

Volunteering Now



New campaign encourages people to "give a little" to volunteering

Volunteer Centre Midlothian has launched a new campaign which aims to highlight the benefits of volunteering to everyone in Midlothian.

The campaign encourages people in Midlothian to give a little of their time and in turns promises an experience which will bring lots of benefits to the individual. People who regularly volunteer report an improvement in their health and wellbeing, increased employability and a sense of personal achievement and the Volunteer Centre hopes the campaign will encourage many more people to get into volunteering and give themselves the chance to experience these benefits too. Speaking prior to the launch Anne Moodie, Director of the Volunteer



Centre explained "As we launch our new campaign we want to challenge the people of Midlothian, young and old, to 'give a little' of their time to volunteer. There are hundreds of volunteering opportunities to choose from. Some take place during the day, others in the evening. There is something for everyone!

Volunteering can make a huge difference to you and your local community. So why not give it a go?"

The new campaign aims to spread the word of volunteering across Midlothian through a leaflet and poster campaign, regular adverts and articles in the press and drop-ins at Penicuik Job Centre and Dalkeith Careers Office.



Volunteer Centre Midlothian has achieved Investing in Volunteers status which demonstrates our commitment to providing a quality volunteering experience to those who volunteer within our organisation.

Volunteer Centre Midlothian enters exciting new phase

Volunteer Centre Midlothian has entered an exciting phase in its 25 year history by appointing a new Director.

Anne Moodie who previously co-ordinated the Live IT Sidekicks Project in Midlothian, started in her new job at the beginning of April. Anne has considerable experience of working with volunteers, staff management and a good grasp of the local volunteering landscape.

Anne has a clear vision for the organisation. "I want to build on the Volunteer Centre's existing strengths to ensure that it is an accessible and welcoming organisation which inspires people to volunteer and

supports both individuals and organisations, enabling everyone to have a positive volunteering experience".

Inherent in this new phase is a desire to work more closely with organisations which involve volunteers and to ensure that anyone who wants to volunteer in Midlothian has the information and support to help them do so.



Anne Moodie, Director of Volunteer Centre Midlothian

Volunteering Taster Sessions

After 3 successful years, the Volunteering Taster Sessions project has come to an end. The Project, which was funded by The Big Lottery's Young People's Fund was designed to offer small groups of young people the opportunity to sample a variety of volunteering activities. Along with their group leader and the Volunteer Centre's Youth Development Worker, the young people have been involved with various activities over the 3 years, from fundraising and leaflet drops to gardening and befriending in local Care Homes. A total of 133 young people have experienced the benefit of increased confidence, skills and experience, as well as developing positive links with their communities as a result of the project.

Young People into Volunteering

The Young People into Volunteering project was established in April 2009 after securing Fairer Scotland Funding. The project enables the Volunteer Centre Youth Development Worker to provide extra support to help young people into volunteering. Support is specifically tailored to individual need and can range from help completing a volunteering application form to accompanying a young person to an initial meeting with an organisation. In addition, 3 'Get Ready for Volunteering' courses aimed at 15-25 year olds run throughout the year. The course is designed to help young people think about volunteering and the benefits it can bring enabling them to make better informed decisions. For more information contact [Karen Downie](mailto:karen@volunteermidlothian.org.uk) on karen@volunteermidlothian.org.uk.

Live IT Sidekicks Project

The Big Lottery funded Live IT Sidekicks project is run in partnership with the Midlothian Library Service and provides one to one computer tuition from Volunteer Tutors (Sidekicks). Tuition is free and is held in libraries across Midlothian. Anyone can become a learner, just speak to a library staff member or contact the Sidekicks Coordinator. Recently Denise Thomson and Keith Barbour have taken over as joint coordinators from Anne Moodie. At present 28 people are receiving one to one tuition from 16 Sidekicks and in total 227 learners have now received or are still receiving tutoring. The project has also commissioned a feasibility report to look into the possibility of branching out into other kinds of IT tutoring such as in carehomes, sheltered housing and at the learners' homes. One Sidekick is currently teaching IT skills for an Adult Literacy Class (MALANI) and the class recently showed off their skills at an open day at Dalkeith Library. The project is currently thriving and is looking forward to an exciting future, due to the dedication and hard work of its volunteer Sidekicks. Contact sidekicks@volunteermidlothian.org.uk

Support into Volunteering Project

The aim of the project is to encourage and enable people with mental health problems to be involved in volunteering. After a period of mental ill health volunteering can be a way forward and can improve an individuals mental health. Since October 2009, 35 people have been referred to the project. Support is offered to suit the needs of each individual and a Preparing to Volunteer Course is offered to those who might need time to consider if volunteering is an option. The course held during February/March had 9 participants and since attending the course 5 people have gone on to volunteer. A further Preparing to Volunteer Course is planned for June. The project also provides support to organisations who involve volunteers with mental health problems. A Mental Health & Volunteering Workshop aimed at people who manage or support volunteers, has been designed to increase confidence in engaging volunteers who have had, or are recovering from mental ill health. The next workshop will be held on 26th May. Funding has been secured to allow this project to continue until March 2012. For more information contact [Cheryl Prior](mailto:cheryl@volunteermidlothian.org.uk) at cheryl@volunteermidlothian.org.uk

Supported Befriending

The Supported Befriending projects allows young people to begin volunteering in a supervised and supported role. Young volunteers are trained as befrienders and attend local carehomes for weekly sessions, taking part in conversations and activities with residents. It is hoped that in addition to the positive impact the project will have on residents, the befriending will allow volunteers to build confidence and gain valuable social skills under the support and supervision of the project worker. These skills will help prepare volunteers for future employment and education. The project has been really successful so far, 30 young people have been referred to the project with 24 of them completing training and currently 17 young people actively attend carehomes weekly. Activities range from bingo to singing/dancing and we've just purchased a Nintendo Wii for the project and hope to try it out in the homes soon. Funding has also been secured to allow the project to continue until April 2011, which is brilliant news. The real focus of this project is to help those young people just leaving school to gain confidence and skills relevant for employment and already volunteers are reporting improvements in these areas as a result of the project. For more information contact [Keith Barbour](mailto:keith@volunteermidlothian.org.uk) on keith@volunteermidlothian.org.uk.