

## West Kent Volunteer Centre



## Volunteers' Week Starts Today

Volunteers' Week runs from 1st-7th June and celebrates the 22 million people who give their time to support good causes in their communities. Throughout this week voluntary organisations will be putting on events to thank their volunteers and to encourage those that are new to volunteering to join in. To find out more about Volunteers' Week visit the [website](#) or follow #volunteersweek on twitter.

This bumper edition of the newsletter includes stories from local volunteers about what volunteering has meant to them and then features some of the opportunities currently on offer with local organisations.

Thank you for your interest in volunteering.



## **Teresa, Dial 2 Drive admin volunteer**

### LIFE AS A VOLUNTEER

I have been a volunteer for 17 years, following a stressful divorce which left me feeling unwanted and unappreciated. It happened to be The Year of the Volunteer at that time, as publicised in the national press, suggesting people could go along to their local bureau and offer a few hours of their time. I duly arrived at the Sevenoaks branch and was interviewed by Mandy Wynne, who is now Deputy Chief Executive of Imago (Sevenoaks office having amalgamated with Tunbridge Wells). Since then I have been involved in many voluntary roles, including catering, fundraising, gardening, and office work for several charities including Royal London Institute for the Blind, Burrswood Hospital, Chiddingstone Castle, Rockdale Housing, and for the last three years Dial 2 Drive. Volunteering has been a "life saver" for me, making me feel useful and valued as a person and I have made some amazing friends.

It is true to say that Dial 2 Drive is the most enjoyable role I have had, which I hope to continue for many years. The environment is friendly and caring, almost like a family. The work can be extremely challenging, but also rewarding when the clients express their appreciation of the service we offer. Volunteer drivers are a very special "breed", who constantly amaze us with the lengths they go to in order to care for our clients. A sense of humour, together with tolerance, is definitely needed when dealing with our mostly elderly clients who are sometimes forgetful or confused! Hardly a day passes without laughter rippling through the office for one reason or another. I cannot imagine life without D2D, which has been a real tonic for me, enjoyably filling my time, whilst helping others. It doesn't get better than that!



## **Sue, Dial 2 Drive admin volunteer**

I have been volunteering with D2D for several years now, and I can honestly say that they have been the most hectic and demanding of my working life.

However, I can also say that they have been the most enjoyable, rewarding, entertaining, educational (I'm running out of superlatives here) and ultimately satisfying so far. There are very few occupations, especially in this era of targets and rationalisation, where one can return home mentally tired, yet inwardly thrilled, to have enjoyed a cheery conversation with a lonely pensioner or facilitated a long-awaited hospital trip or confidence enhancing hair appointment.

That being said, my role in the office is negligible, and the biggest and shiniest medals should be awarded to our wonderful D2D drivers who spend their time behind the wheel, individually transforming the lives of their passengers.

To find out more about volunteering with Dial 2 Drive/ Short Breaks, contact [volunteering@imago.community](mailto:volunteering@imago.community)



### **Annie, Short Breaks youth volunteer**

I started volunteering just over 2 years ago after hearing about IMAGO at a careers festival. I thought it would be fun to apply to join as it would be a new experience that I could learn from, and use the skills to help me in the future.



I really enjoy volunteering because it's very rewarding seeing the children enjoying their time away from their family as they're able to spend weekends or days out with their friends. From my experience volunteering, the one skill I feel I have developed most is communication, because at first I found it difficult as I wasn't able to communicate effectively with others, however now I feel I can. I have also gained confidence within myself from volunteering which has helped me a lot.

Being a volunteer has helped me decide what I want to do in the future, as it was a whole new experience for me. I have recently decided that I am looking to work with children or adults with disabilities, and I feel volunteering has helped me secure this decision and I still feel confident that I will carry on volunteering into the future.

