

# Fire Service youth engagement programme in West Lothian



Pupils from Deans Community High School and St Margarets High School attended the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service youth engagement programme at Bathgate fire station last week.

Seven pupils from 3rd year took part over five days in a programme that allowed participants to experience basic fire service tasks such as team building, first aid, hose running, ladder climbing, Search and Rescue and community fire safety activities.

Local Area Liaison Officer Stuart Watson explains: "Working with young people means that the fire service can raise awareness and challenge attitudes to fire safety and other forms of anti-social behaviour.

"The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Youth engagement project engages with young people aged between 12-17 in order to work towards reducing hoax calls and secondary fires and to increase awareness of local community safety issues.

"We encourage positive social behaviour by using a combination of intensive group work and fire service activities with a view to raising self-esteem, confidence, personal motivation and increase problem solving skills

"The programme allows participants to experience basic fire service tasks and all activities incorporate a fire safety message and endorse a strong group work component.'"

Mr Watson adds: "I would like to thank Tracy Harrison, Community Champion from Tesco Bathgate who provided lunches for the pupils throughout the week."

Councillor Anne McMillan attended on behalf of West Lothian Council to present the certificates on the last day. Parents, carers and representatives of both schools also came along to see the youths put on a display of what they had learnt though the week.