



potentia 

Assisted by Chwarae Teg

## Enterprise support for Lone Parents

Wedi'i gynorthwyo gan Chwarae teg

## Cefnogaeth i Rieni Sengl

### Dr Gefei Wu, Penarth

Dr Gefei Wu originally trained as a Pharmacist, before completing a PhD in Biological Science. She was keen to research into Chinese remedies relating to anti cancer treatment, and soon started to realise that there was a huge market for alternative medicine.

Gefei returned to China for an operation, and afterwards she wished that she could relieve some of the post-op pain, as she had done for so many of her friends through her knowledge as a Qualified Acupuncturist. A friend suggested using the 'Haihua' machine – magnetic acupuncture without the needles. On taking her friend's advice, Gefei went from severe pain to catching the plane back in two weeks! Could Gefei make a business out of this wonder machine? She brought one home to find out. To research the market, Gefei put an advert in the local paper offering a trial of the machine and was inundated by phonecalls. People are intrigued by alternative therapy, acupuncture in

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particular, but needles often put them off having a treatment.

Gefei wanted to set up a legitimate, flexible and well organised business so that whether she chose to either finish or continue her studies, she could support herself and her teenage son. The Haihua treatment offered relief from weakness following strokes, frozen shoulders, sports injuries, back and neck pain and even asthma. It was the idea of being able to help and heal people that pushed Gefei forward and convinced her to go into business.

Not knowing where to start, Gefei contacted Business Connect who organised her business plan and cash flow forecast. They referred her to Chwarae Teg who helped with everything from legalities, insurance, accounts and VAT. Chwarae Teg recommended the Enterprise Rehearsal Project, run by the Wales Co-operative Centre, allowing Gefei to start her business on a 'test trading' basis.

"I'm very grateful to Chwarae Teg. There have been so many barriers to overcome, and they've helped me move forwards, when I thought I never could." Gefei has recently opened the doors of Herbal Farm Ltd to the public in Cardiff.

**i** *The Potentia project offers pre-start up support for disabled people, ethnic minorities, young people, Welsh speakers, lone parents and people aged over 50.*

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Datblygu Rhanbarthol Ewrop



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## Cefnogaeth i Rieni Sengl

### Teresa Kennedy, Caerphilly

Finding a balance between our work and home life is the route to successful living, according to certain 'lifestyle magazines'. In the practical world however, where mortgages and children exist, things aren't so straightforward. Especially for lone parents, who often find it difficult to source employment that's flexible enough to fit around a busy home life and the demands of childcare. This could explain why more lone parents are exploring self-employment.

Teresa Kennedy is just one person who proves that with the right support you can find that balance. After separating from her husband a few years ago, Teresa has been the sole provider for herself and her three children. Unable to find employment that fitted around her role as a full time parent, times have been difficult. Teresa decided to take matters in hand, and visited the Lone Parent Advisor at her local Job Centre in Caerphilly.

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After discussing a range of options, Teresa decided it was best to arm herself with more qualifications that would help to develop her interests into valuable business assets. Two days later Teresa was back in college studying Holistic Therapy, Anatomy and Physiology, with a plan to start her own business at the end of the course.

Returning to the job centre with a vague business idea, Teresa was introduced to Chwarae Teg and Teresa was heartened by the support that was available. With Chwarae Teg, Teresa had the opportunity to go on a business planning course, and was later referred to Venture Wales who provided a bookkeeping course. Together with the training and support she received, Teresa was awarded a £600 grant from the Job Centre for all the materials she needed to start up.

As a mobile holistic therapist, Teresa provides reflexology, aromatherapy, body massage and nutrition advice to help bring a little balance to her customers' lives. Though it's been a struggle, her reputation and client base is growing all the time: "There were times of doubt, but between my children and Chwarae Teg, I was helped all the way."

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