

News Release

9 June 2011

Paralympian Joins Learning Event For Special Needs Schools

Paralympian Fran Williamson has been announced as the special guest at 'Opportunity Days', a work based learning event for special needs schools in Hertfordshire, held at the University of Hertfordshire's de Havilland Campus on Tuesday 14th and Wednesday 15th June.

The University is working in partnership with HCS Careers Limited, career management specialists, to provide special needs students between the age of 14 to 19 with the opportunity to develop key employability, enterprise and personal skills through a range of workshops and experiences.

Now in its 6th year, the event is run by employers, business professionals and volunteers within the community and gives students the opportunity to:

- Receive hands-on practical experience of a number of different work areas
- Meet and work directly with people from industry
- Experience a new and different learning environment
- Meet and work with young people from different schools
- Recognise, develop and apply their skills for enterprise and employability.

This year, HCS Careers has also teamed up with GB Sports Coaches, a free national online sports coaching and networking community based in Stevenage. Through the site's networking facilities, they have arranged for Paralympic athlete Fran Williamson to attend, who is hoping to inspire the young people to follow their dreams. Fran has been a member of the Great Britain swim team since her international debut in 2001 and is the current World Champion in the 50m backstroke. Having won 12 World Championship and six Paralympic medals, she looks to add to her titles in the London 2012 Games.

Ross Renton, Head of Recruitment and Access at the University of Hertfordshire, said: “We are delighted to be hosting this event again. It is an inspirational event that gives young people the opportunity to realise their potential.”

St. Elizabeth’s Centre and Hertfordshire Youth Connexions are also working in partnership with the event. Further workshops are being held on Wednesday 22nd and Thursday 23rd June at the St. Elizabeth’s Centre in Much Hadam. For more information about ‘Opportunity Days’, visit www.hcs.co.uk or call the team direct on 01462 704934.

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For more information, please contact Hannah Broady, Media & PR Officer, University of Hertfordshire Press Office on 01707 28 4022, Email: h.broady@herts.ac.uk.

Notes to Editor/s

Find photos attached from last year’s event and of Fran Williamson

For more information on Fran Williamson, visit www.fran-williamson.co.uk

For more information on GB Sports Coaches, visit www.gbsportscoaches.co.uk

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- *The University of Hertfordshire is one of the region’s largest employers with over 2,700 staff and a turnover of more than £235 million. With a student community of over 24,500 including more than 2,000 international students from over eighty five different countries, the University has a global network of over 165,000 alumni. For more information, please visit www.herts.ac.uk*
- *The University of Hertfordshire was awarded the Times Higher Education ‘Entrepreneurial University of the Year 2010’*