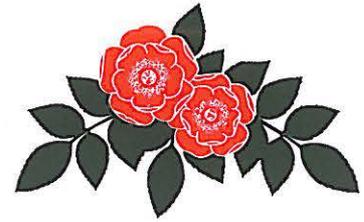


NEWS RELEASE

UNIVERSITY
OF CENTRAL
LANCASHIRE



International exposure for Aids work

A local student, who fought almost single-handedly to set up a new support group in Preston for people affected by HIV and Aids, is to make a presentation about his work at an international conference on health promotion.

Mike Hawkins, a student of Health Studies and Health Promotion at the University of Central Lancashire, established the Preston HIV Support Team in October 2001. It is the only support group in the town dedicated to people affected by HIV and Aids.

Mike is one of five students nominated to accompany lecturer Denise Richardson and represent the University at the 10th International Conference on Health Promoting Hospitals, to be held at Bratislava in the Slovak Republic in May. He will present a paper on how the HIV Support Team can work in partnership with local health services to maximise the health and well-being of people affected by HIV and Aids.

He says: "I'm looking forward to being able to share my experience with others at the conference. People have become indifferent to HIV in recent years so it was quite an achievement setting up the Support Team and it took several months of planning. But, as a student of Health Studies, I had some knowledge of how certain agencies function and the bureaucracy I might encounter, and that was a real encouragement to me."

The University of Central Lancashire has a long history of involvement in Health Promoting Hospital initiatives. Denise Richardson was one of the instigators of the original pilot project which saw Preston Acute Hospitals Trust become the first Health Promoting Hospital in England.

She says: "Central Lancashire is a leader in this field and we are delighted to be taking five students to the conference, enabling them to experience this important and practical social network for health promotion development.

"We are expecting a great deal of interest in Mike's work with the HIV Support Team, as well as in our other specialist areas which include Hospital Stop Smoking Policies, Coronary Heart Disease, and partnerships between HPHs and Universities."

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