

Kirbie Williams, 20, Tulse Hill

Kirbie first attended Snow-Camp back in 2008. She was 17 and participated in a Snow-Camp France trip with other young people from her youth project in Tulse Hill. Her place was funded by Lambeth's Commissioning Programme, and the first experience of snowsports had a profound impact on her. She has since continued through all of the Snow-Camp programmes and finally achieved her dream of qualifying as a ski instructor in 2011. She has recently been employed by Snow-Camp, using her new qualification and skills to teach other young people how to ski. We briefly interviewed her about her experiences of being involved in Snow-Camp over the last few years.



Kirbie attending the Graduate Programme in 2010

'Snow-Camp has made a huge impact on my life. Before I didn't really know what I wanted to do, or have any idea about a career, but now I know skiing and being a ski instructor is what I want to do. Snow-Camp has helped me in so many ways – I now have a lot more confidence in myself. Before, if I couldn't do something or I got something wrong I used to get really frustrated and give up but now, I think about all I have achieved in skiing, and just keep going at it until I get it.'

'Also I used to get in trouble in my area - there was nothing to do. Snow-Camp has helped by giving me something constructive to do and get motivated by - and this helped me avoid trouble at home. Through the life-skills sessions it also helped



Kirbie on a Snow-Camp trip in 2008

me learn about myself and also reconnect with my family. I have also made up lost time – I'm with doing better at college and looking for work which will enable me to better my life. With skiing it's not going to come to you straight away. Skiing taught me it takes time and practice to learn new skills, and these are great lessons for other areas, so I think that's how it helped me.'

I think Snow-Camp is a great organisation and that it helps young people develop new skills. It has given me the opportunity to gain my level 1 Snowsport England Instructor qualification, which I have now used to teach the next groups of young people coming through Snow-Camp programmes. That was the best feeling ever.'

Aaron Minto, 20, Brixton

Aaron first attended a Snow-Camp France trip in 2009 with his Roupell Park youth project. He was 18 years old and his place was also funded by the Commissioning programme. He developed a passion for skiing and has since completed all Snow-Camp courses and most recently, completed his Snowsport England Level 1 instructor qualification. He has also been employed by Snow-Camp on our recent beginner courses to teach his peers and has become a very effective ski instructor. We recently interviewed him about his time and experiences with Snow-Camp.

'I found out about Snow-Camp through my youth project, I wasn't really sure what it was about at first, but I signed up with some encouragement from my Youth Worker. I wanted to try skiing because I wanted to try something new and challenging - my youth

worker was a good skier himself, he showed me pictures and videos of his family skiing and it seemed like a lot of fun, but something I thought I would never be able to do'

'The most challenging thing on the first course was controlling my speed and linking turns but after getting used to the slippery surface it became easier. I was surprised how quickly I learnt. It felt good. After my first Snow-Camp course I felt that I really



Aaron teaching on the summer 2011 Snow-Camp London programme

achieved a lot. I found myself facing the skiing challenges very positively and I made good progress. And I became very interested in the sport as I had never done anything like it before and wanted another chance to do it again.'

'I certainly don't think that I would have got involved in skiing if it wasn't for Snow-Camp as I have never been offered the opportunity to do something like skiing before and also the cost for me to do would be very expensive.'

'Doing skiing and being involved in Snow-Camp has made me grow as a person, it has made me more confident and has also taught me not to be afraid to try new things. I think that the life skill sessions are a great way to reflect after the lessons on the slopes. They bring the whole group together like we are all family even though we are all from different areas / backgrounds and we have only known each other for a short space of time. It builds confidence in everyone as it gives people the chance to speak out and learn how we could bring our experiences from skiing back home and how we can apply these in our normal life. It has made me believe that anything is achievable, that I can do anything I want if I put in the hard work.'

'I can't believe I have now been able to use my Snowsport England instructor qualification to teach other young people how to ski, I never imagined I could get to this point! I am excited about the future - my motivation has increased in all areas, even college – and I now have my place at university and I am looking forward to starting and joining the university snowsport society.'



Kirbie, top row 2nd from right and Aaron, top row, 3rd from left, both received their SnowSport England Level 1 certificates

