

## Young people discover the recipe for success

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Young people have been learning how to cook healthy meals and develop their social skills thanks to a disability service run by Barnardo's Cymru.

Over the last few weeks they have been learning all sorts of kitchen techniques including bread making, knife skills, weighing and measuring and health and safety, culminating in a Come Dine With Us event for family and guests.

They cooked up a three course meal with the help of Richard Shaw, a home economist who runs Cooking Together which provides community and school based cooking workshops with an emphasis on healthy eating.

He said: "They were a fantastic group to work with and I hope they will all continue to cook the recipes at home with their families in future."

The event held at the Wyndham Vowles Centre, Abertillery, proved a big success and the young people learnt more than just cooking said Joanne Harper Team Manager with Barnardo's Cymru.

"They've grown in confidence, learnt how to work in a team, how to regulate their behaviour and have explored new tastes and textures," she said.

The young people served up leek and potato soup, a choice of vegetarian main courses and apple crumble and custard. They chose the menu themselves and were involved in the preparation, hosting and the washing up afterwards.

Wendy Rutherford, Family Support Worker with Barnardo's Cymru, said: "I'm so proud of them and the way they worked through everything. For them to be able to invite their families along to something like this has meant so much to them. Their families have told us they have seen a real difference in their confidence and seeing them wanting to be front of house and take ownership of the day has been wonderful."

The cooking workshops have been designed to help them learn independence and are among a number of initiatives organised by the Barnardo's Cymru Achieving Changing Together service which is funded by Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council.

Others include classes in staying safe, healthy relationships and managing emotions. There are also plans to pilot a multi-sensory group for young people with more complex needs who are normally very isolated and miss out on social and leisure opportunities, putting families under increased pressure. The sessions, run by the Touch Trust, will allow them to explore music and movement while their parents meet up in a relaxed atmosphere.

