



Making a Difference Award

Celebrating people who volunteer their time within a health or care service, offering care and support to make a positive difference to people in our community

Alison Alderson

Alison was nominated by Marie Kerr, from Dementia Action Teesside. Alison is a carer who attends dances with her mum. Although she is not a 'volunteer' as such, she goes over and above to support others. Alison created a WhatsApp group for carers for sharing information on what's going on for carers as well as providing peer support. It's a platform also where carers can share photographs and videos from activities.

Being a carer for someone living with dementia can be a very lonely and isolating however Alison does her best to make everyone feel valued and appreciated. Her input into local forums, events and workshops demonstrate her passion for change so that carers voices are heard and positive outcomes are achieved. Carers feel more part of a community - their own community. We hope that others have listened to what she has said and taken on board suggestions for dementia friendly communities but most of all, hope that they have heard her voice as a carer for someone living with dementia.

Behnoosh Shahandeh – Volunteer – Methodist Asylum Project

Behnoosh, known as Raha has nominated by Terry Doyle for her volunteer work. In spite of her own health problems, and the hurdles she and her family cross, she keeps smiling and gives a genuine warmth of welcome to everyone. This goes a long way in helping people relax and trust.

She is a very calming influence for him and the whole service of welcome to the hundreds of people who find themselves dispersed into the area and helps a person feel they belong, have worth and can have dignity again.

Dawn Greenan – Volunteer – Teesside Hospice Care Foundation

Dawn has been nominated by Kathleen McPartland for her role as a volunteer receptionist who gives up her free time meeting and greeting visitors to the inpatient unit. She's warm, friendly, kind, and welcoming, compassionate, and

caring with everyone. She even came in on Christmas Day.

The nominee makes everyone who visits the service feel welcome, cared for, and listened to as she takes the time to make conversation with everyone and check to see how they are doing. Everyone that has any contact with nominee, whether that be visitors/families or staff, always say how lovely she is and how much she cares.

All of us who work on reception strive to make our visitors feel at ease coming into the hospice, at what can be a very difficult time for some, and this lady excels at this. Every organisation needs someone like this.

Peer Support Volunteers – Homestart Teesside

Michelle Hardy nominated the team of peer support volunteers who visit families with young children to support parents in making their lives less stressful.

Each weekly visit makes a difference, it gives parents time to express themselves and be listened to with non-judgmental, compassionate, confidential support.

Helps families get out into the fresh air.

Volunteers go above and beyond from helping wallpaper or budget, reading to children while a parent fills in forms, prioritising with household chores, role modelling positive parenting.

The families themselves are included, with representation on the board of Trustees, 1 in 5 volunteers were families supported by the organisation themselves in the past.

Often standing alongside families at the darkest times, to see them through the other side. By breaking down the isolation and loneliness, we improve mental health. The support stops families accessing statutory services as we work in prevention, improving the lives of children, impacting 1001 days best start to life and play an important role in safeguarding and advocate for children, enabling the voice of a child to be heard at multi agencies meetings and within families. As well as responding extremely quickly to the need of families for warm clothes, children's toys, books, or equipment, through accessioning stock from their charity shops and community links.

The organisation is always keen to use the voice of both families and volunteers to improve service and they play a part in the strategic plan; over the last few years they have run family picnic events which is enjoyed by everyone.

Sarah Smith – The Link Charitable Trust

Sarah has been nominated by Helen Bartram, for her volunteering supporting a parents' group. Despite personal challenges she has taken a lead and has excelled at running the group. She is compassionate and empathetic, offering a flexible approach, offering parents a space to seek support, using her own knowledge and information she meets the needs of everyone.

Sarah makes a huge difference by listening without judgement, Sarah has had a positive impact on everyone that attends, helps lift them up and offer them a supportive space.