when the opportunity arose to send some student onto the 'Respect' project M was an ideal candidate. Since then M has completely turned himself around: M has not been excluded from school and was the top student in the whole school for a marked improvement in his 'attitude to learning' grades. M is now a Year 10 student and although there are still some social issues, he is now focused upon his learning and enjoying being part of the school community. I do believe that M's attitude has completely changed.*

*He now believes in himself and others and as a result has more confidence. I feel that these changes were influenced by his time on the Respect Project. M has learnt how to control his emotions better, he has learnt how to work as part of a team and apply these skills to everyday life and he also appears happier within himself.*

*I would like to thank everyone who was and is involved with this project, it is a worthwhile and effective programme which has provided measurable results.*

**How does it work?**

Each project focuses in one district, and follows these steps...

**1. Recruitment by Teachers**

Three schools from that district are invited to each nominate twenty of their Year 9 students to join the programme, who will benefit from an opportunity to excel in a non-school setting

**2. An Activity Day during School Time**

All 60 students attend an outdoor activity day where they are assessed on the way they approach the physical and mental challenges put before them.

**3. Invitation to Continue**

20 of the students are invited to continue to the next stage. For those not invited back, teachers are debriefed with the reasons.

**4. A Second Activity Day during School Time**

The 20 students complete a second activity day as a group. These students are assessed on how well they listen to instructions, show a willingness to get involved and work as a team.

**5. Life Skills Evening Course**

15 students are invited to take part in 8 weeks of weekly evening sessions in a local community centre or youth club. Transport is provided. Sessions start with a personal contract and cover self-respect, personal challenges, relationship management, teamwork, leadership, communication skills, decision-making, drug awareness, healthy eating, local opportunities.

**6. Week long residential**

This is the opportunity for the young people to use the personal and social skills they have built up to take on individual and team challenges during the week away. The experience of climbing mountains and living away from home in an alien environment and sees the young people pushed outside their comfort zones and ultimately achieving more than they ever thought possible.

**7. Graduation Evening**

With local dignitaries.

**8. Debriefing to Teachers & Parents**

Including ongoing monitoring.