



Volunteer Stories

Here are some of our volunteers telling us about their experiences of supporting our organisation:

"I joined the forum after a practitioner working with our family had suggested we joined to access some support, we felt very isolated and was struggling to get the help our child needed. I went along to a drop in where I was met with like minded people who just got it! I finally felt like I wasn't alone or going crazy it wasn't just us, we chatted with other families who offered us helpful hints and tips as well as support from the RPCF team. We made friends we started to socialise again going to activities where we didn't feel judged. At the same time my health had deteriorated and I was feeling isolated, someone from the RPCF team had noticed this and asked me if I wanted to help out a little at drop-ins and to help fundraise for the forum. For me this seemed like a great idea volunteering allowed me to feel like I was doing something, without the pressure that paid employment brings. Volunteering improved my mental health and wellbeing it improved my confidence and helped me make friends with similar interests. Over time I learnt new skills attended training and found a passion that I never knew existed. Volunteering completely changed me and helped to develop a new career. I am now in paid employment, my mental health and wellbeing is healthier most importantly my family now received the support they need and I feel empowered to challenge when appropriate. I know it may sound cheesy but volunteering really did change my family's life."

"I am a young person with a range of disabilities whilst away at college part of my course was to do some work experience within our community. My mum works for the forum and I have been around the forum for many years in fact since it began back in 2009. So I asked if I could do my work experience at the forum, following my work experience and when I finished my college course I offered to become a volunteer for the forum to help on reception and other duties. For me volunteering is a way of socialising and opportunity to meet new people. I like to feel like I'm helping people who are in need of help. The forum support me to be able to volunteer and out things in place to help such as accessibility with the computer. Since volunteering at the forum it has helped me to become more confident and learn new skills which have helped me to apply for my first paid job."

“I started volunteering for Rotherham Parents Forum 4 years ago, helping out at activities and craft club along side my regular job. I was only able to volunteer a few evenings a week and then a Friday during the day. I decided to volunteer because I saw how much my own daughter got out of attending activities and meeting new people that I thought it was time for me to meet new people, people who understand the day to day challenges you have with a child that has autism. By volunteering I have make new friends, friends that I can call on in my hour of need who I know will never judge me. I have learnt new skills through craft club, had the opportunity to attending training, and even though I'm only a volunteer I feel part of the team. The past 4 years have gone fast and I'm looking forwards to once again volunteering at activities as restrictions lift. If anyone thinks that volunteering might be for them, I'd say give it a go because you won't look back!”

“I contacted the Forum with a need to help but not knowing how. The Forum has been a lifeline for me. With their encouragement and Support I have grown in confidence, Knowledge experience & skill's, more often than not they had more faith in me than I did in myself. My family have benefited from this in so many ways. They have gone from having a mum who lacked direction other than her caregiving role which obviously is still my main Priority but now I am able to fulfill that role with a keener sense of myself, Confidence lifted & a spring in My step. I have participated in things I never felt I would ever have the honor of doing so. & Volunteered alongside some of the most passionate & knowledgeable people regarding the needs of this community than I have ever met. I am now working towards a paid Position which I am very proud off. However, I have felt like part of the team since the beginning. Whether paid or volunteering here at the Forum everyone is equal & works together as a team.”

“It gives me a sense of purpose. It's a way of giving back and making a difference to people's lives. I am aware of the difference the voluntary sector makes to society and supports people to access services often not available though the public sector. My contribution to the voluntary sector helps me feel I'm not a burden on society and allows me to help others through challenging times. It gives me the opportunity to share my knowledge and experiences and learn new things. It makes me feel valuable and worthwhile.”