

## John Ruskin College Awards Evening

### Successful start to the New Year

John Ruskin College Awards Evening was the first event organised by the college for 2009. It took place on 7th January at Fairfield Halls in Croydon where past and current students gathered together to celebrate all they achieved throughout the previous academic year.

The Awards Evening is an annual event held to celebrate the success that students have achieved and the efforts they have put into learning. However this year's awards evening was very special. It was exceptional because of us, the students, who face difficulties every single day but are diligently trying to develop our skills and knowledge through our education to prepare ourselves for the next stage of our lives!

Following the Principal's introduction and warm welcome, this year's event began with the presentation of the awards for the A+ Academy. Each academy presented their students with achievement awards and celebrated their success. Many of the students who had completed their studies at John Ruskin College last year were now attending university.



This year's entertainment was particularly impressive. The audience was amazed at the outstanding performances of all the students. Our Gospel Choir began the entertainment programme. The choir was formed this year as part of the college's enrichment programme. There are currently 24 members, led by Tosin Oluwafemi who is the Student Director. The audience thoroughly enjoyed the first ever performance of the choir when they sang 'Something Inside So Strong' by Labi Siffre. They were amazing!

Caleb Ayirebi, a student from the Business academy

who was awarded during the evening commented: 'The Awards Evening was remarkable. I got a stunning award for BTEC First Diploma Business and my contribution to Student Council. This award motivated me to work to the best of my ability, and has also inspired me to think about who I want to be in the future. It made me aware that you can achieve everything you set your mind on. The Awards Evening was a good one since we recognised the different talent we have at John Ruskin College and that shows that John Ruskin is 'the place to be'.'

The entertainment programme became even more impressive with the outstanding performances of the John Ruskin College Youth Dance Group, also part of the enrichment programme of the college. The Youth Dance Group is well known for their performances in various competitions and festivals, winning on several occasions.

The next entertainment act was unique and absolutely incredible. The flautist Rachael McPherson played 'If you go in, you're sure to win' by Arthur Sullivan accompanied by Felipe Rojas. This was an amazing duet which no one expected to hear - a pleasant surprise for the audience.

The ceremony continued with awards for excellent attendance and punctuality followed by the Best Learners' Awards. This is a very important category with last year's ceremony held in the House of Lords.

For the Best Learner's Award, each Academy nominates one student who they consider has been their best learner. John Ruskin College best learners

for the academic year 2007/2008 are: Iliia Itkin for the A+ Academy, Simon Darlington for the Business & IT Academy, John Adedoyin for the Creative Arts Academy, Lynnet Akol for the Health, Care and Early Years Academy, Kerri Wimbles for the Science and Sport Academy and finally Alisha Murray for the Increased Flexibility Programme. All these students earned congratulations and were given an award for their constant enthusiasm and hard work during the year which helped them achieve success and move on to higher education and career development.

*Continued on page 4*

## Vocational courses – the route to university

### John Ruskin College leads the way



'I have the world in my hands,' said Haya Ali, a 17-year-old student currently studying BTEC National Diploma in Business at John Ruskin College, following her acceptance of a place at Queen Mary University for a Business Management degree.

Haya, previously a student at Addington High School, began her studies at John Ruskin College by doing A Levels for two months but soon changed to the BTEC National Diploma. She found the BTEC National Diploma Business more exciting because of the coursework, the support of her teachers and the work experience that the course incorporated.

She added: 'Most people said I would not be able to get into university unless I did A Levels. My family wanted me to do A Levels so I wanted to make them proud. But I believe I made the better choice because I have achieved more than I would have if I did A Levels.'

Haya explained that she had chosen John Ruskin College because of the good reputation and the high achievement rates it is known for. She described her experience at John Ruskin College as being an extremely pleasant one especially because of the support she has received from her teachers and the friendly, safe environment she was able to study in.

She said: 'Their support is what motivates me. They explain every task well until we all understand it. We are all treated equally and no one feels left out.'

BTEC qualifications combine theory and practice and are delivered by teachers who have industrial and business experience. BTEC courses are assessed throughout the year (just like many university courses) and not through final exams. In 2008 the college sent 150 BTEC students to university.

