

**October 2012**

### **South Wales based Food Firm Expands Apprenticeship Scheme**

South Wales based food firm Tillery Valley are expanding their apprenticeship scheme by taking on a further three apprentices this month. The company appointed their first ever apprentice last year.

Tillery Valley, Sodexo's prepared food business, supplies over 600,000 meals a week to the healthcare, education and local authority sectors throughout the UK from its site near Abertillery. The company provides 350 jobs locally and has previously won the Investors in People Award for the support and training it offers its employees.

Mathew Sweet from Aberdare was selected as an apprentice in the national meal provider's engineering department last autumn as part of a new, three year scheme in conjunction with Coleg Gwent. Having successfully completed his first year studying on a Foundation Engineering Course and working for the company during his holidays, Mathew will now join the team on a full-time basis for his second year, with day release to study for a Level 3 Maintenance Diploma.

As the largest private employer in the local area, Tillery Valley is eager to continue the success of the scheme, which was set up to encourage young people to consider the food industry as a future career path. The firm is keen to increase the number of opportunities in the area by appointing a further three apprentices this year.

In addition to David Whitcombe starting as the new engineering apprentice, Tillery Valley is also welcoming Sacha Hooper as an accounts apprentice, and Rhys James into their New Product Development team. While David follows a similar first year programme to Mathew Sweet, Sasha will work with the company's finance team alongside studying, on day release, for a Business Administration NVQ and towards her AAT qualification. Rhys will be working towards an apprenticeship programme in Food Manufacturing with a focus on New Product Development.

Rebecca Gwilliam, Tillery Valley's Human Resources Manager, said:

"Our apprenticeship scheme provides the opportunity for young people to work towards professional qualifications at Coleg Gwent alongside gaining valuable hands on experience working at our site. We believe it's important to support the professional development of young people and the apprentices are a valuable investment for our business. The mix of vocational skills and hands on experience offers young people an excellent introduction to working life and we hope to see many more young people succeed within the business as a result of the scheme."

Sacha Hooper, apprentice said:

“I started my apprenticeship at Tillery Valley in September this year and the reason I chose an apprenticeship scheme was it meant that I could gain hands on experience whilst learning, which I wouldn’t get if I went to University. I think Tillery Valley is a great place to work as it is a successful business within Sodexo and a business where I can progress. My ambition is to become a fully qualified accountant within 6 years.

“The team is very supportive and I feel I have settled in well. The team are always available if I have any questions and I am thoroughly enjoying the apprenticeship where I hope to gain my relevant qualifications and develop my personal skills.”