











A Home at University Care experienced and Estranged Students Exhibition



Photographic stands


<p>1. Ella, (portrait stand)</p>	 	<p>My university experience was life-changing. When I think back to who I was around five or six years ago, I'm astonished at how much has changed and for the better.</p> <p>My social skills were pretty poor back then but a little time, support from friends and having such a secure living situation really helped me blossom.</p> <p>I studied Media and then completed a Master's in Public Relations. I've always been the kind of person to ask 'why' and want to know how it all works. I completed both my degrees whilst working in communications-related positions to apply my knowledge in a practical setting.</p> <p>The Unite Foundation helped me secure an internship with a social media company. I am now working in my chosen field, and I absolutely love it.</p>
<p>2. Cereza (portrait strand)</p>	 	<p>On my 16th birthday my family presented me with a clear choice. I could choose my education, or I could choose them.</p> <p>I would have to give up my future, my dreams, my hope and my worldly curiosity. I would be locked away in the family home, under abuse and financial manipulation but would be assured of the family safety net.</p> <p>"You wouldn't betray your mother" he said.</p> <p>"Your father wants you to stay here and take care of me, and that's that" she said.</p> <p>"Stop resisting. You have everything here. Why do you need to go to school? They'll brainwash you."</p>



		So, what did I say, you ask? I just graduated.
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3. Lewis (portrait stand)	 <div data-bbox="692 478 925 841"> <p>Lewis</p> <p>University for me has been an incredible fun and eye-opening journey of discovery. Given a year of my experience was pandemic stricken, which in hindsight I see as a blessing in disguise, I have learned so much about myself and the endless opportunities that await me in this world.</p> <p>I feel so blessed and fortunate to have been awarded the scholarship by the Unite Foundation and I will be forever grateful because I know without this, my journey through university would be incomparable to the one I've had.</p> <p>I just end with a huge THANK YOU to the Unite Foundation!</p> </div>	<p>University for me has been an incredible fun and eye-opening journey of discovery.</p> <p>Given a year of my experience was pandemic stricken, which in hindsight I see as a blessing in disguise, I have learned so much about myself and the endless opportunities that await me in this world.</p> <p>I feel so blessed and fortunate to have been awarded the scholarship by the Unite Foundation and I will be forever grateful because I know without this, my journey through university would be incomparable to the one I've had.</p> <p>I just end with a huge THANK YOU to the Unite Foundation!</p>
4. Christian (portrait)	<p>Christian</p>  <div data-bbox="692 901 925 1265"> <p>Christian</p> <p>University. An opportunity for positive growth as a person and to pursue a subject I have passion for. An opportunity as well to change who I am or, more accurately, was.</p> <p>The most important part of university was the ability to be independent and not reliant on anyone, particularly due to the Unite Foundation scholarship allowing me the freedom to attend university without worrying about accommodation. Bristol has been amazing obviously. Like most people say when they attend university, the people I have met here have been incredible. I think being able to carve out that large circle of friends has also been a real support and help in times when I have been depressed and felt low.</p> <p>I have been able to properly grow and mature as a student and person. This has only really been possible because I had enough funds —and therefore the time— to really put the work in.</p> </div>	<p>University. An opportunity for positive growth as a person and to pursue a subject I have passion for. An opportunity as well to change who I am or, more accurately, was.</p> <p>The most important part of university was the ability to be independent and not reliant on anyone, particularly due to the Unite Foundation scholarship allowing me the freedom to attend university without worrying about accommodation. Bristol has been amazing obviously. Like most people say when they attend university, the people I have met here have been incredible. I think being able to carve out that large circle of friends has also been a real support and help in times when I have been depressed and felt low.</p> <p>I have been able to properly grow and mature as a student and person. This has only really been possible because I had enough funds —and therefore the time— to really put the work in.</p>

