

Founders4Schools awards ceremony celebrates champions of youth employability on Ada Lovelace day

Sherry Coutu CBE, Founders4Schools, and The Crick Institute gather inspirational students, teachers, and business leaders in annual awards ceremony

10 October 2018, London: Last night, Founders4Schools celebrated and awarded the role models in its community who are doing the most to connect students of all backgrounds to the vast opportunities within the world of work.

Sherry Coutu CBE, Founder and Chairman of [Founders4Schools](#), and Jack Parsons, CEO of youth-first marketplace Big Youth Group, presented four awards to the teacher, employer, local authority, and student who have gone above and beyond this year to inspire young people along their career paths.

The four award categories included the Career Ambassador Award, the Educator Award, the Community Award, and the Partner Award, all of which attracted nominations from the length and breadth of the UK.

The awards ceremony followed one of the Founders4Schools events at [The Francis Crick Institute](#) to celebrate Ada Lovelace Day, drawing together nearly 200 students from participating schools in the City of London and Camden aged 12 to 16 enjoying inspiring talks from a diverse group of women in STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and maths).

Speakers included former Chief Technical Officer for the Obama Administration, **Megan Smith**, VP International for Snapchat Inc., **Claire Valoti**, King's College Engineering student and Amazon Bursary recipient, **Fatima Benkhaled**, Founders4Schools' data scientist, **Larissa Suzuki**, who won female engineer of the year in 2017.

"[Founders4Schools](#)' mission as a charity is to connect today's young people to leaders in their community to solve tomorrow's problems. We aim to provide young people with encounters with employers each year while they are between the ages of 6 and 16, and 100 hours of work experience placements between the age of 16 and 24," said Sherry Coutu CBE, Founder and Chairman of Founders4Schools.

"We would not be able to help communities address their skills gap without the hard work and dedication of educators, curious students, and passionate business leaders who are leading the way.

"Together, our thriving network has supported around 216,000 young people to date. Having brokered more than 655,000 student-employee encounters means that on average, these pupils have met at least three business leaders in their community to date. These crucial encounters empower young people across the country to make better-informed decisions about their futures within the current curriculum and funding envelopes."

Janet Coyle, Director Trade & Growth, London and Partners, and winner of the Career Ambassador Award said, “Founders4Schools was born out of Silicon Valley comes to the UK back in 2011 when we invited some of our entrepreneurs from the US to speak in schools. This had an extraordinary impact on the level of interest of students wanting to study maths and science and that’s when we decided there was a real need to establish Founders4Schools.”

“My passion for Founders4Schools has never waned since, and the way this charity has scaled is phenomenal. There have been hundreds of thousands of student and entrepreneur encounters, with the efficiency and localisation of the platform making it so much easier for schools to find the entrepreneurs within their local community.”

Alan Hamilton, Depute Head Teacher, Stirling High School, and winner of the Educator Award said, “I’m very passionate about getting business leaders into local schools, but I soon found that you can very quickly exhaust your own contacts. I started using and sharing the Founders4Schools platform just over a year ago, and this has allowed us to introduce so many new business leaders into the school so that we can start building new relationships with them.

“We’ve now got a key mentoring programme with some of our girls studying computer science as a direct result of just one of our encounters, and we’ve got work experience and work placements lined up as a result of other encounters. This is greatly benefiting our young people and teaching them two key messages: it’s all about learning new skills, and there’s no wrong path to your future career.”

Councillor Susan McGill, Convener of the Children and Young People Committee at Stirling Council, said, “We are delighted to be working with Founders4Schools, which is one of the many innovative ways we are expanding the opportunities for young people in Stirling.

“This award is fantastic recognition for the staff at the Stirling High, and the hard work being put in to inspire the next generation to achieve their potential and enter the workplace. A huge congratulations to everyone at the school on this well-deserved accolade.”

“I know Stirling High and all the schools participating in this initiative have reported huge benefits, and by continuing to engage with Founders4Schools, we can continue to raise the bar of aspiration for our young people.”

Helen Whitfield, Chief Operating Officer at NBS said, “I first came across Founders4Schools in my work at the North East Futures UTC. The North East in general is developing a great digital economy and a strong presence in STEM, but it’s still a real challenge to get girls involved. That’s where I see myself making an impact as a role model, and Founders4Schools is providing the platform and network for more role models to emerge.

“In my role as a business leader working with Founders4Schools, the most impact is not necessarily in the work that I do as an individual, but in the work of the whole team behind me. I’m really fortunate that I can bring ideas to the business and get a diverse range of skills and perspectives to take back to the schools. And what tends to happen is, instead of the schools connecting with just me, they’re connecting with the wider network. This is highly impactful because students don’t just want to hear from one business leader.”

Award Winners:

- Career Ambassador Award: Janet Coyle, Director Trade & Growth, London & Partners
- Educator Award: Alan Hamilton, Depute Head Teacher, Stirling High School
- Community Award: The North East
- The Partner Award: John Riddell, Education Manager, Business in the Community

Founders4Schools’ unique technology platform helps teachers facilitate student-employer encounters in their classrooms as easily as buying a book on Amazon, they help students find work experience placements as easy as they would send someone a message on snapchat and they make it as easy for leaders get a talent pipeline as booking a flight. The charity operated in England and Scotland where some school’s pupils have met 10 leaders each in the past 12 months and where in some local authorities 100% of children have had an encounter in their classroom because the teachers find the service so easy to use.

-ENDS-

About [Founders4Schools](#)

Founders4Schools is an award-winning charity dedicated to improving employment prospects for students aged 6-24 years, by connecting them with business leaders and in doing so closing the skills gap that holds back economic growth.

Over 20 different types of services including career talks, workplace visits and work experience placements are available to educators and students across over 300 local authorities in England and Scotland. Business leaders who connect with young people through Founders4Schools are those most in need of modern skills to grow their businesses.

Aligned to Gatsby benchmarks and the Enabling Enterprise Skills Builder, thousands of head teachers and parents can rely on Founders4Schools to make it easy for every child to meet with at least one ‘employer’ in their classroom while they are between the age of 6 and 16, and to secure 140 hours of work experience between the ages of 16 and 18 years, which has been proven to significantly improve their prospects.

About [The Francis Crick Institute](#)

The Institute, which opened in 2016, is in the London Borough of Camden, and sits amid a unique cluster of scientific skill, leading hospitals and one of the world's top universities, UCL. The Institute is dedicated to research excellence. Its work is helping to develop new

treatments for illnesses such as cancer, heart disease, stroke, neurodegenerative conditions and infectious diseases. The institute does not hold events open to the public.

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