



News Release November 2009

Designs on Christmas

...at Woking STEPS Learning Centre Open Day

It was decision time for visitors to the Woking STEPS Learning Centre Open Day last Wednesday (November 18th).

They were all asked to help choose the official Christmas card for the Surrey Care Trust, the charity which runs the centre to provide an alternative education for 14 to 16 year-olds who have struggled to fit into mainstream school for all kinds of reasons.

The young people – and it is rumoured at least one staff member – had come up with various festive designs. The winner of the popular vote was Emily Anderson, 14, with her cuddly Father Christmas and snowman, so hers will be the image that goes out with seasonal greeting to all supporters of the Surrey Care Trust.

In extreme contrast was 15-year-old Alex Garman's design featuring a line-up of festively -dressed young ladies. His graffiti style may not be everyone's idea of a traditional Christmas card but this young man has evident talent and his goal is to study art at college when he finishes on the STEPS programme.

The Surrey Care Trust is a charity that helps people overcome the disadvantage of low achievement and lack of skills, and much of its work today is focused on second chance learning and providing education and training programmes.

It runs learning centres at Redhill, Staines and Woking where young people spend up to two years gaining qualifications that provide a stepping stone back into mainstream education at the age of 16 or improve their chances of finding a job.

"We were delighted to see so many parents, as well as friends and supporters of the Surrey Care Trust at the open day," said Magda Pascoe from the learning centre team. "One of the very noticeable things about the young people who come here is that they are used to being on the receiving end of negative criticism, so it does a lot for their self-confidence to be the centre of attention in a positive way."

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