

North Music Groups Take Centre Stage at STUC Songs Festival



The young performers from Sutherland with Bruce Armstrong and supervisors Tracey Campbell and Lisa Bates. Photo: Peter Moore

Two Sutherland community music groups delighted the audience at the STUC Unions into Schools Song Festival on 29th November. One Big Drum and The NOISE project are co-facilitated by Bruce Armstrong, who is Community Connector for Health and Happiness in Sutherland and Roxana Meehan, Youth Development Officer for Highlife Highland. Roxana (and Supervisor Tracey Campbell, pictured) are also UNISON ULRs.

Bruce said: "One Big Drum opened the festival with its African drum music. The group, which includes young people with learning disabilities, really rose to the occasion and gave their best performance ever." All the groups had an opportunity to talk about the tracks they had recorded and to get feedback from experienced music professionals, including folk legend Rab Noakes and The Specials' Jerry Dammers. Commenting on One Big Drum's recording, Jerry said: "Absolutely fantastic - that could easily be on any record." The NOISE Project, which includes young people aged between 11 and 18 years old, wrote a song against discrimination for the festival called 'All Different, All Equal'. "A fantastic pop song," was just one of the very positive comments they received. Bruce said: "All the group members have had a tremendous boost from this experience."

In brief...

Cross Union ULR Forum Dates

The new date for the postponed Western Isles Forum is 29th January 2014 from 12 noon - 3pm in the County Hotel, Francis Street, Stornoway. Dates for the March meetings of all Forums will be communicated in January.

H&I Partners Meeting

Inverness

Scottish Union Learning in the Highlands and Islands met recently with partners and learning providers. STUC General Secretary Grahame Smith led the annual information share to promote understanding and improve ways of working.

Development Fund

Applications for 2014-2015

Applications are invited from unions for Development Fund projects for next year. The criteria can be found at <http://www.scottishunionlearning.com/funding/development-fund/2014-2015-development-fund>.

The closing date for applications is 9th January 2015 at 5pm.

Everyday Skills Event 2014

Next year's event will be held on 27th February 2014. Further details will follow. You must have the permission of your own union to attend STUC events.

Sisters Doing It for Themselves



It seems that two heads are better than one when it comes to taking on a course of Higher Education study. Sisters Dolanna Macleod (right) and Mary-Anne Campbell both work for Caledonian MacBrayne ferries in Stornoway and both are in their second year of a Certificate in Higher Education with the Open University as part of a Scottish Union

Learning pilot. Dolanna said: "I heard about the course when our training department sent an email about it. My sister and I both applied, although we didn't realise that until we were both accepted. I was very interested in doing the course as although I am confident in my abilities at work, I didn't have a qualification to back it up.

"It's been really helpful having Mary-Ann on the course as we regularly meet up to compare notes with class-mate Eilidh Smith and the three of us help each other stay motivated. I hope my qualification will help me to be more professional and confident and possibly gain promotion in the future. Finding time to study can be difficult but it has been a really good experience and also gives you a great sense of achievement."

Contact

**Scottish Union Learning
in the Highlands and Islands**
UNISON Building
53 Shore Street
Inverness
IV1 1NF
Tel/Fax: 01463 248 905

Eleanor Adam
Development Officer
Email: eadam@stuc.org.uk
Mobile: 07876 260 412

Pam Urquhart
Development Officer
Email: purquhart@stuc.org.uk
Mobile: 07702 836 481

Diana Nicholls
Admin Assistant
Email: dnicholls@stuc.org.uk

Mairi Maciver
Admin Assistant
Email: mmaciver@stuc.org.uk

www.scottishunionlearning.com

Catherine Shines at Scottish Book Week Event



Guest author Catherine Deveney enthralled the audience at a recent Book Week event. Catherine read from her second novel 'Kiss the Bullet' and shared some insights from her varied career. The two Big Book Quiz £20 book tokens were won by Prospect ULR Joan Docherty and PCS member Richard Ridgwell. Richard also scooped the quiz to win Catherine's books. Some copies of the Scottish Book Trust 'Treasures' book are still available. Contact mmaciver@stuc.org.uk if you would like some free copies for your workplace.



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