

Press release

For Immediate use

Business and college celebrate recognition

A local business and college has been recognised at a prestigious national award ceremony in recognition of their partnership working which has helped the company develop and grow.

The Outpost at Crieff and Perth College was highly commended for the Business Start Up category at the 'Business to College Awards' held on Wednesday night (24 March) at Dynamic Earth in Edinburgh.

The Outpost was first set-up in 2009 to supply authentic African goods such as food and drinks to home-sick expats by business-founder, Fiona Gallagher. Starting-up a business is a daunting prospect for anyone, but for Fiona it was even more of a challenge as she is registered blind.

Despite her entrepreneurial talent, Fiona needed some additional business support, in particular setting-up essential administration processes for the day-to-day running of the shop. Fiona approached Perth College UHI Centre for Enterprise for help and guidance.

Fiona said: "My disability makes me an entrepreneur with a difference, and I face challenges in running my business that are quite unique. The team at the College were a fantastic source of advice and they went out of their way to find information which was particularly relevant to me.

"With their guidance, I have changed the way my business is run, they set-up links with the RNIB and I now have access to specialist equipment such as a computer with an adapted speech and scanning software, I even have a measuring device which helps me identify money.

"My business has expanded and last year I took over an existing DVD rental shop, so now the two outlets run side-by-side. Despite the economic downturn, both businesses are thriving, and that is, to a large extent, down to the support I have received from the College."

The 'Business to College Awards', sponsored by the Scottish Funding Council and organised by Scotland's Colleges, is part of the *Scotland's Colleges Mean Business* campaign which aims to raise awareness of the support available to businesses from Scotland's network of 43 further education colleges. This year, colleges have been encouraged to take part in a week-long campaign – dedicated to highlighting the college sector's expertise, experience and facilities which are available to businesses – by staging events on campus, aimed at engaging with the local businesses community.

Now in their second year, both the campaign and awards bring together Scotland's leading business and skills organisations – the Scottish Chamber of Commerce, the Federation of Small Businesses Scotland, Scottish Enterprise, Alliance of Sector Skills Councils, Business Gateway, CBI Scotland, Skills Development Scotland, Scottish Qualifications Authority and Highlands and Islands Enterprise - to support the initiative.

Attending the awards, Keith Brown, Minister for Skills and Lifelong Learning, said: "These awards are a great way of acknowledging the huge contribution colleges make in supporting the business community, helping to secure Scotland's economic recovery and our future prosperity.

"As a Government we have always acknowledged the way colleges have stepped up to the mark and continued to deliver for learners in Scotland. In recent times, just as the demand for college places has risen, so too have colleges themselves risen to the challenge of meeting that demand.

"Too often in previous recessions, the damage to young people has lasted a generation, and sometimes a whole lifetime. We are working hand in hand with Scotland's colleges and businesses to make sure we do not repeat the mistakes of the past."

Ray Harris, Chief Executive Scotland's Colleges, said: "The Business to Colleges Awards is a great opportunity to celebrate the creative and innovative ways in which colleges and businesses are working together. Scotland's colleges provide real value and benefits to the businesses they engage with. With a practical 'can-do' approach to solving the challenges of the businesses that operate in a modern thriving economy, they contribute a great deal towards Scotland's economy.

"The constant investment in the skills of college staff, as well as the development of many state of the art training facilities, ensures that our colleges continue to meet the demands of all the businesses they engage with."

Joe Mooney, Chair of Scotland's Colleges Knowledge Action Group and Principal, Reid Kerr College, said: "The awards highlight the flexible, local solution colleges are able to offer to businesses. They also underline the amount of work they do across Scotland in supporting businesses – identifying and implementing solutions to tailor-fit the company's requirements – which ultimately lead to a real step change in performance and profit.

"Colleges offer a wide range of expertise and experience and the campaign and awards are designed to encourage companies, no matter what sector or size, to contact their local college and discuss the services on offer."

Scotland's College's Mean Business is part of the wider knowledge transfer and employer engagement agendas for both higher and further education.

Businesses can obtain further information on *Scotland's Colleges Mean Business* by visiting www.scotlandscollegesmeanbusiness.com.

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Notes to editors

Photo Caption: Kaye Adams, Andy Willox, FSB Scotland, Fiona Gallagher, The Outpost, Sheena Howden, Perth College, Perth College, Keith Brown MSP

Business to College Awards 2010

Winners

Workforce Development Up to 50 Employees	All1 Smile Orthodontics & Coatbridge College
Workforce Development more than 50 Employees	Servite Housing Association & Dundee College
Sustained Relationship	McGill Electrical & Dundee College
Impact – Public Sector	JobCentre Plus & Forth Valley College
Impact – Private Sector	Print Matters & Dundee College
Business Start Up	Discovery Packaging & Design & Dundee College
Innovation	Dawn Homes & South Lanarkshire College
College of the Year	Dundee College

Highly Commended

Workforce Development Up to 50 Employees	Gary Hoffman & Clydebank College
Workforce Development more than 50 Employees	ChesapeakeBranded Packaging& Motherwell College
Sustained Relationship	Dumfries & Galloway Housing Partnership & Dumfries & Galloway College
Impact – Public Sector	Ministry of Defence & Carnegie College
Impact – Private Sector	Burntisland Fabrications & Carnegie College
Business Start Up	The Outpost & Perth College
Innovation	OPITO & Forth Valley College

Commended

Workforce Development Up to 50 Employees	Orchardhead Care Home & Carnegie College
Workforce Development more than 50 Employees	IQA Utilities & Reid Kerr College
Sustained Relationship	Scottish Water & Cardonald College
Impact – Public Sector	NHS Tayside & Dundee College
Impact – Private Sector	Mechanex UK & Central College
Business Start Up	Studio 19 & Adam Smith College
Innovation	Northlink Ferries & Orkney College

Award Sponsors:

Impact – Private Sector	Royal Mail
Impact – Public Sector	Royal Mail
Business Start Up	FSB Scotland
Innovation	Frontline
Sustained Relationship	The BIG Partnership
Workforce Development	
Up to 50 Employees	SQA
Workforce Development	
More than 50 Employees	Alliance of Sector Skills
College of the Year	Anderson Strathern

The Scotland's Colleges Mean Business marketing campaign was first launched in March 2009. It aims to make business more aware of the support services that exist from colleges which can help achieve a step change in performance and profit.
www.scotlandscollegesmeanbusiness.com

Independent research published in November 2007 showed that as a network, Scotland's colleges are in regular contact with more than 10,000 businesses and are providing support services worth almost £40million.

The Scottish Funding Council is responsible for allocating £1.7 billion of public funds each year to colleges and universities in support of Scottish Government priorities. The Council's funding contributes towards the costs of learning and teaching, skills development, research, innovation and other costs such as staff, buildings and equipment in Scotland's 20 universities and higher education institutions (HEIs) and 43 further education (FE) colleges. The £14 million funding SFC provided for knowledge transfer and developing employer engagement was announced in circular [SFC/30/2007](#).