

REAL LIVES, REAL ACHIEVEMENTS

GARY

A FUTURE ACCOUNTANT

When I was nominated I thought nothing of it as I have never won anything in my life.

So when I was told I had won, I was really surprised and wondered what that meant. I had been awarded £250 to spend on something to help me progress in my life - plus a trip to London to pick up my award and meet the other winning vendors. I was really looking forward to a couple of days away as I'd not been out of Birmingham since 1997. And what shall I spend my prize on? Well I knew right away; a computer to get me through my college course in Accountancy.

On the day I had to go to London I was excited as well as a bit nervous and looking forward to it, all at the same time. We arrived in London around 5pm and it was busy. The hotel was close to the station, and you should have seen my room; the bestest room I have ever stayed in with the biggest bed I have ever seen. The height of it came up to my waist. It looked like you would just melt in it.

I was a bit nervous on the evening as I was with the guests. There were a lot of nice people there who were pleased to meet me after they had read my background, and I was pleased to meet them. And meeting John Bird... he was a nice, down to earth chap, who says it the way he sees it. When it was time for the awards I was hoping not to be called up first as it meant going on stage to be given my award. Lucky for me I was last up. Richard Doyle and Mark Jones from Cadbury awarded it to me and I could not think of anything to say as I was so nervous and had never been in that position before.



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How did I feel winning the achievement award? A little embarrassed at first as I was on the cover of magazine, but I wanted people to know (from my past) that I had turned my life around. I wanted the new people in my life (other vendors) to see that The Big Issue Foundation really works – you can fit back into society.

I am back at college now and on to the next accountancy level. It is nice knowing that there are some people out there paying attention to what I am doing, someone to say “well done, that’s good, you have done well this year”. At times I think if I don’t carry on with this I would be letting people down, but the only person I am letting down is myself.

Real Lives, Real Achievements is supported by:

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WHAT IS REAL LIVES, REAL ACHIEVEMENTS?

Real Lives, Real Achievements is an annual awards event which aims to recognise and celebrate our remarkable vendors and the brave steps they have taken in their journey away from homelessness.