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## Designing for transformed lives

Northumbria Design students have developed a logo and website for a new North East charity.

Second Year BA Interactive Media Design students were guided by their tutors to work on creative design concepts for a strong brand and online presence for The Oswin Project, launched last month.

Founded by Reverend Fiona Sample, the new charity aims to support ex-offenders in North East England by sourcing paid employment and apprenticeship opportunities in the construction and hospitality industries.

The 32 design students pitched their identity concepts and logo ideas to Rev Sample and other charity trustees. After two rounds of design development the judging panel chose the winning logo design, created by Tylen St. Hilaire along with fellow student Oscar Chiu, who developed the website.

Tylen's design was inspired by ornate Anglo-Saxon wood carvings from the charity's namesake, King Oswin of Deira. Constructed from overlapping circles, the logo symbolises people coming together and the breaking of cycles.

He said: "Each half-ring and circle pair forms a birds-eye-view of a person holding onto two other people, representing the support of the Oswin Project, and the 'plus' shaped arrangement is a subtle positive.

"The logo falls partway between 'charitable' and 'corporate' design to appeal to the organisation's different audiences. Potential service users and the public will recognise the group as a not-for-profit and are more likely to be sympathetic as a result, while potential business partners will see a professional-looking mark, giving them faith that the Oswin Project is a trustworthy and serious organisation."

Oscar added: "One of the biggest challenges for the Oswin Project was tackling the public perception of ex-offenders, we wanted to create an image that is open and friendly that could change perspectives. Despite a short timescale, we managed to deliver a website that is both high quality and without compromise."

Tylen and Oscar were invited to visit one of the charity's current renovation projects in Pegswood. The two students met with the first four 'Oswinners' – ex-offenders who have been helped by the Oswin Project to get an apprenticeship in construction – and their mentors on site.

The Oswin Project provides ex-offenders with support from the moment they leave prison until they have achieved employment, offering training and opportunities to gain qualifications. The aim is to give people a fresh start and a genuine second chance to rebuild their lives, as well as benefitting wider society by reducing the cycle of re-offending.

Reverend Fiona Sample said: "The students have impressed everyone. There

were some wonderful designs and we all wanted to select more than one. How easy it would have been had we needed more logos!

“Northumbria University is so often involved in local projects, making life better for communities in the North East. They will remain involved with The Oswin Project.”

Design tutor Jamie Steane, Principal Lecturer in Media and Communication Design at Northumbria, oversaw the student project. He said: “The students were set a challenging brief to help rebrand and design a communication platform for the trustees of the Oswin Project to spread their message and engage with their stakeholders.

“The students collectively did a fabulous job but this would not have been possible without the infectious passion of the trustees and the inspiration of the ex-offenders who were part of the pilot project.”

The students’ winning logo and website can be seen at [www.oswinproject.org.uk](http://www.oswinproject.org.uk)

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