

Pole dancing business and community hero wins at National Happiness Awards

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A former anorexia sufferer who uses pole-dancing and burlesque lessons to support other troubled women.

A charity which organises 'giggle doctors' who visit children in hospital.

An office development with happiness as a foundation.

All have triumphed at the National Happiness Awards
(<http://www.laughology.co.uk/happiness-awards/national-happiness-awards-2018>).

Natalie Morgan-Dew runs the Mizz Twisted Cherry Aerial and Alternative Dance Studio in Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire and was named Happiest Workplace Person, while Theodora Children's Charity in London won the Happiest Team accolade.

Prize-winning pole dancer and instructor Natalie battled anorexia and agrophobia for 12 years and beat the disease when she feel pregnant with her daughter, who is now four and is the youngest member of MENSA.

Natalie set up her alternative dance studio not only as a place where women can go to keep fit, but also as a place where mental health and is just as big a priority. She has helped her students through a range of traumatic experiences including sexual abuse and domestic violence.

Her husband, Ben Dew, said: "Natalie is not trained as a counsellor but her empathy for others means she often gets home late from class because someone has just shared something very important with her. She has helped victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse seek the right help, she has helped people who have lost children and loved ones and helped people through divorces, anxiety and who are at life crossroads. She is there for anyone no matter who they are."

Theodora Children's Charity runs the Giggle Doctors initiative. Giggle Doctors are a team of specially trainer performers who visit children in hospitals, hospices and specialist care centres. Last year they visited over 33,000 children, bringing light and laughter to them and their families. Judges at the awards were impressed by the measures the charity takes to support its personnel and ensure their own mental health and wellbeing.

Alice Barley, fundraising and communications manager said: "It is really nice to be recognised for all the hard work we do to try and bring a bit of happiness to the hospital environment for children. It was great to be in a room where everyone else understood the importance of happiness and were doing amazing things to make the world a little happier."

Bupa Place also triumphed at the awards and was named Happiest Workplace. The new office development in Salford was designed specifically to ensure the health, wellbeing and happiness of the people working there.

The National Happiness Awards were launched three years ago by learning and development consultancy Laughology (<http://www.laughology.co.uk>). They have developed a reputation as the nation's brightest and boldest award scheme. Around 200 organisations and individuals entered this year.

National Happiness Awards founder and Laughology CEO Stephanie Davies said: "Each year the National Happiness Awards get bigger and better. They are the Oscars of the wellbeing world and the people and places we honour are real heroes who make a huge difference to lives. We had some amazing finalists and it is truly encouraging to see so many organisations and leaders taking happiness seriously."

The National Happiness Awards were held on Friday November 16 at MediaCity in Salford and were supported by Salford City Mayor, Paul Dennett.

Each National Happiness Award category was judged by an independent panel which includes business experts, HR professionals, education specialists and psychologists.

The awards are sponsored by LACE Partners, Fit2Communicate, Simply Better Events and Crown House Publishing. The event supported Children in Need and the City Mayor of Salford's homelessness charities.

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