### **Laura, trustee at Imago**

#### **How did you get involved with Imago?**

*I became aware of the wonderful work Imago does through a colleague in Further Education. I wanted to find out more and see if I could contribute.*

#### **What does your role involve?**

*I attend regular meetings in which we hear about the work that Imago does, act as a formal panel which scrutinises finance and other documents and contribute ideas and professional expertise. I also attend events to meet staff and those Imago works with in person.*

#### **What have you gained from your volunteering experience?**

*I have learned so much about the challenges people face and how we as a society can help to support them and work together to improve health, social and educational issues. I have been incredibly touched by the dedication of Imago staff and their passion to make a difference.*





My experience with Pact so far has been such a positive one and I am very pleased I made the decision to apply. For ex-offenders, resettling back into the community is difficult and often they have vulnerabilities, such as mental illness or a lack of family support, which makes it even more intimidating. Having access to a mentor can improve resettlement opportunities and reduce the likelihood of reoffending. Whilst the role is challenging and it requires time and commitment, it is both rewarding and enjoyable. It has given me the opportunity to meet new people, develop my listening and communication skills and provide support for those who really need it. Pact training days are intensive and interactive, allowing full preparation for the mentoring role. Due to constant supervision and support from numerous Pact staff members, I have never felt unsafe or worried and all my questions have been answered promptly.

Volunteering with Pact is an incredibly worthwhile thing to do and I feel like a valued member of the team. Mentoring gives you the opportunity to support others, whilst also providing you with important, transferable skills and experiences. I would encourage anyone who is interested in volunteering with Pact, who considers themselves to be a non-judgemental, approachable individual, to apply for the role.



Sharon has been volunteering with Headway West Kent at our Maidstone Wellbeing Support Group for two years, fitting in volunteering with Headway West Kent around her full time job.

Sharon attends every Thursday morning to support the running of the group, she is a great listener and has lots of empathy and understanding of the needs of our clients who are living with brain injury.

Sharon wanted to involve her employer in this year's Action for Brain Injury Week which took place in May, she set about organising a bake sale, book sale and raffle in her works canteen, a few colleagues pledged to have their chests waxed and to wear make up for the day should a target of £150 be raised. She also encouraged the employees to take part in 'Hats for Headway' day on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> May all to help raise awareness of brain injury. Sharon and her colleagues raised £400 for Headway West Kent during Action for Brain Injury week which is fantastic. We would like to say a huge thank you to Sharon for being such a kind and committed volunteer. For further information about Headway West Kent please visit [www.headwaywestkent.org](http://www.headwaywestkent.org)



## Volunteer Stories

*I began volunteering for the Sevenoaks Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA) approximately six years ago, after a period of ill health for myself. I wanted to focus on something of value and something that I passionately believed in. The instructors that I met at Sevenoaks were completely inspirational people who welcomed me warmly to the group. The benefit that the adult and child riders gain from their lessons with the ponies are immediately obvious - their bodies relax, they move more easily, they forget about their day to day problems and they smile! Focussing on other people and their problems helps me to forget about my own difficult issues. I have made strong friendships with some of the other volunteers and both my physical and mental health have improved through my involvement with Sevenoaks RDA.*

As a lifelong horse lover, and lapsed rider/horse owner, I get a regular 'fix' working with our great ponies. They make sure you appreciate them as individuals . . . and that leads me to the main reason why I volunteer with RDA - our riders.

When I retired from teaching, I left behind many young people who I hoped appreciated my efforts to improve their understanding of Science. Now I know so many riders of all ages who really do appreciate my helping them to ride their pony. They may not say so in so many words, but 'high fives' and a big smile after a cold muddy ride are quite enough. In addition I've been lucky to work with many young riders who want to learn more about caring for horses through the ASDAN scheme supported by RDA National. It's been a joy to see these riders develop confidence in grooming, feeding, mucking out and tacking up. They have achieved awards and experience which all of us can celebrate.

Finally, I have many great new friends. RDA volunteers always have a common bond, which makes us special, even if our families don't always get the message!!

I retired after 43 years in business and I always wanted to do volunteer work, but work pressures never allowed me the time. Now with time on my hands I am putting my skills and resources back into voluntary work. I am now a volunteer at Bradbourne RDA as a Wednesday morning helper.