Haya Ali will begin her studies in Business Management at Queen Mary University in September 2009. She aspires to work in a bank or estate agency when she graduates.

**Congratulations Haya!**

# Debate Club

The deceiving mind  
 You look in my face and lie  
 Living in a fool's paradise  
 I can see,  
 The economy's screaming  
 Recession the pressure  
 While Gordon Brown's  
 Saying we're going to make things better

I should know but somehow  
 The emotions  
 Put you first  
 Living ignorant  
 Reaching a point where  
 My breakeven is broken



Hot topic  
 why talk about things that really can't change?  
 but then are you  
 a Shepherd or just apart of the herd  
 falling back you say  
 you just observe

no sound  
 Opening up to  
 no sound, no voice  
 just

.....  
 see debate club is about speaking up  
 sharing your voice  
 we all have an opinion  
 about the now  
 but what's the cause?  
 C13, Fridays, 1.55  
 I don't need your applause

## Speak Up

By **Zunade Powell**,  
 BTEC National Diploma in Business

# Our Gospel Choir made us proud

Christy Martin from Guernsey Grove Community Project wrote to express her gratitude for the performance our Gospel Choir gave to the Guernsey Grove Senior Citizens Club during their annual Christmas lunch.

She congratulated the choir and the soloist and commended the professionalism with which all the Gospel Choir members conducted themselves. She said: 'The whole choir were amazing, with special commendation to the soloist who sang so beautifully.'

The choir members left the Guernsey Grove Senior Citizens with the best impressions and offered to support them in future performances. Their presence there not only created a more festive atmosphere but it also signified the importance of communities working together to break the stigma that the elderly and young people cannot get along.



Ms Martin concluded: 'By your choir performing at our annual Christmas lunch, this broke down many barriers as watching the two age groups interacting

with one another to celebrate the festive season was simply delightful.'

## New Learner Survey - we're listening

100% of you found the college staff helpful when you applied

98% of you found the guidance we gave was good

96% of you felt you were on the right course

95% of you found the information provided on the college and your course was helpful

92% of you found that the information we gave about the additional activities on offer was good

99% of you understood what behaviour we expect of you

93% of you feel you are achieving what you set out to do

92% of you enjoy coming to college.

*These are the positive messages you have told us about your experience as a learner.....*

*These are some of your concerns.....*

- 24% of you felt the student planner was not helpful
- 15% of you were not aware of any work placements on your course or what opportunities would be open to you after your course
- 15% of you felt the induction activities did not do enough to help you settle in, or cover the college's policies and procedures sufficiently or explain your rights as a student.
- 11% of you felt we did not identify your needs or use them to support your learning enough.

*So what are we doing to address your concerns?*

- We are developing a new Learner Planner with an exciting new layout and ideas.**
- We are improving the interviewing process with more information for learners.**
- We are revising the induction activities to give you better information.**
- We will shortly be appointing a skills manager to ensure your needs are better supported.**

# Dreams come true



Who said that we cannot follow our dream? Kong Wako, currently studying BTEC National Diploma in Science and A2 Physical Education, has managed to find the way to make his dream real. This is what he told us.

### Tell us a little bit about your experience at John Ruskin College so far.

I have enjoyed my experience at John Ruskin College because it is different from other colleges I have attended and none compare to it. Aaron and Natalie run a tight ship and command respect, but also get affection from their students. Through their efforts individuals who participate in extracurricular activities have a good experience and have made life long friends.

Normally I am an introspective person and do not wish to spend a great deal of my spare time in the canteen. I am glad that there are other programmes that I can participate in in my free time, for example the debate club.

I have enjoyed my experience at John Ruskin College and would recommend it to anyone.

### Why do you think sports are an important course to study?

Sport is not given the credit it deserves. Sport builds character and teaches life skills which can dramatically improve your chances of employment. Sports teaches perseverance, teamwork, problem solving and many more skills. There is a sport for every one - team sport for the more vocal and strong in character, for example football, or table tennis for those who are less vocal but quick at decision making.

