

IntoUniversity: Testimonials

Ayisha

Ayisha has been attending our centre at North Kensington since she was in primary school. Her mother really appreciated the support offered by our team, which helped her to gain three As at A-Level and receive a place at the University of Warwick to study Law. She is now in her final year and has just been offered a training contract at DLA Piper, one of the largest legal service providers in the world.

“**IntoUniversity** has been a prominent feature of both my personal and academic life for over a decade! The North Kensington centre has not only grown in size, but has helped me grow as a person.

Often, young people lack vision and confidence in their own ability however, with the support of **IntoUniversity**, I am finally on the road to fulfilling my dream as a corporate lawyer. From getting help with homework at the age of 9 to discussing complex essay plans at the age of 22, **IntoUniversity** is a charity that wants to help people like me to prosper in society.

It’s not often you find people, other than your family or the odd teacher, who do not see you as a statistic, but rather as someone who just needs a push in the right direction. This is definitely a charity I am proud to be a part of and I enjoy the responsibility of sitting on the Trustee Board for my local **IntoUniversity** centre. Having been a mentee at **IntoUniversity** before, I can’t wait to be on the other side of the table as a professional lawyer with the opportunity to mentor younger generations!”

Sadiya

Sadiya was born in Somalia and moved to the UK as a young girl. She spoke no English and had no experience of the education system in the UK. She was directed to our charity to receive help with her study of English and with her school work. The team also worked on building up her confidence in herself. She now studies Business at Middlesex University.

“I started attending **IntoUniversity** when I was in year 9. At the time English was my second language so I found homework and how to express myself difficult but **IntoUniversity** was a place I could come to study without being disrupted.

IntoUniversity worked with me on my grammar, exam techniques and also provided me with one-to-one support which my school was unable to do. They helped me to pass my GCSEs with good grades - they helped me to achieve.

Following this, they then helped me to select and apply for the right colleges and A-Level courses by providing me with lots of guidance. **IntoUniversity** supported me to pass my A-Levels, which I found very difficult; especially the transition between year 12 and year 13. They helped me to discover where my interests lay, and I attended workshops about university with them. They also encouraged me to visit some of the universities I was interested in, which changed me from being scared about going to university to being excited!

Without **Into**University I wouldn't have achieved all of the things I have. I would encourage any young people to attend **Into**University because it will help them achieve their dreams."

Bartek

*Bartek was born in Poland and moved to the UK as a teenager. He had limited command of English and as a result he struggled to settle in to his new school both socially and academically. From an early age he was keen to make it to university, but his school offered no careers advice. He first came to his local IU centre whilst he was studying for his GCSEs. His English improved dramatically and he was able to discuss university options and career choices with the **Into**University Education Workers. He is now in his first year at Kingston University, studying Law (LLB).*

"When I first arrived at **Into**University I was 14 years old, which is a tough enough age for any teenager, let alone one like me, with little command of the English language and unsure about how to fit into the many different groups of people I had come across since arriving in England. The Sports FOCUS Week I attended was exactly what I needed; the activities were designed to make all of us think about our futures and since then, I've never looked back. Providing opportunities like a visit to Lords cricket ground and two days at Brunel University made it suddenly feel like anything was possible.

Ever since then I have engaged in many **Into**University programmes and events, including national and international trips, a mentoring scheme, and more FOCUS weeks. All of those helped me in meeting different people and becoming much more open with them but most importantly, it allowed me to experience a life outside of school and the options that were available for people my age. Immediately, **Into**University became the primary source of help with regard to my academic life.

Going to university was always a hope but never a realistic one. I was unsure of what was required to attend higher education institutions but thanks to **Into**University, who have steered me in the right direction and stuck by me for the last five years, I was able to go to university and study the course of my choice- I am now studying Law (LLB) at Kingston University. I would not be the person that I am now if it were not for **Into**University."

Jason*

Jason is 13 and is very bright but has behavioural issues. He suffers from very low self-esteem and poor motivation. Within a short 6 months he has made huge leaps and bounds with us, improved in confidence and has become a really committed member of Academic Support. He now takes real pride in his achievements with us.*

"I have been attending **Into**University for six months now. I come to Academic Support because you can get help when you need it, it's helpful and good for school as it is useful for many subjects. I have also come to other activities at **Into**University which were fun and useful. First I came to a Medicine Week in the summer and I met new people. Then in half term I went on a trip to the Design Museum and we designed a box for jewellery. It was fun and we worked in teams."

