



Enabling People with Learning Disabilities

NOW cleans up at the IFEX awards

Donna Sheehan and Noel Finn, win Gold and Bronze at the Northern Ireland Chef Ability Awards 2008. The Awards In association with NI Union for Supported Employment (NIUSE) are a first for Northern Ireland pitting the skills of Six trainee Chefs with learning disabilities against each other in a one hour cook off at the International Food Exhibition's Chef Skill competition. It's been a long road for Donna and Noel, who have been training with The NOW project for some time, both had to compete in preliminary heats last month to qualify for the competition

Supported by staff from NOW's social enterprise business- Loaf Catering, the pair have been learning chef skills and practicing for the event, Loaf a Social Enterprise offers work placements and vital training opportunities to adults with learning disabilities in North & West Belfast to learn all aspects of the catering business in both their busy coffee shops and fast growing corporate catering business

Salon Director of Chef Skill 2008 Sean Owens Commented: "We are proud to bring the Ability awards to Northern Ireland for the first time and Overwhelmed by the very high standard achieved. Donna, Noel and the rest of the competitors have raised the bar for all future competitions achieving standards that any restaurant in Northern Ireland would be proud of. It really shouldn't be long before the NOW trainees are snapped up by local caterers!"

Head Chef at Loaf Mark Beatty said: "This just goes to show that people can achieve the best with the right support, NOW and Loaf Catering are currently working with 40 people who are all looking for long-term careers in the catering industry, Id like to invite business' to come along and see the quality of the food that Our trainees produce, and their high standards of workmanship".