



MERLIN NEWS

The Merlin Venture Ltd. Newsletter



Welcome to the Christmas edition of Merlin News, the newsletter bringing you all of the latest information on Merlin Venture and our businesses.

Merlin Recognises Star Staff

At Merlin we like to recognise hard work and achievement in our staff. In the new year we will be having a regular Star employee every month. To celebrate the launch of this scheme our first awards are for three of our staff who have performed above and beyond their current role to promote Merlin and the local community.

Danielle Wellard-Taylor is a trainee nursery nurse at Tiggy Winkles Pegasus Day Nursery, and she has organised a number of events for Tiggy Winkles and also for several charities throughout the year. Danielle will be leaving us in the new year to work in America, and our loss is the USA's gain.

Wendy Stokes is our Assistant Management Accountant and a resident of Castle Vale. Wendy has been involved with many community groups on Castle Vale including the 2005 group and the Community Advisory Group, regularly attending their meetings as both a resident and minute secretary, ensuring that the community is able to have its voice heard.

Barbara Lane is an administrator for Buster Werkenbak, working on the front line scheduling passengers and organising routes for the drivers. Throughout the year Barbara has assisted in the marketing of the Warwickshire service helping to develop new routes and increase passenger numbers throughout the year.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our staff for the great work that they have put in during the year.



L-R Danielle Wellard-Taylor, Wendy Stokes and Barbara Lane: star employees of the month

ILM Returns to Castle Vale

Merlin Recruitment and Enterprise are running a new Intermediate Labour Market with funding from the Birmingham City Council and the Castle Vale Endowment Trust Fund. We are working with people who have been out of work for six months or more and are having difficulty getting back into the workplace.

Working in partnership with local businesses we are able to provide clients with three to six months of paid work experience with the goal of a permanent position at the end.

Merlin has many years experience in managing ILM projects and we are delighted to be offering the facility again. The scheme enables businesses to reduce their risk when taking on new staff as up to half of their salary will be paid during the placement.

This service helps people to access work by providing an alternative to the mainstream agencies who may be unable to offer the personal one to one service that Merlin prides itself on.

For more information call Jacky Lynam at The Castle Vale Campus on: 0121 747 2200

New support for Enterprise across the Tyburn Ward

Merlin Venture is delighted to launch its new Enterprise service, funded through the Birmingham City Council co-finance programme. Throughout the entire Tyburn ward we will be able to support businesses, people planning to start their own business, people in work but on low incomes, and anyone who is unemployed and seeking work or training. For more information call Jennie Giryn on 0121 776 8880.

Merlin Enterprise is preparing to launch a number of business initiatives in the new year providing support to all sectors of industry. We will be providing training and support to help you develop your staff and recruit when you grow your business. If you are a local business keep your eyes open, we will be in touch soon.

Jobs and training programme helps over 600

Since we started offering our employment and training support services across the Erdington district in April 2005, no fewer than 613 unemployed residents have been signed onto the programme. Of these we have so far placed 115 into employment and a further 72 have undergone targeted training, which has dramatically improved their job prospects. We have also helped 31 youngsters from Stockland Green as part of an employability initiative funded by Birmingham City Council via the neighbourhood renewal fund, and many of these have moved onto training and employment. Our service is now targeting residents of the Tyburn ward as we have been successful in winning further co-finance contracts from BCC, and one of these is the Intermediate Labour Market.



The Merlin Recruitment and Enterprise team





FREE Christmas trips from Merlin Venture and the Fort Shopping Park

As an early Christmas present to Castle Vale residents, on 12th, 14th, 19th and 21st December the 696 community bus is running a special Christmas shopping service to the Fort Shopping Park between 6.00pm and 9.00pm. This service with support being provided by the Fort Shopping Park will be completely **FREE of charge** to all passengers.

"Many residents rely on the 696 community bus to travel to get everyday essentials that they would be unable to access without it. By providing this special service we hope that will help them with their Christmas shopping" Ian Gilbert Marketing Officer.



FREE Childcare for Christmas shoppers

To enable even more Castle Vale residents to take advantage of the free bus service, on the evenings of the 12th, 14th and 19th of December, Tiggy Winkles Daycare Nursery will be providing **FREE** childcare for children up to the age of 5 years old so that residents can relax and shop at their own pace in the knowledge that their children are still in safe hands. Places are very limited and must be booked in advance.



Merlin and Norman Laud Charity Raffle

Norman Laud are absolutely delighted to be the chosen charity of Merlin Venture to benefit from the Valley Travel Christmas raffle. The raffle will run up until the 22nd of December with all proceeds going directly to improve facilities available for the children at the centre. The Norman Laud Association are a registered charity, based in Sutton Coldfield. They offer their services to West Midlands children and adults with disabilities, and their families.

This year they will need to raise £150,000, which will be accomplished by a mixture of Fundraising Methods including seeking Community and Corporate support, organising events and making applications to various trusts and foundations. If you would like more information, please contact: Alison Johnson on: 0121 373 6860 or e-mail: alison.johnson@normanlaud.org.uk

A New Face for the New Year

It's always good to practice what you preach, which is why whenever we have a vacancy the first place we look is to candidates registered with Merlin Recruitment and Enterprise.

Michael Overton registered with us back in September and has recently become our new Community Engagement Officer. Michael is now responsible for developing even stronger partnerships within the Community, focusing on employment and training.

He will work with schools, community groups, council members and officers and other local organisations to ensure that the community has more of a say in the employment and training services that are provided.

"As a community activist for over 25 years and a lifelong Erdington resident, I have the opportunity to use my local knowledge to enhance the employment and training opportunities available." Michael Overton. If you are interested in participating in the community based Jobs and Training Steering Group call Michael on **0121 776 8880**



Michael Overton —Engagement Officer

New IT Lab available

Now available at the Castle Vale Community Campus is a brand new IT lab, which is **FREE** to use and available for everyone. Merlin Venture are offering the opportunity to build on existing skills and computers are available with a full range of professional software. The lab is designed for self-tuition with training available for some software packages. Facilities are limited and must be booked in advance to ensure availability. If you would like more information on the work we do with training in the community call **0121 747 2200** for details.



Jamie Todd (back) and Phil Byrne from Kick Start Productions

"With access to this equipment, starting up our DJ Workshops is so much easier for us. We are able to start our company officially with the right materials and are really looking forward to getting to grips with the software." Jamie Todd from Kick Start Productions making music in the IT Lab. **The IT lab will be open between 9.30am until 4.30pm Monday to Friday.**

Bath Store Sponsors Valley Travel Bus

Bath Store have just become the latest company to begin promoting themselves on our Valley Travel 696 Community Bus.

Bath Store have brought Designer Bathrooms at affordable prices to Castle Vale and are aware of the importance of using a recognisable service to promote their brand. Appearing on the 696 is an extremely cost effective and recognised way of contacting not just residents but the high volume of traffic that passes through the estate on a daily basis.

For more information on advertising on the community bus contact Gemma on **0121 776 8880**

The team at Merlin Venture would like to wish everybody a Happy Christmas and Prosperous 2007.

Merlin Venture is supported by many funding bodies including



Contact Information

If you would like any more information about Merlin Venture and any of the services we have to offer please contact us via:

Email:

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MERRY CHRISTMAS