

What types of volunteering have you been doing?

I started volunteering at my local gymnastics club helping younger gymnasts to develop their abilities. I also help within school with events ranging from trampolining and football through to rock climbing and hockey. Some of these events were during school hours but others took place on evenings and weekends. I then got the opportunity to go to Ribbersdale with the Year 8s on an outward bound residential. All of these hours link in to my Community Sports Leader Award (CSLA) and now are linking into my HSLA award. I also help with cluster primary school events helping children with little snippets of sports. This led to me helping out at South Hunsley Primary School as an assistant with activities both inside and outside the classroom.

What difference has volunteering Made to You?

Volunteering has made a massive difference to me. It has helped me to have more confidence to lead the session, as well as knowing what to do. It has also given me the communication skills that I need to talk to other participants and leaders as we need to work as part of a team in order to make the session run smoothly.

What have been the highlights of your volunteering?

My highlights have been being able to get involved with as many things as possible and being able to see the difference that we have made on the participants and helping with different things. It has also given me a sense of achievement by being able to lead a session and have that bit of responsibility about it. My main thing has been being able to see the smiles on the participant's faces when they have achieved something they couldn't do at the start.

Is there any way we can improve our support to you as a volunteer?

I don't think there is any way you can improve it. You signpost us to different events and opportunities to volunteer and we get recognition for our volunteering.

Would you recommend volunteering to other young people?

I would definitely recommend volunteering to other young people because you get sense of being able to do something different and it gives them lots of different opportunities within the area.

Why do you think volunteering is important to your community?

I think volunteering is important to the community because without some volunteers, events wouldn't go ahead meaning that you don't get as many opportunities within the local area.

We also asked her teacher, Mr Duerden who nominated her, a few questions about Katie and her volunteering and this is what he said:

What difference have you seen in Katie since she started volunteering?

I have seen a huge difference over the years. She came into year 7 as a shy individual and through her volunteering she has developed confidence and leadership skills, which has then allowed her to lead sessions by herself. I have seen her in situations where she has had challenging young people and she has taken it in her stride. Her confidence levels have come on second to none.

How has Katie's volunteering supported the school?

All our individuals who volunteer at the school support us fantastically but Katie, has gone above and beyond expectations. She has volunteered across all different types of sports, all different types of events, with all different types of people. This is obviously a huge help to the school because it helps

us to provide further provision for students inside the school but also within our catchment primary schools. She is a fantastic help to our department.

Is there any support around volunteering that our organisation can give to the school. Please give us any suggestions?

Our school is now a leadership academy within the PE department so we offer students the opportunity to take part in leadership awards. As part of those leadership awards they have to contribute a number of hours to the community. It might be that you can point them in the direction of people or organisations who can help them to volunteer. As well as that, in the sixth form they have to do a community contribution through their weekly tasks and that is something you could help with.

Would you recommend using young volunteers to other schools or organisations?

I certainly would because volunteers help with the process of everything. The more people who can help, the better the outlook. With the quality we have here, with the likes of Katie, it has really helped our department to progress. It has really, really allowed many students to access more sports and more extra-curricular activities throughout the school.