

# Media Release

September 29, 2006

## Gearing up for success

STUDENTS from across the city can now access dozens of specifically designed programmes to boost their employability for free. Sixth formers from St Aidan's Catholic School and Language College and St Anthony's Catholic Girls' School took part in the first part of the Gear Up project by attending an employability seminar.

The seminar is a compulsory part of the project which allows the students access to a wide choice of educational programmes which are aimed at specific sectors. These include training in media-related activities and working with business people from the retail and finance sector. Each are based on the 12 employability skills which form the basis of the Gear Up umbrella that oversees the individual programmes. The skills include: time management, communication and adaptability.

On Thursday (Sept 28) around 120 St Anthony's students and 130 from St Aidan's worked with business people from a variety of places. Supporters came from 2-Touch, Reynolds Outdoor Centre, Community Fire Safety Department, City of Sunderland Council, Sunderland University, B Skills Ltd and Connexions.

The students took part in team activities including drawing pictures of their idea of an nightmare employee and also heard from several speakers with advice about the world of work. These included Sue Burney from Connexions, Bryan Alderson from TWEBLO (Tyne and Wear Business Link Organisation) and Karen Humble of Karen Gray Ltd.

The employability seminar was organised and delivered by Sunderland-based charity Education Business Connections. It is just one of many programmes that the organisation runs bringing together schools and businesses across the region.

Education Business Connections was formed eight 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. Programmes are funded from a variety of sources, including from the European Social Fund, but EBC's ongoing development is supported by Futurebuilders (for more details go to [www.futurebuilders-england.org.uk](http://www.futurebuilders-england.org.uk)).

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