

## **Young baristas have a latte to offer the community.**

A team of young trainee baristas from the charity [Autism Unlimited](#) are offering their new-found skills to the community.

The students, who attend the Portfield School Sixth Form, are part of the 'Brew Crew', an initiative set up by the charity to equip its young people with practical work experience as they transition into adulthood and employment.

Small teams of students at the Sixth Form in Airfield Road, Christchurch, are enjoying 10-week courses with tutor Tim Hewitt, a former Barista with more than 20 years' experience.

Lessons take place inside a former horsebox, which has been refurbished by the charity as a mobile coffee bar.

The students are learning about different coffees from around the world and their unique flavours, as well as how to make and serve drinks including cappuccino, latte, and espresso.

Tim Hewitt said: "The Brew Crew is a great initiative where students can gain valuable insight into the world of work and enjoy hands-on experience, whilst developing and practising key life skills, including cash handling, following instructions, and cleaning. This boosts their CV and equips them with the tools and confidence they need for the workplace as they move towards adulthood.

"It's also a lot of fun, great for their wellbeing, and you can see their self-esteem growing as they learn.

"It's been good to see how students have embraced the challenges of making great coffee and it's very encouraging that some of them are already taking what they have learned in our lessons and using it in their further work experience in local cafes."

The Brew Crew has also been putting its training into action by serving coffee to their neighbours in Airfield Road, as Tim explained: "Sixth Form is situated next to Beaulieu Garage which has a monthly Coffee and Cars meet-up and we were thrilled when they asked us to provide the coffee for these events.

"This has enabled the students to learn how to manage their time and sell, make, and serve drinks to a queue of waiting customers, which they have dealt with excellently.

"It's been wonderful to see students engaging with people and everyone agrees their coffee is delicious. We are now hoping to attend other small, local events and would love to hear from event organisers who are interested in hosting us."

Student Luca is partway through the course.

He said: "I enjoy making coffee and frothing the milk and of course drinking it afterwards. Tim is a great teacher.

"Today we have been pouring milk slowly to make the shape of a heart. I have also been using my barista skills at my work experience placement at a café."

Siún Cranny, CEO of Autism Unlimited added: "Our team search out ways to enable the best possible outcomes for our students in preparation for employment.

"The Brew Crew is an excellent addition to our Work Experience Programme, which supports our young people through various opportunities to pursue a career where they feel fulfilled and where they can flourish.

"I'm exceptionally proud of all our young baristas and feel very lucky to have tasted their coffee, the ginger one invented by one of our students is surprisingly delicious!"

To discuss whether the Brew Crew might provide refreshments at your event please email: [tina.flower@autism-unlimited.org](mailto:tina.flower@autism-unlimited.org) or [Maureen.harrington@autism-unlimited.org](mailto:Maureen.harrington@autism-unlimited.org)

Ends

Picture captions:

Brew 1- (left to right) Brew Crew tutor Tim Hewitt with students Luke, Jack, Jaden and Luca.

Brew 2 – Tim Hewitt and Brew Crew member Luke

Brew 3 – Tim Hewitt and Brew Crew member Luca.

[www.autism-unlimited.org](http://www.autism-unlimited.org)

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