

MILESTONE BIRTHDAY BASH

10:30 - 29 June 2007

Nearly 500 people whose lives have been transformed by a charity attended a party to celebrate its 25th anniversary.

Apex, of Leicester, has helped 12,000 unemployed people and former offenders from across the county find work over the years.

Among those who turned out to celebrate its milestone yesterday was Paul Limb, 26, of London Road, Leicester.

He referred to the charity when he was released from prison after serving more than three years for a violent offence.

Mr Limb said: "I've been learning computer skills and have done work on a CV since I started coming here in March.

"If it hadn't been for Apex and the focus its give me, I'd probably be back in prison now.

"I'm hoping to get a job in computers. I come to the Apex offices every day during the week to help me do this."

Bharad Sagar, 45, of Humberstone, Leicester, who is taking a language course at Apex, said: "I've been trying to get a job for two years now and I've been working to improve my English here, so I'll have a better chance. I've almost finished a 20-week course and I feel a lot more confident about going for jobs in shops."

Hiraben Keshavala , 30, of Evington, Leicester, said: "I've been coming here to try to improve my language skills, so I'll be able to go for more jobs."

Guests were able to view a display about the history of Apex and how it went from having just four employees in a small office in Millstone Lane, Leicester, in 1982, to becoming a major organisation with 80 members of staff.

People were also shown around the four-floor centre in Charles Street.

Ann Height, Apex chief executive, said: "I've worked for the charity for 16 years and it was wonderful to see people back here for the party.

"We always try to give people a feeling of confidence when they work with us and it's nice to celebrate everyone's achievements over the years."

Apex began by helping former offenders resettle after leaving custody, but in 1990 the charity started helping others such as the long-term unemployed.

Leicester Mercury