*not his real name, as he was referred to us by social services.

Ruth

Ruth's father tragically died when she was young and her mother has been bringing her and her siblings up since then. Ruth first encountered IntoUniversity in 2008 when the team delivered a workshop in her school on learning preferences. Since then she has participated in further activities and been matched with a corporate mentor. She currently attends the University of Hertfordshire where she is studying for an Extended Degree in Science. When back in London, Ruth continues to visit the centre for advice on her course and is in regular email contact with the centre staff to let them know how she is getting on at university.

"I first met **IntoUniversity** when they came and did a workshop in sixth form. I then went on a Medicine and Sports week in the summer holidays and helped younger students in a Performing Arts week. During Year 13 **IntoUniversity** came in and ran workshops on personal statements and transition and I went to the centre for 1:1 help with my personal statement and how to apply for student finance.

Earlier this year I was given a mentor who has helped me with my budgeting for university, getting ready for university and applying for grants. **IntoUniversity** has been a really good source of information and help and all the stuff I know now I wouldn't have known if I hadn't been introduced to **IntoUniversity**."

Rebecca

Rebecca is in Year 9 and attends a secondary school in the borough of Haringey. Nobody from her family has ever attended university.

"I have been coming to Academic Support at **IntoUniversity** Haringey North since the centre opened last autumn. I was told about it by my school and I decided to come to get help with my homework. It is a quieter environment than at home and there are more books and resources.

As a reward for coming to Academic Support I was matched with a mentor last year. My mentor, Clare, studied Medicine. She was very friendly and we did activities such as cooking together and chatting about my future. We also made a board game about the steps that you can take to go to university. It was great because she let me know a lot more information about university - it opened my eyes to all the opportunities open to me.

In the summer term I took part in the Careers in FOCUS programme and I learnt about different jobs that I could do. I went to some amazing workshops run by professionals including a lawyer, sports manager and graphic designer. I am very sporty so I also got help to research careers in sport and through this I decided that I would like to become a physiotherapist.

During the summer I took part in a Sports Science FOCUS Week at **IntoUniversity**. We did sports activities such as football and archery, and visited Brunel University to see the campus and to have a graduation. It was fun to see what you can do and it was good because one of the student ambassadors was studying physiotherapy so I found out about the different things within the course. I want to go to university now, possibly even Brunel University!

I love meeting new people at **Into**University and I have got much better at working with others as well as working independently. If I didn't come to **Into**University I would just do nothing after I finish my homework, but here I get extra work to keep me occupied. I am looking forward to meeting my new mentor next week and am excited about what the future holds."

Nejmi

*Nejmi attended our centre in North Kensington. Following his time with **Into**University he read Business Studies at Aston University and now works for Accenture UK Consulting*

"Whilst being able at school, attending university was always a cause for concern for me - how was I going to support myself financially? Was I prepared for entering higher education and would I thrive? **Into**University had unwavering confidence in my ability and put me forward for an Academic Scholarship, with both the financial support to focus on my studies and the emotional support lending me the confidence to achieve, **Into**University contributed to raising the levels of my aspirations.

Since graduating, I now return to IU to volunteer time aside from my work since I want to offer the kind of support and encouragement to foster aspirations in the next generation; it is a fantastic cause and one that I can attribute to having given me the necessary confidence to achieve."

Ousama

Ousama is one of our long-standing students, who has attended our centre from primary school all the way through to starting university this autumn.

"I have attended **Into**University since I was in year five at primary school (aged 10) and I'm now in my first year of university, studying Economics and Mandarin at SOAS.

I'm proud to say that I was one of the first students to attend **Into**University and it's great to see how much the charity has grown since then. I attended the first, ever FOCUS week where, at the age of 11, I got the chance to visit Imperial College London. I started the week with little knowledge about my future opportunities and ended it presenting at a graduation ceremony at a top London university! **Into**University always had high expectations of me and I began to believe in myself.

I attended Academic Support alongside my two sisters and got help with homework, coursework, my UCAS statement and CV writing. Another FOCUS week and being paired with a university student as a mentor helped me realise my desire to continue to work hard and achieve grades good enough to achieve a place at university.

Some of the staff who were on that first FOCUS week are still there now and they are always still pleased to see me whenever I pop in. It's that welcoming environment that remains so important, to returning students like me and new students who are just about to start learning about their futures."