What I have seen in my short time at Bradbourne has given me great pleasure, that Bradbourne has wonderful facilities to give everyone who comes to ride or help out the chance to succeed. I have certainly learnt new skills, such as horse management, ensuring that the ponies are ready for the first morning's ride, which is very important for the riders young or old who are less tolerant of having to wait. I have also re-used my skills that I have taken with me from working in a large business enabling to communicate effectively to my rider whom I am leading.



**Paul Bleser, Volunteer Administrative Assistant,  
Burrswood Health & Wellbeing**



After retiring from full-time work 12 years ago I thought it would help alleviate some of my boredom if I took on a bit of voluntary work. The roles I was considering weren't exactly my thing: car park attendant and an elf (it was Christmas time)!

But fortunately I came across Burrswood Health & Wellbeing and (more by accident than design) began working in the Counselling Department in January this year, assisting with administration. At Burrswood I have been able to use the skills I gained working for many years as a facilities manager at Royal Bank of Scotland and have implemented new systems in the Counselling Department that have benefited my colleagues.

I initially started working for one day a week and have enjoyed my time at Burrswood so much that I have now increased to two. I find it rewarding to be around a team of professionals who do so much to help patients going through a difficult phase of their lives.

Julie Shannon, head of the Counselling Department, says my help has been "invaluable" and that my "lively personality" has brought "life into the team". From my perspective, the role has given me a new sense of purpose that has benefited my own health and wellbeing.

Burrswood Health & Wellbeing has a variety of volunteer roles available throughout the organisation. Please contact Haritha Pattabhi for more information on 01892 865978 or [haritha.pattabhi@burrswood.org.uk](mailto:haritha.pattabhi@burrswood.org.uk).



## VOLUNTEER AT RACE FOR LIFE



Registered charity nos 1089464, SCO41666 and 1103

### URGENT: Marshals Needed This Weekend!

Dunorlan Park , Tunbridge Wells, TN2 3QN

Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> and Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> June

8:00am – 1:00pm on Saturday

9:00am-1:00pm Sunday



If interested contact **Sarah-Jane Winding**, Area Events Manager - South,  
Cancer Research UK

Email | [sarah-jane.winding@cancer.org.uk](mailto:sarah-jane.winding@cancer.org.uk)

Mobile | 07887 626956

Regional Twitter | [@CRUKEventsSouth](https://twitter.com/CRUKEventsSouth)



## Toughest is looking for volunteers and marshals

**What:** Toughest is an obstacle race from Scandinavia, with a course of 8k and 40 obstacles.

**When:** 17th June 8.00-16.00

**Where:** Pippingford Park, Forrest Row TN22 3HW

**We are looking for:** Social, service minded and positive people

**To do:** Make sure the event runs smoothly. Working as an obstacle marshal or in the event village

You will have a fun day, meeting lots of new friends

Sign up today, so you don't miss out!

Last day to register 7th June.

**More about Toughest:** <https://www.toughest.se>

**How:** Contact [Linda@toughest.se](mailto:Linda@toughest.se)



## **ellenor Volunteer Shop Assistant and Sorter**

### About the opportunity

We are looking for keen and enthusiastic people to join our friendly team of volunteers in our ellenor shops across Kent. You will develop customer service experience, meet new people and develop your retail knowledge.

We are looking for people who can give a minimum commitment of two half days a week (or one half day at a weekend).

For more information about these opportunities please contact our Volunteer Co-ordinator on 01474 320007 extn 1112 or [hr@ellenor.org](mailto:hr@ellenor.org). Closes 31<sup>st</sup> August 2017.

### **British Heart Foundation Volunteering Opportunities Shop Support Volunteers, various roles (Tunbridge Wells)**

The British Heart Foundation is the nation's heart charity and the largest independent funder of cardiovascular research. Coronary heart disease is the UK's single biggest killer but we are leading the fight against it.

Our pioneering research has helped to transform the lives of people living with heart and circulatory conditions. We are currently seeking volunteers to join our Tunbridge Wells standard shop team in various back shop/office supporting roles which require a range of skills and include a variety of tasks, including those on the list below. Please note that the minimum age is 16 years.

