

# DORSET BUSINESS

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## Leoni is a chocolate chip off the old block

A YOUNG entrepreneur is following in her father's footsteps by entering the world of chocolate making.

Leoni Wilton, is a self-confessed chocoholic, is the daughter of Bournemouth chocolatier Gerry Wilton, who set up a business providing chocolate fountains for weddings, parties and film premieres before founding the world's first chocolate-themed hotel in Bournemouth.

Having grown up around chocolate, Leoni is now launching her own venture – Leoni's Children's Chocolate Parties.

The 21-year-old is promising hands-on fun for children aged seven to 14.

Leoni told the Echo: "I've always loved helping my father out at his chocolate events – particularly his chocolate shoe making sessions – so children's chocolate parties seemed a natural next step."

Gerry added: "This was very much Leoni's idea."

"She's been coming with me to help at chocolate events since her early teens, so she's grown up seeing how much fun working

**By Steven Smith**

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with chocolate can be. When she came home from work one day saying she wanted to set up a children's party business, I said, 'Go for it.'

In the past Leoni has helped her dad on high-profile projects including making a chocolate fountain for the premiere of Charlie and the Chocolate Factory and providing one for the wedding of Katie Price and Peter Andre.

Leoni, who studied catering, added: "As the family business grew I just became more and more involved."

"I absolutely loved it. I started going with dad on chocolate team-building events and learned the art of making chocolate. When he and mum set up the Chocolate Boutique Hotel, we needed to make chocolates for guests so I mastered the art of tempering chocolate."

Now she hopes to emulate her father's success.

"I've held nine parties so far



**GROWING BUSINESS:** Leoni Wilton is enjoying spreading the word on chocolate

and the children really love it. We make chocolate pizzas and chocolate hearts, choco-planes and chocolate lollies.

"We practise writing in chocolate and have a chocolate fountain running throughout."

"There's also a chocolate truffle making session for older chil-

dren. And if parents aren't driving, we include a glass of wine for them too."

Find out more at [thechocolateboutiquehotel.co.uk/leonis-childrens-chocolate-parties.html](http://thechocolateboutiquehotel.co.uk/leonis-childrens-chocolate-parties.html). You can also email [leoni@chocolatedelight.co.uk](mailto:leoni@chocolatedelight.co.uk) or call 01202 759979 for more details.

## Be aware of impairments

A NEW initiative to encourage more employees to take up awareness training on Asperger's syndrome, dyslexia, autism and Down's syndrome is now available in Bournemouth.

Award-winning Signs4Life, which also offers awareness workshops on disability, deafness and visual impairment, is showcasing the initiative to help staff communicate and engage with their colleagues, service users and clients who may have learning disabilities.

Fozia Parveen, Signs4Life managing director, said: "You never know when you will come into contact with a client, a colleague or member of the public who is autistic, deaf or visually impaired."

"We are working with organisations as varied as The British Red Cross, supermarkets, schools and hospitals."

"Each of our workshops helps you comply with the Disability Discrimination Act and Equality Acts 2010 and encourages a "can do" approach to the 12 million people in the UK who have a physical, sensory or learning disability."

To find out more about the Signs4Life employee courses in Bournemouth call Fozia on 07964 019764 or visit [signs4life.org.uk](http://signs4life.org.uk).

## Solar project is heating up

POOLE Housing Partnership's (PHP) pilot solar panels project has taken off, with the first 55 panels now installed on the top of a block of council-owned maisonettes in the heart of Poole town.

## Accredited to fit PV panels

POOLE-based electrical contractor Batchelor Electrical has gained accreditation with the nationally recognised Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS) for the installation of solar photovoltaic (PV) panels.

## Firm offering 'free' power to those with space on the roof

DORSET homeowners are being invited to take advantage of a new scheme aimed at reducing their energy bills.

Engensa is rolling out the initiative across Bournemouth, allowing people to rent out their roof to the company, which will pay for installation and maintenance of solar panels.

The work means the homeowners will then be able to claim a feed-in

tariff (FiT) and receive a source of free, green electricity.

Engensa's chief executive Toby Darbyshire said: "Solar is a brilliant investment for families across the UK, but not everyone who owns their own home has the money to invest."

"We are launching the SunRoof free solar scheme to make sure as many families as possible can benefit from dramatic cuts in their elec-

tricity bills and from the satisfaction of turning their home green."

Demand has rocketed as a result of increasing energy prices and the highest ever FiT, which is only available on panels installed before the end of March 2012.

Engensa has opened a new hub in Hinton Admiral, working with the New Forest Estate, as a base for its three installation teams and team of local surveyors.

## Award win for website

THE CobWebs Company, owned and run by husband-and-wife team Shaun and Su Cowell in Blandford, has won an award for its website.

The competition, run by computer software company Serif, received more than 2,600 entries.

The company produces handmade baby hats, customised bodysuits and toddlers' T-shirts.

## Your Daily Echo Business section

COVERING the business community has always been an important part of what we do and now we are increasing our coverage of the business community across Dorset and the New Forest.

On a daily basis and in our monthly Dorset Business magazine, we will be looking in depth at local businesses

big and small and the issues affecting them. The team is headed by the Echo's head of content, Andy Martin, along with chief reporter, Darren Slade and senior reporters Steven Smith, Emma Joseph and Diana Henderson who will be looking after business in Poole.

Be sure to keep us in touch with all your business news.

You can contact us on 01202 411300 or email either [businessnews@bournemouthcho.co.uk](mailto:businessnews@bournemouthcho.co.uk) or [newsdesk@bournemouthcho.co.uk](mailto:newsdesk@bournemouthcho.co.uk) to tell us your business goes on.

Contact Diana Henderson at our Poole office on 01202 675413 or at [diana.henderson@bournemouthcho.co.uk](mailto:diana.henderson@bournemouthcho.co.uk).

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