

# Marie Goldman

MP for Chelmsford



## Truly inspirational to see students getting hands-on at city Skills Fest

**W**E spend a lot of time in life talking about things we need. Some of the time, our needs may be urgent and legitimate: I need food; I need warm clothes, for example. Sometimes, however, when we talk about need, it's more of a want: I need a holiday; I need a glass/cup of [insert your favourite drink here]. I agree that, on a micro level, many of the things we want often contribute to healthy, long and fulfilling lives. But on a macro, big-picture level, I would argue there are only three things that we fundamentally need, and that, without these, nothing else matters.

First and foremost, we need a planet to live on that is capable of sustaining human life. At the risk of stating the obvious, if we don't have that, there's very little point talking about anything else. I would say it would be game over, and everyone can go home, except that we wouldn't have a home to go to. So when we see and hear reports and evidence of the damage humans have been doing to the only planet we can call home, we really should pay more attention.

Secondly, we need our health. If we can't wake up in the morning and get out of bed because ill health prevents us, it's very hard to do or focus on anything else. Good health provides us with freedom and autonomy, and yet we're terrible as a species at ensuring that on a population level, we're properly looking after not just our own health, but also the health of those around us. We must also remember that prevention is far better than cure – not getting sick in the first place is far, far better and, in the long run, less costly than trying to treat a disease or other ailment that has already taken its toll.

Finally, we need education, because without education, we can't fix the other two. Without education, we can't find the cure for diseases or understand what we need to do to prevent them from infecting us in the first place.

Without education, we can't keep ourselves healthy to live long enough to reach our full potential. And without education, we can't protect our planet from the missteps

Marie Goldman  
MP at Skills Fest  
PHOTOS: MARIE  
GOLDMAN MP



Marie Goldman  
MP learning to  
be a brickie



Marie Goldman MP  
learning about  
different water  
contaminants with  
Essex & Suffolk Water



Marie Goldman  
MP smelling  
different herbs  
at Skills Fest

The problem is that we are, inevitably, reliant on the children of today to fix the problems of tomorrow.

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we have made as a species and fix what we have already broken about the precious blue globe that is our only true home.

In short, education is the silver bullet – the thing that fixes everything else. I've said this many times before, and I'll probably keep saying it until the end of my days. Nothing else can be fixed without education.

Why do I say all of this?

Well, I spend a lot of my time concerned about the state of education in this country, from the lack of funding and resources for special educational needs to the disappearance of good-quality, extra-curricular activities available to all.

Schools are struggling with increasingly over-stretched budgets, despite the Government trying to

tell us they're putting more money into education. Yes, but if that extra money is less than the extra costs being heaped on to schools... well, as the Americans say: "you do the math". None of this is the fault of incredibly hard-working teachers, head teachers and school staff. This isn't about apportioning blame, it's about trying to fix the problem.

The problem is that we are, inevitably, reliant on the children of today to fix the problems of tomorrow. We need them to become the doctors, nurses and scientists of the future.

We need them to farm our food, build our houses and run our businesses. We can help them do that by ensuring that the young people currently at school and starting to think about their future careers have broad horizons and are aware of all of the career opportunities out there.

It's vital that they have the opportunity to experiment and see the whole range of different paths they could choose, so that they become inspired and go into careers that

make them excited to get out of bed in the morning.

We can't just rely on parents and teachers to tell children about this huge world of possibilities – for a start, parents and teachers cannot possibly be expected to know about everything, especially in a world that is changing so quickly.

That's why I was so thrilled and delighted to be invited along to Chelmsford's annual Skills Fest, a festival run by Chelmsford City Council that last week saw more than 1,700 Year 8 students from Chelmsford secondary schools join more than 75 local businesses and organisations from cutting-edge industries, expert trades and essential local services to find out what the future could hold for them.

It was truly inspirational to see young people getting hands-on with science experiments and state-of-the-art technology, talking to household name companies and engaging with local service organisations.

There was something for every-

one, including the teachers, who I spotted getting involved too. This was all in a true festival atmosphere – Glastonbury, eat your heart out!

As for me, I had fun laying some bricks, learning the skills needed to test chemical samples, and chatting with the exhibitors and numerous stalls around the large site and in the huge marquees.

A massive thank you to the dedicated and amazing team of officers at Chelmsford City Council who worked their socks off this year and every year to broaden the horizons of our young people.

Judging by the smiles on everyone's faces as they explored the site, it was very well-received. It certainly makes me feel more positive about the future.

You can find out more about Skills Fest on the City Life website here: [citylife.chelmsford.gov.uk/posts/chelmsfords-skills-fest-welcomes-over-1500-local-students](http://citylife.chelmsford.gov.uk/posts/chelmsfords-skills-fest-welcomes-over-1500-local-students).

Keep cool in the summer heat.

Marie