- Excellent customer service
- Till sales management
- Sorting incoming donated items
- Tagging and steaming clothes
- Specialist knowledge of vinyl records and current market value
- Specialist knowledge of rare books and current market value
- Excellent IT skills
- Knowledge of selling goods on E-Bay

Any amount of time is always appreciated, we welcome all help and support from volunteers from one hour a week to a few days on a weekly basis. Full training will be provided, including Health and Safety.

For further information, please contact Sue Cordani / Yoong Lawrence on 01892 518587, e-mail [T04@bhf.org.uk](mailto:T04@bhf.org.uk) or simply all in at the shop with your CV!  
18 Mount Pleasant Rd, TN1 1QU.

Our opening hours are 9-5 Monday-Saturday and 10-4 on Sunday.



# **CAN YOU GIVE A SHIFT in 2017?**

## **If you can, OXFAM needs you!**

Make 2017 the year you 'Give a Shift' and make a powerful difference. Oxfam Tunbridge Wells has volunteer opportunities available – if you have a few hours to spare each week, why not come and see if one of them fits your talents?

We are situated @ 37 Mount Pleasant Road (opposite Wagamamas).

### **We currently need help with:**

CUSTOMER SERVICE

VISUAL MERCHANDISING

BACK ROOM (sorting, pricing etc.)

ONLINE SALES

MARKETING

If any of the above roles sounds like your kind of thing, please come and see us.

In return for your valuable time we offer:

- role training,
- work experience to enhance your CV,
- a social outlet to meet new friends & increase your confidence,
- a chance to learn new skills,
- reasonable travel expenses if you need a bus or train to get to us,
- an opportunity to make a powerful difference within an internationally recognised NGO dedicated to fighting poverty.

We are a lovely team of dedicated volunteers, please join us and help us keep our great shop open!

Call in the shop for an application form, or call Duncan on 07921 955014, or email [oxfamshopf4336@oxfam.org](mailto:oxfamshopf4336@oxfam.org).



**OXFAM**



Come by for a tea or coffee!

Open Sessions

Monday June 5th

Saturday July 1st

Wednesday August 9th

Saturday September 2nd

Monday October 2nd

Saturday November 4th

Tuesday December 5th



# Looking for your next adventure - volunteer at Ightham Mote!

Life is one long adventure and we'd love to join in with your next one. Whether you want to put years of skills and experience towards our cause or just want to try something brand new, we'll have a role to suit you.

Our team is full of inspiring people from all walks of life who get a real buzz from working and learning together.

**'To me, volunteering means staying active doing something both useful and enjoyable'**

*Derek, Volunteer at Ightham Mote*

**We are currently looking for part time room guides.**

Ready to get involved? Speak to Iain Sanders on 01732 810378 ext. 130 or email him at [iain.sanders@nationaltrust.org.uk](mailto:iain.sanders@nationaltrust.org.uk)

For other details, visit [www.nationaltrust.org.uk/ighthammote](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/ighthammote)

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National Trust Images/



## Volunteer Gardener needed -Tonbridge

We need a volunteer to work alongside service users in our Tonbridge Wellbeing Centre garden. Light duties only. Patience and understanding plus a vision for projects supporting people towards improved wellbeing would be very useful.

Other volunteer opportunities available in Sevenoaks.

We're Mind, the mental health charity. We're here to make sure anyone with a mental health problem has somewhere to turn for advice and support.

REGISTERED CHARITY 1044977



Contact Sue or Siân on 01732 744950

[hello@westkentmind.org.uk](mailto:hello@westkentmind.org.uk)

Enjoy looking after small children?  
Want to help a local charity?



KEEP CALM

AND

BE A CRECHE  
VOLUNTEER

We are currently looking for crèche volunteers for our Tonbridge and/or East Malling Mums' Support Groups.

