

The Cat's Whiskers Café

Vision for Young People with Additional Support Needs



CREATING OPPORTUNITIES

Siblings Catriona and Paul are well used to each others company. Never mind being brother and sister, Catriona and Paul are also work colleagues. A feat your average brother and sister duo could barely endure never mind enjoy! However Catriona and Paul are not your average sibling duo. Paul has Autism and Catriona has been Paul's carer for over 10 years, so as we mentioned earlier, they are well used to each others company!

Worried about the lack of opportunities out there for young people with additional support needs, Catriona and Paul's mother, Penny, decided to open a café to ensure there was somewhere young people like Paul could turn to in order to gain the confidence and experience they needed to achieve employment. Catriona, who holds an HNC in Hospitality, was the perfect candidate to manage the business and who better to help her than her brother Paul. The Cat's Whiskers Café currently employs 5 people with a focus on providing a friendly atmosphere.

DANIEL'S JOURNEY

We caught up with Daniel, who has worked at the Café since November 2016. Unfortunately, Daniel didn't have the best of experiences in college or at the Job Centre so when a friend pointed him in the direction of The Cat's Whiskers Café he jumped at the opportunity. Much like his colleague Paul, Daniel developed his skills and they both went on to achieve their SVQ Level 2 in Hospitality as well as becoming qualified First Aiders. With his new skill set, coupled with his commitment and enthusiasm Daniel managed to secure a new job helping with the catering team at a local school in South Lanarkshire. Although sad to leave the team at the Café, he is excited to continue his work within the catering sector and use the skills he learned at The Cat's Whiskers.

While everyone at The Cat's Whiskers Café are sad to see Daniel leave they are also proud of what he has achieved. Catriona told us that it is clear to see how much employment helps develop these young people. She suggested that all employees who have come through the Café's doors have gone on to increase in confidence and that the Café itself has benefitted from this dedicated and enthusiastic team of staff.

Going forward, Catriona is looking forward to working with **DYW** as she hopes they can help support her vision of encouraging employers to recruit more young people with additional support needs as she knows how beneficial it has been for her staff.

The Cat's Whiskers is a fully licenced café located at Bridge Street, Strathaven who offer an extensive menu, serving delicious home baking, afternoon tea, lunches and an exciting cocktail menu. The venue is also available for private hire. You can view their full menu at www.thecatshiskers.cafe.