<p>5. Jax (portrait stand)</p>	  <p>Jax</p> <p>I woke up one morning to a ding; the ding I had been waiting weeks for. I opened my mail and there it was staring back at me, my final results. My uni experience flashed before my eyes.</p> <p>The adventures in 1st year with friends that will be by my side for years to come. The confidence my tutors helped me build in 2nd year which gave me courage to relocate to London all summer and study filmmaking. The fact that I could take my scholarship with me and live for free in the capital so I could afford to take that opportunity. The 3rd year I ventured to study abroad in Seoul, South Korea.</p> <p>In 4th year I managed to achieve a 1st class BA Hons in journalism. I now have my dream job working for the BBC in Scotland. I recently made my first film, 'Should I tell you I'm trans?'</p> <p>None of this would have been possible without the foundations of safety and security that the Unite Foundation provided me with from day one.</p>	<p>I woke up one morning to a ding; the ding I had been waiting weeks for. I opened my mail and there it was staring back at me, my final results. My uni experience flashed before my eyes.</p> <p>The adventures in 1st year with friends that will be by my side for years to come. The confidence my tutors helped me build in 2nd year which gave me courage to relocate to London all summer and study filmmaking. The fact that I could take my scholarship with me and live for free in the capital so I could afford to take that opportunity. The 3rd year I ventured to study abroad in Seoul, South Korea.</p> <p>In 4th year I managed to achieve a 1st class BA Hons in journalism. I now have my dream job working for the BBC in Scotland. I recently made my first film, 'Should I tell you I'm trans?'.</p> <p>None of this would have been possible without the foundations of safety and security that the Unite Foundation provided me with from day one.</p>
<p>6. Jay (portrait stand)</p>	  <p>Jay</p> <p>Being granted the Unite Foundation scholarship has been positively life changing for me. You see no one can ever take away your knowledge, making your education priceless. The person I was before and the person I am now are very distinctive. Having the Unite Foundation team support and believe in me, has enabled me to bring positive manifestations into fruition and also come out of my comfort zone and break down barriers.</p> <p>Since starting this journey I have become involved in the University Royal Navy Unit as well as clinically practising my dental degree to help the local community and the homeless. I've become a big believer in giving back to your local community and I've learned to appreciate the rewarding feeling of positively impacting someone else's life too. With the Unite Foundation's support I've matured and reflected upon my life on a spiritual level too. I've strong gratitude for being able to be in a position of growth.</p>	<p>Being granted the Unite Foundation scholarship has been positively life changing for me. You see no one can ever take away your knowledge, making your education priceless. The person I was before and the person I am now are very distinctive. Having the Unite Foundation team support and believe in me, has enabled me to bring positive manifestations into fruition and also come out of my comfort zone and break down barriers.</p> <p>Since starting this journey I have become involved in the University Royal Navy Unit as well as clinically practising my dental degree to help the local community and the homeless. I've become a big believer in giving back to your local community and I've learned to appreciate the rewarding feeling of positively impacting someone else's life too. With the Unite Foundation's support I've matured and reflected upon my life on a spiritual level too. I've strong gratitude for being able to be in a position of growth.</p>
<p>7. Fran (landscape stand)</p>		<p>University is such a multifaceted experience. It isn't just, and never will be, one memory but always a collection—it has really enabled me to grow to be the person that I am now.</p>

	 <div data-bbox="696 316 1048 536"> <p>Fran</p> <p>University is a life-changing experience. I feel like I've been thrown into a new world where I have to learn to be independent and take responsibility for myself. It's been a challenge, but I've grown so much in the last few years. I've learned to be more confident and to stand up for myself. I've also learned to be more empathetic and to listen to others. I've made some great friends and I'm really enjoying the experience. I'm grateful for the opportunity to be here and to learn from the best. I'm excited to see what the future holds for me.</p> </div>	<p>I've gone through so many social and academic problems, which have taught me to worry less and laugh more! These problems have permitted me to learn so much about who I am and what I could be in my time at university on the scholarship.</p> <p>It's developed both my academic and professional skills, but has also enabled me to work on my life skills and my emotional intelligence. One important lesson I have learned is that only time goes in one direction, we humans are allowed to sway away from norms and confines. If you feel like doing something else do it.</p> <p>Make your present self happy, it is worth it!</p>
8. Lucy (landscape stand)	 <div data-bbox="696 754 1048 991"> <p>Lucy</p> <p>University is a life-changing experience. I feel like I've been thrown into a new world where I have to learn to be independent and take responsibility for myself. It's been a challenge, but I've grown so much in the last few years. I've learned to be more confident and to stand up for myself. I've also learned to be more empathetic and to listen to others. I've made some great friends and I'm really enjoying the experience. I'm grateful for the opportunity to be here and to learn from the best. I'm excited to see what the future holds for me.</p> </div>	<p>I would like to see greater awareness and support for care experienced and estranged students the whole way through the education system.</p> <p>I felt very unsupported at school. I was told in high school by my guidance teacher that "university wasn't for me". I think there is a lot of stigma for care experienced and estranged students.</p> <p>I didn't get good grades in high school due to the trauma and difficulties I had gone through. I had to go to college for 4 years before getting into university and although I got an A in my HNC college course, only one university let me in. I felt judged by the fact I did not get good grades in high school but it was hard for me to focus in school due to living on "survival mode" for so long.</p> <p>I have benefitted from the Unite Foundation Scholarship by getting 3 years free accommodation and it has given me a lot of independence and respite from caring roles within my family. My flat is a safe space where I can focus on me, myself and my future.</p> <p>I am lucky at my university. We have a team for care experienced and estranged students, I have someone I can go to if I am struggling or need advice or a rant.</p>

