

## Why join Toastmasters?

I was always a quiet, shy child. Even at school, I missed several opportunities to take part in a play or lead a group. As I grew up, I avoided speaking in groups and the jobs I chose were always 'background' jobs, avoiding the public gaze. This shyness and fear of public speaking came to a head one day. It was the first meeting of a course I was attending. Twenty of us sat in a circle taking turns to introduce ourselves to the audience. I was so terrified my voice came out in a whisper!! I knew it was time to tackle the problem.

Before long I noticed an advertisement for Toastmasters "Do you lack confidence in public speaking?" That was me! I went along to our local club and was amazed by the friendly welcome and encouragement I found there. After two visits I joined up. I have been a member of Toastmasters for five years now. During that time I have completed four speech manuals and had many speaking roles. Indeed at each meeting every member gets a chance to speak either with a planned speech or by taking part in table topics (impromptu speaking). Our meetings are fun and friendly and the speeches entertaining. There is also an opportunity to serve on the committee and follow a leadership as well as communication track.

The benefits of Toastmasters are countless. The confidence gained from public speaking affects not only those people looking for advancement at work but on a personal level too, within your circle of family and friends.

I can only say joining Toastmasters was one of the best decisions I ever made and I only regret I didn't join earlier!

Diane

Bishopdale Toastmasters