Dental nurse named Greater Birmingham Apprentice of the Year 2022

A young dental nurse who has had to juggle her studies, work and being a home carer has been crowned our Greater Birmingham Apprentice of the Year.

Summar Wilkes works at Smile Style Dental Care Centre in Stafford where she is also studying for a dental nursing apprenticeship.

She won the Health, Education and Care category at our Greater Birmingham Apprenticeship Awards 2022 before being picked ahead of the five other individual category winners to be crowned overall Apprentice of the Year **(scroll down for the full list of winners).**

Judges were impressed by the way the 18 year old has managed her studies and training at the practice, including working weekends and sacrificing her social life, while also taking on caring duties for her mother at home after she fell ill.

The panel said she showed exceptional maturity for someone so young and she was a credit to her employer while her training provider Performance Through People praised the fact she had not let any setbacks affect her contribution at work where she is due to finish her apprenticeship next spring.

All the winners on stage at the Greater Birmingham Apprenticeship Awards 2022

Speaking at the ceremony, Summar told BirminghamLive she felt really overwhelmed by winning the two awards and a little lost for words.

Reflecting on her apprenticeship journey so far, she said: “I care for my mother which has been quite challenging at times and I’ve not always been able to meet deadlines but my assessor has been really helpful with pushing them back for me.

“I’ve enjoyed being able to work and study at the same time and learn on the job – it’s a lot more helpful than trying to learn sitting down in a classroom.

“My goal is to qualify as a dental nurse and then train in the field of orthodontics which I will also be able to do on the job via more courses. My long-term aim is to work up to becoming an orthodontist, I would really love that.”

The annual awards, now in its fourth year, was once again held at Edgbaston stadium in Birmingham and headline sponsored by training provider BCTG Group.

Hosted by Heart broadcaster Ed James, they celebrated not only individual apprentices but also their employers and the training providers helping them through their education.

They are run by BirminghamLive in partnership with the Ladder for Greater Birmingham campaign which was launched in 2018 and has been creating thousands of new apprenticeship opportunities across Birmingham and Solihull.

Among the other winners were West Midlands Ambulance Service, itself a multiple winner at our previous apprenticeship awards, HS2, Sunbelt Rentals and Aspire Active which won the education category for the second year in a row.

Gallery: See the pictures of all our winners at the Apprenticeship Awards

Kevin Davis, chairman of the Ladder for Greater Birmingham campaign and chairman of our judging panel, said: “Once again, the nominees to our fourth annual apprenticeship awards didn’t disappoint.

“While all our winners are worthy of the title, I and my fellow judges were blown away with the commitment, resiliency and dedication shown by our overall Apprentice of the Year Summar.

“She definitely has a wise head on young shoulders and I can only see a bright future for her going forward. All our finalists and winners have shown exceptional endeavour and fortitude in their work and training and long may it continue.”

Also on the 2022 judging panel was Suzie Branch-Haddow from Birmingham Metropolitan College, Fraser Ingham from Skillsfirst, Natalie Penrose from HS2, Kate Reynolds from Birmingham City Council, Mike Smith from The Apprenticeship Works, Gail Tipper from University College Birmingham and Rebecca Waterfield from South & City College Birmingham.

Training providers play a vital role in the development of apprentices so the awards and Ladder campaign would like to recognise the following for their work with this year's finalists – Aston University, Birmingham Metropolitan College, HS2, Ixion Training part of Shaw Trust, JTL Training, Juniper Training, Performance Through People, PwC, Sandwell and Birmingham NHS Trust, University College Birmingham and Weightmans.

The full list of 2022 winners and sponsors is:

Apprentice of the Year – Health, Education & Care, sponsored by Skillsfirst

Summar Wilkes, Smile Style Dental Care Centre

Apprentice of the Year – Construction and Property Industries,

sponsored by Birmingham Metropolitan College

Beatriz Ramos Albert, HS2

Apprentice of the Year – Travel, Tourism and Hospitality, sponsored by Birmingham City Council

Barnabas Davis, University of Birmingham

Apprentice of the Year – Engineering and Manufacturing, sponsored by South & City College Birmingham

Aaron Neary, Ansaldo Nuclear

Apprentice of the Year – Professional Services, sponsored by University College Birmingham

Hollie Tomkins, West Midlands Ambulance Service

Apprentice of the Year – Tech, Digital and Creative Industries, sponsored by Birmingham Airport

Samran Garewal and William Tabbron, both from PwC

Greater Birmingham Apprentice of the Year 2022, (chosen from the six category winners above), sponsored by Royal Mail

Summar Wilkes, Smile Style Dental Care Centre

Small Employer of the Year (1-50 staff), sponsored by BCTG Group

Fairytales Day Nursery

Medium Employer of the Year (51-249 staff)

SPV Special Projects

Large Employer of the Year (250+ staff)

Sunbelt Rentals

Training Provider of the Year, sponsored by The Ladder

Foundation

The Development Manager

Education Engagement Award, sponsored by Greater Birmingham & Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership

Aspire Active Education Group

Training provider Performance Through People was our event drinks sponsor.

The awards are run in conjunction with the Ladder for Greater Birmingham campaign, an initiative launched in 2018 aimed at creating hundreds of new apprenticeships in Birmingham and Solihull.
To find out more about the Ladder campaign and how employing apprentices can benefit your business, visit www.ladderforbirmingham.co.uk or call **03332 409 699**