		<p>Having that point of contact for care experienced and estranged students is crucial, and all universities should have this.</p> <p>Studying at university without the support of family can be tough but it is a big relief to know I have my scholarship accommodation.</p>
9. Stephen (landscape stand)		<p>Hey there! I'm a Foundation Scholar and Graphic Design student at De Montfort University, Leicester. Throughout my studies, I've used the freedom the scholarship gave me to take every opportunity to build my skills, CV and portfolio of work.</p> <p>This is going to be so important when I leave university as I'll need to entirely support myself. So far, I've gained exposure to brand, marketing and communications roles across different organisations, including societies like Demon Media where I produced content for their radio, TV and magazine strands.</p> <p>I also proudly designed a logo for a new university department and worked closely with the Unite Foundation on rebranding and launching our 'This is Us' identity.</p> <p>I believe all students should follow their passion and see where it leads them. For me, my experiences and achievements gained me recognition and reputation, which led to an internship within Thames Water's Learning & Development Digital Design Studio. I hope these opportunities continue throughout my future career upon graduation this summer.</p>

<p>10. Dannii – (landscape stand)</p>		<p>University wasn't something I ever thought about doing, I didn't have the grades or the support to even think about going.</p> <p>But after some personal circumstances changed I decided I really wanted to experience university life. An opportunity to leave behind my past and move into the future.</p> <p>Luckily, I got the Unite Foundation scholarship which was such an important aid for my uni experience as it gave me support and safety. It took the pressure off.</p> <p>For me university has been a very personal experience, I think of it now as a great stepping-stone to adulthood, it allows you to progress in a stable manner.</p> <p>University gave me time to breathe and allowed me the space to grow, learn and figure out who I am. It gave me the chance to think big about my future and the time to plan it.</p>
<p>11. Paige (landscape stand)</p>		<p>I chose to move city to study; to move away from my family dysfunctions.</p> <p>I met some amazing people that really helped me to open up and be my true self. There were times of course when it was sometimes difficult mentally with the workload but if I could go back and relive my time at uni, I genuinely wouldn't change a thing.</p> <p>Believing in yourself is easier when those around you believe in you too. Becoming a Unite Foundation scholarship student and being at the university I was in, gave me that new perspective. Uni really was the best 3 years!</p> <p>Although now I'm a graduate, I'm still very much connected to uni life and the Foundation. I've been able to use skills from my degree to produce materials around estranged student solidarity week and I love presenting the This Is Us podcast where I chat tunes and tales of uni life with current care experienced and estranged students.</p>

		University gave me freedom. The Unite Foundation gave me university... and then more!
12. Nyomi (landscape stand)		<p>My university experience was like riding a rollercoaster.</p> <p>I experienced all the wonderful delights of living and studying in the best city in the north, Manchester!</p> <p>It was the first time I had my independence, living in a home to call mine, falling in love with the culture around me and enjoying the social life the city has to offer.</p> <p>I met my best friend for life, started my future in a career I love and most importantly, I grew as a person. I will never forget my university experience as it was the start of new beginnings and a reminder that there is always purpose to pain.</p> <p>Through university I had the ability to grow into my identity, become free of financial burden and have my estrangement validated.</p> <p>I have first-hand experience of the Foundation's continual support to make estranged and care leaver students' lives better.</p> <p>I'm very proud to now help deliver that for students of the future by joining the charity as a Trustee.</p>