

Amazing support allows Kobi to get his life back

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A 22-year-old Ardfinnan man has hailed as a life saver a training and mentoring course he took on at a time when he was struggling in his life.

Kobi Burke, a man who faces social anxiety, disorder and depression challenges, gave an emotional address to graduates at the annual award ceremony at the Clonmel Community Training Centre.

He outlined how his decision to enrol on a catering course at the centre changed his life.

Kobi told *The Nationalist* that he was drifting aimlessly

for over two years after doing his Leaving Certificate at Coláiste Dún Iascaigh.

He explained that throughout his life he felt like an outsider and he was always having to invent excuses about who he was just to be treated the same as everybody else but that was not the case after he accepted a place at Clonmel Community Training Centre. "I was met with nothing but love and respect, I did not have to come up with any excuses. It was okay to be the way I am.

"It made such a difference to my life," said Kobi. Because of that environment, Kobi said he thrived and he is appealing to people who find

themselves in a similar position of despair never to give up.

"I don't think I would be still here today had I not found this course and the chance it gave me. Before this course I was in a very dark place, this course saved me. I had basically dropped out and given up.

"I was going to school one day a week, I was going home because of getting panic attacks in school and the next day I would not get up and go to school," said Kobi.

A person he met recommended Clonmel Training Centre and he decided to give it a go.

"I went thinking it would kill time and that it would give

me something to allow me muddle through the day. From day one however I was feeling better about myself and enjoying doing the things I was doing and being with the people in the group and my tutors.

"It was an amazing experience. It was a powerful experience for me. "I am in a happy place now thanks to everybody on the course. It is nearly nine months since I last had a panic attack.

"I connected with everybody and I now plan to start social care studies. I now have the confidence to go on.

"My life is back on track and I am happy with where I



Kobi Burke is grateful to everybody at the Clonmel Community Training Centre for helping him to get his life back on track

am going now," he said. Kobi hopes that his experience from being on the verge of giving up to now being able to look ahead with confidence and optimism will help others.

"I had no idea things were going to change so quickly for me and I would say to

anybody in despair to hold on to the hope that things will change and life will look brighter.

"Don't stay silent about what you are going through. There are people out there who can help," Kobi advised people who may be suffering in silence.