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Charitable Status No NI103276

VOLUNTEERING - Good for Body and Mind

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/northern-ireland/get-involved/volunteer/>

Volunteering does not just play an important role in delivering services, but also in improving the lives of the volunteers themselves; improving physical and mental health; combating loneliness and personal isolation; bringing communities together; boosting independence; providing contentment and satisfaction; and empowering people. Volunteering may help you live longer. Volunteering not only enriches the lives of others, it can also improve your physical and mental wellbeing. And, volunteers are less likely to suffer from depression!

STEPPING STONES – STANLEY PRENTICE



I volunteer at Stepping Stones, Seymour Street, Lisburn.

After taking early retirement almost 20 years ago, I wanted something to do that was part time and voluntary. Stepping Stones, coincidentally, had an advert in the local paper looking for volunteers at that very time, and I have been helping in the picture framing department ever since.

Stepping Stones is a training centre for young adults with learning difficulties; it operates five social enterprises which include three cafes (two in Lisburn and one in Newtownards) a bespoke wedding stationery business, a guild commended picture framing business, and provides training in a multitude of areas such as travel and money management.

My work in the framing department consists of assisting the trainees with glass cutting and cleaning, picture assembly, pinning and taping. At tea break I take the picture framing trainees out to the Avenue Cafe, also run by Stepping Stones. This allows the full-time staff to get on with their endless paperwork and administration duties.

Unfortunately, since March and the implementation of social distancing rules, and because the workshop is quite small, I've been limited to taking the trainees out for a walk each week. I really look forward to my weekly visits and have greatly enjoyed seeing their progress. A few of them have been going to Stepping Stones for as long as I have been there and will tell me off if I miss a week because of holidays or any reason.



I would recommend volunteering to anyone with time on their hands and especially volunteering in the learning disability sector. I'm constantly amazed by their sports, politics, history and music knowledge and they are wonderful people to know and work with.

Benefits of volunteering: 4 ways to feel healthier and happier

Jeanne Segal, Ph.D. and Lawrence Robinson

<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/healthy-living/volunteering-and-its-surprising-benefits.htm>

- **Volunteering brings fun and fulfilment to your life.** By volunteering for something you find meaningful and interesting, you can escape from the daily routine.
- **Volunteering connects you to others.** Make new friends & contacts, increase your social & relationship skills
- **Volunteering is good for your mind and body.** It combats depression, makes you happy, increases self-confidence, provides a sense of purpose, and helps you stay physically healthy.
- **Volunteering can advance your career.** When it comes to volunteering, passion and positivity are the only requirements, but it can advance your career by teaching you valuable job skills, and help you to gain career experience.



COVID Symptom Study



You can help fight COVID-19 by aiding research! Join 4,403,225 members of the public supporting the NHS and scientists in the UK. Together we can get out of lockdown safely and beat the disease.

Help slow the spread of #COVID19 and identify at risk cases sooner by self-reporting your symptoms daily, even if you feel well 🙏.

Download the app: <https://covid.joinzoe.com/>

Editor's Note

Unfortunately, I didn't get the response I had hoped, so I would like to thank Des, who stepped in at the last minute, under strong pressure from what he calls 'a very fussy and coercive editor' to help fill an empty column in this issue of An Extra Helping.

MUSGRAVE PARK HOSPITAL – DES DONNELLY

In 2005, I underwent significant cardiac surgery and this was my first real experience of being in hospital. I was so impressed with the care and attention I received, that I promised myself, that one day, I would do voluntary work in a hospital. In 2014, I attended a Hospital Visitation Course in Edgehill College. This course primarily focused on Chaplaincy work and when it finished, I was assigned to work with the Chaplaincy team in Musgrave Park Hospital where, since 2015, I have been a part time Chaplaincy Volunteer. I work three half days a week.



Doing what? Generally, I provide emotional, pastoral, and spiritual care to staff, patients and their families. Although, I work throughout the hospital, my main focus is on that part of the hospital known as Meadowlands. These wards are mostly rehabilitation for elderly patients who have undergone surgery or have dementia issues.

My work involves lots of listening, and basically, I am a great listener but I am a good talker too... maybe I talk too much sometimes. But I love meeting people and I have a great sense of humour which can carry me a long way. It was Mark Twain who said, 'humour is one of life's greatest blessings'.

Why do I do it? I just love the work and I really feel I get more out of it than I give. I meet some amazing people who are talented and skilled. I am enriched by their life experiences and inspired by their wisdom, Faith, and fortitude. Some days and situations can be tough but they keep my feet on the ground and make me appreciate my own health and wellbeing.

Covid19 Sadly, since the pandemic set in, all voluntary chaplaincy work has been suspended and I really miss not being there to offer support to all our wonderfully brave and committed frontline healthcare workers. Hopefully, with the help of a vaccine, I can resume my work there soon?

Volunteering? Apart from my hospital work, I volunteer for some other organizations, mainly involved with the elderly and special needs friends. I really believe that people who don't get involved in volunteering work, are missing out. Someone once said, 'you make a living by what you get but you make a life by what you give' and in a sense, since I retired from a business career, I have reinvented myself and I never have a dull moment.

Volunteers make such a difference to people's lives and no more so than during the current crisis. It was Leo Buscaglia who said:

'too often we underestimate the power of touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment or the smallest act of caring. All of which have the potential to turn a life around.'

**BBC Inspiring Communities**

The Click show looks at how care homes around Europe are using technology to provide some contact for isolated and elderly people. They look at a new suite of volunteering apps for those wanting to contribute during the coronavirus pandemic. They show robots that visit residents and let them make calls on its built-in tablet, talk about Facebook portal and new tablets like 'GrandPad' and the one button 'KOMP' for those with no computer knowledge.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m000hlgp/click-inspiring-communities>

**Thank You, All Our Amazing LU3A Volunteers****Editor**

In May 2019, Ian McCannah, Chair - Third Age Trust said,

'However, we have tried to encompass the extraordinary breadth of volunteering that takes place in all U3As - from the committee roles, through those working away behind the scenes putting out chairs and making tea, to the beating heart of the movement – its group leaders.' and I can only echo his words!