Cardiff student wins Grand Ideas Award

A young entrepreneur based in Cardiff has scooped a national award after setting up his own company selling loupes to fellow dentistry students in an aim to improve their physical wellbeing.

Around 70 per cent of dental students report chronic musculoskeletal pain by their third year of training, but are unable to buy magnification loupes - a magnification tool that helps dentists improve their posture and decrease their operating time - due to their extortionate price tag. UKloupes was set up to counteract this and enable students to buy high quality loupes at a fraction of their retail price.

Dave Stone aged 27, impressed the panel of judges in the Shell LiveWIRE Grand Ideas Awards with his business idea and has been awarded £1,000 to develop UKloupes.

As a final year dental student, Dave was determined for loupes to be made available to all oral healthcare students. Concerned about the high prices of loupes on the market, he looked into selling the device directly to his peers and found by cutting out the middle man, he could sell them at a more affordable price. UKloupes was originally set up and run by students, for students but now also sells loupes to postgraduate trainees, SHOs and surgical practitioners.

The Shell LiveWIRE Grand Idea Awards, launched in 2009 against the backdrop of the recession, are designed to give aspiring entrepreneurs a no-strings-attached financial boost of £1,000 to help them get their business ideas off the ground. The awards are held monthly and entrepreneurs from all over the UK can submit their entries through the LiveWIRE website.

Dave Stone, founder of UKloupes, comments: “In such a tough economic climate, it’s easy to be disheartened about setting up on your own, but for all the young entrepreneurs out there, I urge you to give it a go. Initiatives, like Shell LiveWIRE, are often key to turning your business ideas into a reality. The financial boost of winning a Grand Ideas Award has been a huge help and will allow me to attend many important trade fairs, but in the long run, it’s the credibility of winning an award like this that really makes a difference.”

Dave hopes to expand his business and help other dental students by training a representative at every dental school in the country to teach other students about the benefits of loupes and UKloupes products.

James Smith, Chairman of Shell UK, said: “There is a wealth of entrepreneurial talent in the UK and I hope other young entrepreneurs will be inspired by Dave to capitalise on their own ideas. We wish UKloupes every success and hope the Shell LiveWIRE Grand Ideas Award will help Dave to take the business all the way.”

To find out more or enter the Shell LiveWIRE Grand Ideas Awards visit www.shelllivewire.br

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The Shirley Glasstone Hughes (SGH) Trust Fund recently announced that a £200,000 research budget has been made available to fund research into primary dental care.

The SGH Trust Fund invites applications from research teams that include practitioners currently working in a primary care setting to conduct research in answer to the following question: Do people living in deprived areas define oral health differently from people who live in less deprived areas, and what influences their oral health-related behaviours?

Commenting on the topic, Peter Ward, Trustee of the SGH Trust Fund said: “Much-needed evidence centres around the attitudes of people from different socio-economic groups towards oral health. Not substantive evidence currently exists and the Trust is now looking to commission primary research in this important area.”

The closing date for applications is 31 July 2010.

The topic for research was selected by dentists and dental care practitioners who were offered an opportunity to vote for their preferred area of research via the Trust’s website, the Primary Care Dentistry Research Forum. Meanwhile, voting on the website is ongoing to select questions for consideration for the next call for funding applications.

In 1990, Shirley Glasstone Hughes, a dentist, researcher and BDA member, left her legacy to a charitable trust. This trust was established as The British Dental Association Shirley Glasstone Hughes Memorial Prize for Dental Research.

For further information, please contact Beth Caines at b.caines@bda.org, by phone at 029 20 436 184, or log-on to www.dentistryresearch.org.