### How did you get involved in coaching?

I have always loved sports and have played football at a high level from the age of seven. I had dreams of representing my country on the international stage in any sport. I have suffered bad sports injuries and was advised by medics to lower the standard, frequency and intensity at which I participate in sport. Ultimately I had to stop sport all together for a few years.

I realised that I could not live out my dreams as an international athlete so I decided to help others achieve their dreams. In the summer of 2008 I enrolled myself onto a Level 1 football and basketball coaching course and quickly achieved success. When I qualified I volunteered for various clubs.

I wanted to go a step further and get a Level 2 but did not have the financial means to do so.

As so many others, we enjoyed being in the gym and Aaron made it an enjoyable and educational experience but he could not attend to all students at all times.

I, therefore, volunteered to coach the girls' football team.

### Tell us a little bit about your work as the coach of the girls' football team.

I have coached many people of all ages and levels of ability but none of those can compare to the John Ruskin College girls' football team.

Other teams I have coached do not give me feedback from sessions like the girls do. They do not follow me blindly or accept everything I say. In the girls' team they let me know what they want and we have a healthy relationship whereby I respect them and listen to them and vice versa.

I enjoy coaching the girls because they show commitment and are excited to participate. We do not have a great deal of time to practise but we try to make the most of it.

I have gained a lot of respect for the girls over the short period we have spent together and appreciate their efforts.

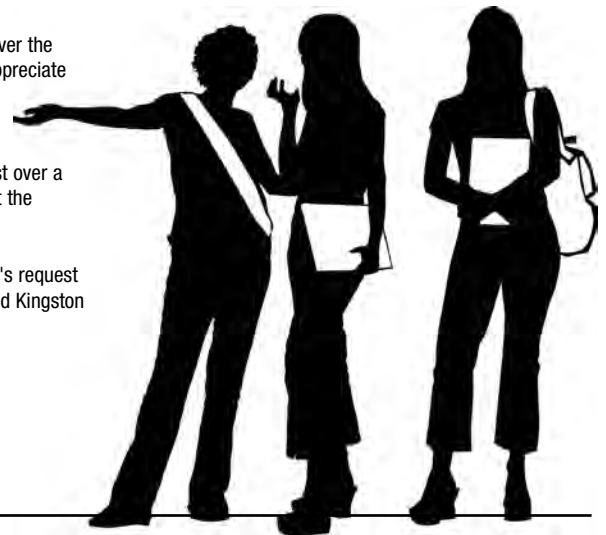
### Any games coming up?

We have got a tournament coming up in just over a month's time. The date is not confirmed but the tournament is due to happen.

I have contacted other colleges at the team's request and am waiting for a response from SFX and Kingston College.

## Sports update!

**Commiserations** to John Ruskin College Boys Football team who despite performing well lost to Reigate College in a league fixture on 25.02.09. The result ended a 5 game unbeaten streak.



# We have a new website!

We have a new website and it looks great. Take a look! It's [www.johnruskin.ac.uk](http://www.johnruskin.ac.uk)

# Spotlight



For our second spotlight interview we had a chat with Melanie Jackson, a very important person at John Ruskin College, who you definitely need to see if you haven't done it yet, because she plays a significant role in helping students with many different aspects of their future!

**What is your full title here at college?**

My full title is Careers Adviser.

**Can you tell us a little bit more about your role as a careers adviser?**

The key part of my job is dealing with young people with their higher education enquiries. That takes a lot of time, because we have approximately 350 students who complete UCAS applications each year. That is about 80% of the total number of students who can progress to university. The job involves helping people make their university choices, advising on completion of the application form, encouraging students to attend open days and taster events, liaising with UCAS, setting up events for the students, organising for students to go on events.

**Do you provide students with any other type of support?**

Yes, in addition to that, I help people prepare their CV, look for part-time work, apprenticeships, internships and work experience placements. I also assist students who really haven't got any ideas about what they want to do in the long term, so I investigate careers options with them and the sort of qualifications they would need to achieve their career ambitions.