For more information contact Hattie Barden by phone or email:

Tel: 01732 744950 Email: [Hattie.Barden@westkentmind.org.uk](mailto:Hattie.Barden@westkentmind.org.uk)

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# Carers FIRST

FIRST Choice for Carers

0300 303 1555

[www.carersfirst.org.uk](http://www.carersfirst.org.uk)

## VOLUNTEERS WANTED

We are looking for new volunteers to join our friendly team.

We have a range of volunteering roles, such as:

- Face to Face befriending
- Telephone befriending
- Helping out at support groups
- Administrative work

All you need is commitment and some spare time!

We provide regular support and training.

If you are interested please call 0300 303 1555 or e mail

[volunteer@carersfirst.org.uk](mailto:volunteer@carersfirst.org.uk)

We are a Charity supporting Carers, providing them with information, advice & support in Medway, South West Kent, Dartford, Gravesend & Swanley, Waltham Forest and Lincolnshire.



**carersUK**  
making life better for carers



Care Quality  
Commission



**JOIN US**

Would you like to be part of a caring, supportive, positive team of volunteers, aiming to enhance the lives of Carers, caring for a family member who has a long-term health condition, visiting them to offer companionship and practical support in the home, sharing an interest or hobby or going out for a walk?



## As a Volunteer Befriender

*"We talk about day-to-day things: our families, what's happened locally...it's something to look forward to" Carer*

If you have some free time to support someone in the Tonbridge, Tunbridge Wells or Sevenoaks Areas, then please contact us to find out more.

**RING JEN 01622 817 114**

Email [jennifer.lane@crossroadswest.org](mailto:jennifer.lane@crossroadswest.org)

Visit [www.carerskm.org](http://www.carerskm.org)

Registered Charity No. 1073896



### **Want to volunteer but haven't got much time?**

We've got a role for that.

Want to **meet new people** and make some friends?

We've got a role for that too.

Want to gain some skills and **learn new things**?

You guessed it, we've got a role for that as well!

Volunteer with us at Mencap and not only will you help us make the world a better place for people with a learning disability, you will change your life too.

So what are you waiting for?

[Take a look](#) at our current roles and find a way to volunteer that's perfect for you. From becoming a **Sidekick** and supporting someone with a learning disability to do the things they love, to volunteering in one of our **charity shops**, there are loads of roles to choose from.

ST GEORGE'S CHILDREN'S PROJECT

# **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

## **Help out at St George's Quiz Night**

Jean's Kitchen & Bar, TN4 9PE

Thursday 22 June, 7pm

call Ellie on 01892 543 982 or email  
[ellie.stewart@stgeorgesproject.co.uk](mailto:ellie.stewart@stgeorgesproject.co.uk)



## **Volunteer event photographers needed**

Tunbridge Wells nursery and children's charity St George's Community Children's Project are looking for volunteers for their quiz night and summer fair. A great chance to build your portfolio and help out a local charity.

### **Quiz night**

Thursday 22 June, 7 – 11pm

Jean's Kitchen & Bar, St John's Road, Tunbridge Wells, TN4 9PE

### **Summer fair**

Friday 21 July, 3 – 6pm

St George's, 7 Chilston Road, Tunbridge Wells, TN4 9LP

**Contact:** Ellie at [ellie.stewart@stgeorgesproject.co.uk](mailto:ellie.stewart@stgeorgesproject.co.uk) or call 01892 543 982.



## Volunteer Team Administrative Volunteer

We're looking for volunteers to carry out administrative tasks from home to assist our busy volunteer team in collating statistics for us to report on the impact of our volunteer programme.

If you can spare a couple of hours in the evening, or longer, we'd love to hear from you. You'll receive copies of handwritten time sheets (scanned or posted, whichever you prefer), and you will be listing these into an excel template and emailing these back to our Volunteer Team.

You'll need access to a computer, good attention to detail and be willing to get stuck in!

**For more information email [volunteering@kentwildlife.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@kentwildlife.org.uk)**  
or call 01622 662012.



To find out more about volunteering in your local community,  
please get in touch

**Tonbridge, Sevenoaks, Tunbridge Wells**



@Volunteering\_WK



VolunteeringWK

volunteering@imago.community

01892 530330

[www.imago.community](http://www.imago.community)