



Media Release

March 20 2009

Photo opportunity: Thursday March 26 2009 at the Quayside Exchange, Sunderland

(Please note winners are expected to be announced between 1.45 and 2pm. To minimise disruption to the pupils during their presentations, photographers are asked to arrive between 11.45am and 12.45pm (to photograph pupils with displays) or 1.45-2pm to photograph the winners with their trophies.

C'est la!..... Hier ist es!..... Aqui es! Schools from across the region converge on Sunderland this week (Thursday March 26 2009) to battle it out in the prestigious Language of Leisure inter-school competition.

The competition is being run by Education Business Connections Limited (EBC) on behalf of the Regional Language Network North East and is the culmination of weeks of planning by scores of young people who were challenged to create marketing campaigns for some of the region's top tourist and sporting attractions – aimed at international visitors.

Zélie Guérin, Head of the Regional Language Network North East said: "Business Language Champions aims to highlight the growing concern for the availability and level of language skills in the UK. This is achieved by helping students to understand the importance of languages as a practical workplace skill; helping teachers grasp the business need for languages and encouraging companies to understand how home-grown language skills can enhance competitive advantage."

"We are very excited about the possibilities for collaboration that the project offers and its potential to develop language use in the North East."

Business supporters from Beamish Museum, Gateshead International Stadium, the Sunderland Empire theatre, The BALTIC Gateshead, Durham county Cricket Club, The Sage Gateshead, Sunderland Aquatic Centre, South Shield's Customs House, and Sedgfield Racecourse as well as the AboutMyArea on-line information service have been working with the pupils to provide information and advice.

Undergraduates from both Sunderland and Durham Universities have also been providing specialist language support for the young people as they grappled with the challenge of getting across key messages for their business supporters in either French, Spanish or German.

Team from Farrington, Castle view, St Aidan's RC, Houghton Kepier (Sunderland), Ryton (Gateshead) Harton Comprehensive (South Shields) and Ferryhill Business and Enterprise College (Durham) are competing for top prize in the Language of Leisure Competition

Barbara McClennan, Chief Executive of EBC said: "This competition is really significant because it brings together local employers, local universities and secondary schools to work on real projects that could have an impact on how we promote the benefits of being able to communicate in a second language and also the importance of the tourism industry in the region.

You can find out more about the competition by logging onto:
<http://www.ebcltd.org.uk/LanguageofLeisure.html>

Education Business Connections was formed eleven years ago to support closer working between schools and businesses in Sunderland. It's success means that now the team delivers innovative educational programmes to children across Tyne and Wear. To find out more visit www.ebdLtd.org.uk

Programmes are funded from a variety of sources, including from the European Social Fund, European Regional Development Fund and Tyne & Wear Education Business Links Organisation (TWEBLO), but EBC's ongoing development is supported by Futurebuilders (for more details go to www.futurebuilders-england.org.uk).

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