## Business & IT Academy News

Ten or twelve students studying the BTEC National Diploma in Business have the opportunity to be placed in the Career Academy which was launched in collaboration with the Business & IT Academy last year. This allows the students a six-week paid internship during the summer, one-to-one mentoring by business professionals and participation in employer-led seminars.

On 6th February Career Academy Students met their mentors at the College at 8.30 am in the Conference suite. They briefly introduced themselves, highlighting the reasons they joined the Academy and the college and gave a snapshot of their life experiences.

During the breakfast meeting, it was revealed that one of the mentors from JP Morgan, Kunal Patel, had attended the college about eight years ago. He was taught by John Rowlands and Chris Elliot. It was because of his positive experience while at John Ruskin College that he had decided to join the mentoring team for the Career Academy.

Students are expected to meet with their mentors

**Have you always been in this position?**

I have worked for the college now for about five years.

**What was your role previously?**

I have been a Careers Adviser for about fifteen years. I worked for Connexions for quite a long time and with a training provider.

**What has been your happiest moment at college?**

It is fantastic seeing students progress on to university and follow courses that have been their dream for a long time – like when a student wants to become a doctor, or an electrical engineer. But also my happiest time was watching the basketball team. I really enjoy that... and the Gospel Choir of course!

**Do you travel?**

Yes.

**Where have you been so far?**

We went to Florida last year...

**Oh, that sounds lovely**

... and we are going to Kenya in July.

**Fantastic!**

**What do you like to do in your spare time?**

In my spare time I have got to look after my son who is aged 10 and walk my dog. I also garden, play tennis... and I read a lot.

**Ok, what do you like to read?**

Oh, I like all sorts of fiction really. I am now reading 'The Road Home' which is about a Polish immigrant and is excellent.

**Lovely! If you could give one piece of advice to students, what would that be?**

My piece of advice would be to follow your dreams... and not give up at the first hurdle!

**All right, thank you very much!**

By **Marina Ivanova**,  
AS Level student

once a month to be mentored in life skills and careers development as part of their involvement with the Career Academy.

**Participating mentoring companies:**

JP Morgan, Pib Company, Glitnir, Olswang, Xchanging, Anglo American, AIG, Lloyds TSB and Reed Business Information.

This is what some of the students said:

"...was one of the best business meetings I have ever attended in my life. Our mentors had high positions in their business. My mentor inspired me..." Caleb Ayirebi

"The Career Academy meeting this morning was a great way for us to meet the mentors... It was a great opportunity and everyone was dressed formally and ready for work." Arnold Kagombe

"Everybody was dressed formally and looked very professional as business people. I am proud to be in the Career Academy." Sajeerthana Cyeril

"It gave me a chance to imagine how a business sets up their meetings. I enjoyed the way everyone introduced themselves. The mentors were really helpful and friendly." Aicha Abid

# From your Student Council



We welcome **Murat Colak** to the Student Council Executive in the role of Marketing Officer.

**Awards Evening continued from page 1**

Many other awards were given to students including Work Experience Awards, Enrichment Awards and the Andrew Burke Award which was specially presented by Geoffrey Jackson, Chair of the Corporation. Over 150 students were rewarded at this impressive event. The entertainment programme closed with the last performance of the John Ruskin College Gospel Choir, singing 'Let It Rise' by William Murphy.

Special guest Jon Rouse, Chief Executive of the London Borough of Croydon, gave a speech during which he commented on how impressed he had been with the talent and the success of John Ruskin College students.

Presidents of the Student Council, Emrah Tezgel and Ramzal Fadlu-Deen, also gave their vote of thanks. Finally the closing speech was made by Jennifer Sims after which Tosin Oluwafemi and Bukola Abiola joined their beautiful voices in an amazing duet, singing 'Hallelujah' by Leonard Cohen.

By **Marina Ivanova**, AS Level student

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Open Event on Wednesday 25th March, 2009, 4pm – 7pm**
- **Gospel Choir concert on Wednesday 18th March, 2009 @ 3pm**
- **Gospel Choir concert on Thursday 19th March, 2009 @ 6:30pm**
- **Red Nose Week 9 – 13 March, 2009**

## The Newspaper

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