

Mentoring builds confidence and results

Keri Harrison didn't need much encouragement when her Southern Screenworks boss Brett Swain asked her if she'd mentor staff from other quarries who were preparing for oral exams.

Now she's assisting people from around Canterbury to prepare themselves, including a very grateful Lara Murphy from Isaac Construction who says Keri's assistance was a fantastic boost in gaining her B Grade Certificate of Competence including the oral exam pass.

After putting herself through a B Grade Certificate of Competence, Keri was already helping her own colleagues pass their exams. So when MinEx's new Chief Executive Wayne Scott asked the Aggregate and Quarry Association board to back his mentoring plan, Brett Swain didn't hesitate to approach his Health and Safety manager.

Keri Harrison put herself through her B Grade CoC in November 2015 and then set about helping her Southern Screenworks colleagues. "I developed a package of tools for our guys." She was already helping staff from Winstone GBC Canterbury quarries when Wayne Scott asked if she could also assist a couple of Isaac Construction staff.

"I'm just lucky I've got a big office," says Keri. She'd developed an easy to follow format that looks at the various guidelines, regulations and legislation affecting quarries.

"The biggest thing I focus on is how to manage risks and emergencies.

Everyone I've taught is highly competent in what they do. Many of my students just lack confidence at presenting their knowledge verbally so I work on that with them."

Most of her students are in their 40s through to late 50s. "I use a variety of tools to mentor my students and often take them out into the quarry and ask them to tell me what'd they'd do on that site." It is a good way to measure how much they have learnt from our study together and it helps me to refine my study tools.

To date, Keri has mentored 10 people with five passes and five fails, all of whom are re-sitting. "I really enjoy seeing my students grow in confidence especially when they say they feel comfortable to attend the exam", she says.

Lara Murphy is one of her passes. The former Auckland landscape gardener began working for Isaac four years ago as a plant operator. She set her sights on a B Grade CoC and was already studying hard for it when she heard of Keri's mentoring offer.

"I had exhausted myself," she says. While she was making some progress it didn't help to hear about the high failure rates with oral exams. The only external assistance had been a one-day course which didn't greatly help. "To be quite honest I didn't find it one little bit helpful. It confused me. The stuff I got in that course was stuff I already knew."

Keri provided workable two-hour periods and sent Lara and other



First-up mentor Keri Harrison, left, has helped several people including Lara Murphy through her CoC oral exams.

mentorees home with some things to think about. She also offered to be on call by phone.

Mentorees are taken through the Good Practice Guidelines for quarrying, H&S Management Plans, Risk Assessments and Emergency Management Plans.

"Keri gave me the confidence I needed to go into that exam without feeling worried," says Lara. "She didn't tell me any of the answers but would point me in the right direction."

Wayne Scott says he's blown away that in just two months since he launched the initiative, MinEx now has 20+ mentors providing support to CoC candidates in various parts of the country.

• *If you think you could assist, please contact Wayne on 021 944 336, wayne@minex.org.nz*

The Aggregate & Quarry Association appreciates the support of our associate members

