

Inspirational Student secures dream gap year

A DENBIGHSHIRE sixth form student is preparing to set off on a year long adventure in Asia as a volunteer English teacher.

Natalie McCall, deputy head girl at Denbigh High School, applied for the gap year placement with overseas education charity, Project Trust.

After getting through the application process, and successfully completing a challenging week long selection course on the Scottish Hebridean island of Coll, Natalie received the news that she had been accepted for a placement working in Unawatuna, Sri Lanka.

Currently balancing fundraising for the trip with revision for her A level exams in maths, physics, chemistry and biology, Natalie is looking forward to getting started on what has been a long-held ambition.

She said: "I was thrilled to receive the news that I had been accepted, this is something I have wanted to do since I was little. At primary school my teacher had recently come back from Uganda and spoke about her amazing experiences in an assembly. That stuck with me and has inspired me to want to do something to help educate

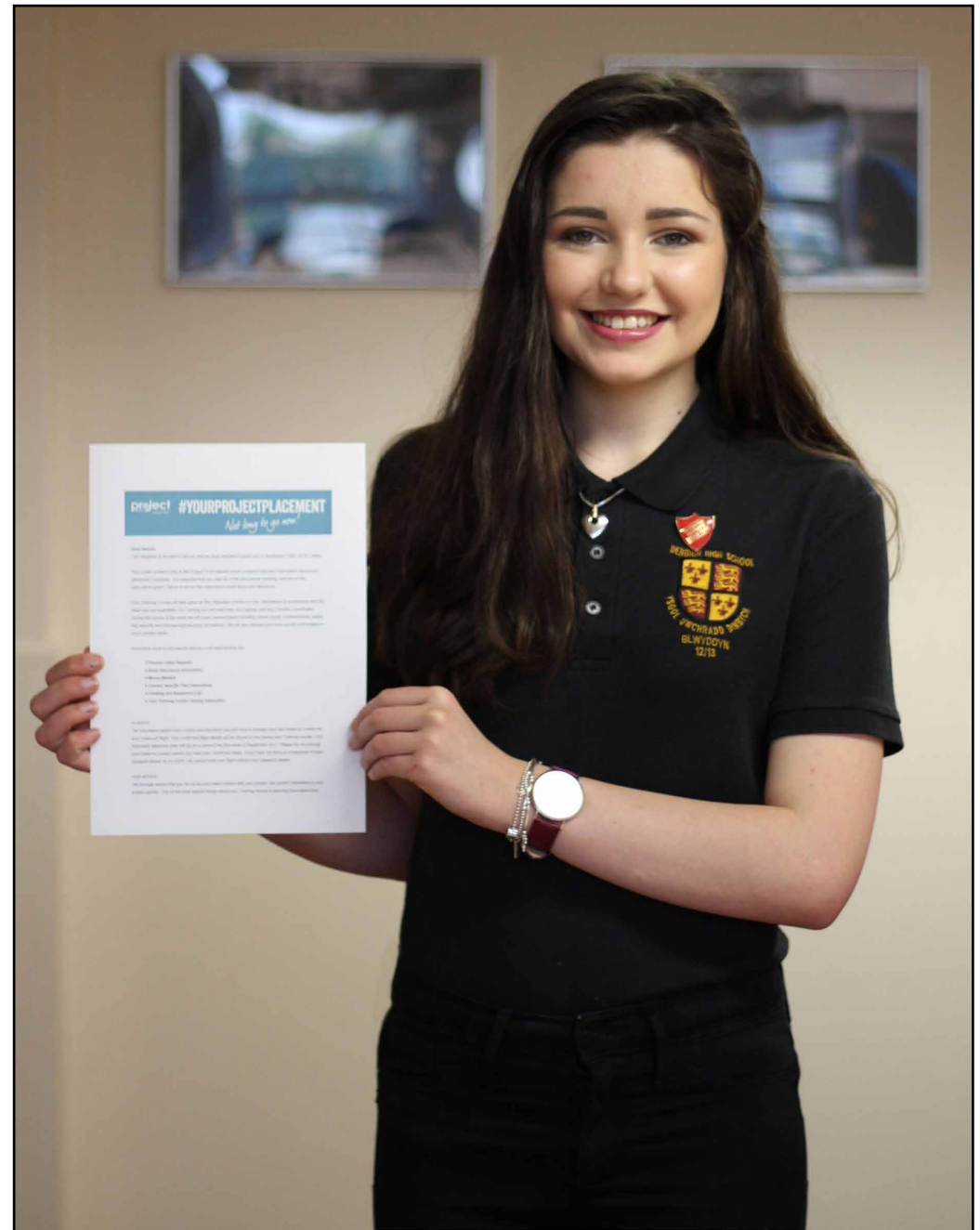
children in another country.

"I will be working as a volunteer teacher for the Senahasa Trust, which is a humanitarian charity that was set up to re-build communities around Galle after the devastating 2004 Boxing Day Tsunami.

"To enable me to get there I need to raise £6,200. My friends and school have been really supportive in helping me with the fundraising. We've walked up Snowdon, held bake sales, organised events at local retirement homes and I've also applied to charitable trusts for funds. So far, I have raised £5,000 so just another £1,500 to go now.

I am so excited to have this opportunity and would like to thank everyone who has helped support me in achieving this, it really is a dream come true."

When she returns from Sri Lanka, Natalie plans to study nutrition and medicine at University College London (UCL) where her place has been deferred for a year. Her career ambition is to set up a wellness centre and work with teenagers who struggle with mental health disorders associated with nutrition.



Andy Skeoch, head of Sixth form at Denbigh High School said: "Natalie is an incredible young lady and a wonderful role model for our younger pupils. She is academically talented and is predicted to achieve top grades in all her A level subjects.

"She is such a caring young person with great empathy, compassion and maturity beyond her years and we are

all extremely proud of her. This is a fantastic opportunity for her and we look forward to following her success in the future."

Natalie will be heading out to Sri Lanka at the beginning of September. To donate towards her trip, please view her fundraising page: <http://virginmoneygiving.com/NatalieMcCall>.