



SPOTLIGHT ON MENTORS

YOUNG GLASGOW TALENT



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Michael Roberts is a retired University of Strathclyde librarian who has been mentoring for just over a year. After volunteering with the Children's Panel, he realised he wanted more personal involvement which led him to mentoring with MCR Pathways. He was able to use his skills honed through years working at Strathclyde to mentor a young person.

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Why did you choose to become a mentor?

When I retired initially I started doing voluntary work on the Children's Panel, which I'm still doing. With the panel, you don't have any personal involvement with a child and it struck me that I wanted that. I had been the head of library services at Strathclyde University, so I had a background in higher education and I was quite interested in helping someone achieve more. I wanted to do something that was socially useful but actually played to the skills that I had. You build up a complex relationship, it is about listening to them and trying to show them some of the opportunities that they're probably not aware of.

What changes have you seen in the young person you mentor?

The young person that I am working with is very easy to talk to and was right from the start. But what you do see overtime is the growing confidence that arises from within them. He's gotten more organised, with time keeping and getting stuff done to the schedule and concentrating. I've personally seen that improve. You see them grow not only intellectually but also socially.

How has being a mentor changed or impacted you?

I would say both mentoring and the Children's Panel have shown me the colossal amount of resilience that exists within young people. It also shows me that there's a whole world you haven't interfaced with. You bring skills to it but the young people also bring a whole breadth of experience and resilience. You build up a sense of empathy.

What would you say to someone about becoming a mentor?

You broaden your skills through mentoring, broaden your horizons. It is very rewarding, you meet some very interesting people.