



MEET THE HIDDEN HEROES...

"Sometimes in life you don't realise what you've achieved until someone else says: 'Hey, look what you've done!'"

That's what the nomination to Room to Reward gave to me. It made me think: 'Wow, I really have done something here that made a difference.'

I'm so grateful. We still talk about it."

Mandy – Soul Midwife (Holistic End of Life Carer) Volunteer at
Macmillan Caring Locally
& Hidden Hero



Room to Reward is a unique charity created to give back to those who do so much, for so many. Our hotel partners donate their anticipated unsold rooms, charities and community groups nominate their inspirational volunteers for a break – we make it happen!

Every day, we read incredible stories of ordinary people doing extraordinary things – giving up their time to make a difference to those in need.

Room to Reward gives just a fraction of this time back in the form of a short, well-earned break.

Here are the stories of some of these incredible volunteers, as told by their charities and the Hidden Heroes themselves...

Pat - Royal British Legion

Pat first began supporting the Legion in 1969 as a member of the Armed Forces, where she served in the Navy and Reserves for 37 years. Pat is always there for everyone else and expects no recognition for her outstanding work for our veterans and Armed Forces family. The people I meet have nothing but the highest admiration and respect for the life changing work she does for those that need our help.



She is an invaluable support to the Lee on the Solent branch. Pat is the Branch Secretary, the Branch Welfare Representative, the Branch Board of Management Secretary, Poppy Appeal Organiser, the Principal County Recruiting Officer, a County Case Worker, a County Poppy Appeal Coordinator, a County Committee Member and the Women's Section Treasurer!

"My stay at Le Manoir, from arrival to departure, was exceptional - I even got to meet Raymond Blanc! Thank you all at Room for Reward for such a wonderful experience. To anyone considering becoming a volunteer, I would say do it! You will never regret it and you will meet some amazing people along the way."



Dave - Relate: Worcestershire

Dave volunteers each week for us to input hand written notes into an online database. The size of our organisation means we are unable to employ an administrator to do this work, so his contribution is invaluable. Dave expects nothing in return for helping us. He recognises how stretched our resources are and he truly is someone who enjoys giving something back to his community.

He really deserves a break. We are delighted to nominate Dave as our Hidden Hero - he really is a wonderful man.



"We crammed a lot into our two day break! With a nice hotel, magnificent scenery and glorious weather, this was a short break that we will always remember.

Many thanks to Relate, the Room to Reward scheme and to the staff at the Royal Victoria Hotel, Snowdonia."

Daphne & Charles – Help & Care

Daphne and her husband Charles are in their 80s and have been helping the local community through volunteering for over 20 years. They have carried out different roles at Help & Care, including driving people with mobility problems to essential appointments or visiting older and isolated people at home and are now part of the Telephone Befriending Support Scheme.



"We started volunteering because we wanted to help people and make a real difference to their lives, especially to those who are lonely and housebound. It's wonderful to see how a small act like a telephone call can make such a big difference for someone who might have not talked to anyone in two or three days."

Emma has been a volunteer since 2015. She helps with admin in the office as well as residential weekends and family activities, attending many weekends and events. She also continues to work in the office and support fundraising events by manning charity stalls at a number of local fetes and shows and obtaining prizes for raffles etc.



She is very dedicated to Mosaic, gives as much time as she can to volunteering and is a delight to work with.



"It felt really special to be recognised like this. We had a great break at The Grand, Brighton and felt really looked after! What a fab charity!"

Thank you!"



Bob has been a trusted and valued volunteer since 2000. Bob's role is My Sight Notts Rambling Group Leader, leading blind and partially sighted walkers through the Peak District every fortnight, come rain or shine, ensuring their safety and enjoyment at all times.

We cannot thank Bob enough for his voluntary services over the years, he's an awesome volunteer leader.

Each and every walker I have met has told me how they appreciate Bob and his dedication to creating a sense of family in the Rambling Group. We'd love to reward him for his commitment.



"Just a short message to express our thanks for the wonderful two days at the Chester Grosvenor Hotel. The staff were tremendous as was our accommodation. We visited Chester Zoo and walked the Chester City walls, visited lots of shops and had great meals. Brilliant, thanks again."

Paul - Dreamflight

Each year, Dreamflight charts a 747 plane and takes 192 seriously ill or disabled children for a 10-day holiday of a lifetime to Orlando. On the day of the departure, all 192 children (plus over 200 medical and non-medical volunteers) are transported from the Hilton London at Heathrow Airport to the hangar set aside for Dreamflight.

Paul is the incredible volunteer who brings this whole departure/boarding experience together. It is a very stressful task, but Paul has ensured we have left on time for 30 years! He does not stop until every person is on board and his enthusiasm does not wane for a second. The children absolutely love him and his legendary 'Who's the best Group?!' shouts are an integral part of the whole Dreamflight experience!



"We chose Christchurch Harbour Hotel and it's been absolutely fantastic. It's an honour and a privilege to volunteer, but these breaks make it very special for people like myself. It's very humbling and very special to be picked. Thank You."



Denise - Hospitality Action

Denise is an invaluable help to Hospitality Action. She visits grant applicants who need support with their application, hosts lunches & teas for our Golden Friends (retired industry members who are often isolated or lonely) and is a volunteer visitor. On top of this, she writes around 2,000 birthday and Christmas cards to our Golden Friends, which sadly is sometimes the only one they receive. She also helps with the posting of almost 1,500 Golden Friends newsletters every two months.

She really is our hero and has made such a huge impact on so many people's lives over the years. We really couldn't do without her, she's amazing.



"When I was a teenager I was horse mad. I spent every weekend and most of my school holidays at Billy Walsh's stable on Ham Common. Many times, in a horse box, I visited the New Forest where Lord Cowdray's team were playing Ham. I vowed to myself that one day I would be a guest at the Balmer Lawn. I am now almost 82.
Thank you for making it possible"



Lisa has been a valued member of the Whitby team for well over a decade, carrying out a wide variety of tasks. Always the first to offer assistance, Lisa is reliable to the core. She's a fountain of knowledge and her passion really shines through. She's gone above and beyond what was expected of her in her volunteer role, taking on new responsibilities to become a fantastic "buddy" to new volunteers starting in the shop. She happily shares her knowledge in an incredibly kind and easy-to-follow way. This is especially important when Lisa is supporting new disabled volunteers who require easily-understood volunteer induction information. She helps to make volunteering with SCOPE more accessible to everyone so that our charity can embrace diversity and include more disabled people as volunteers.



"I enjoyed a very peaceful break at Gisborough Hall. The room was beautiful with high ceilings, a huge bed and crisp white linen. The food was amazing and the staff could not do enough for me. It was great to have a break from normal life and I felt well rested."

Stuart - Hearing Dogs for Deaf People

Stuart is one of those absolutely priceless volunteers to whom Hearing Dogs for Deaf People is indebted in such an enormous way, and yet they ask for no thanks nor credit, and go about their volunteering in an entirely altruistic way. His involvement with Hearing Dogs has been unwavering for 20 years and over that time Stuart has carved out a unique role, caring for working hearing dogs in Scotland when their deaf recipients need support in any way.

Stuart never tires of his volunteering. Thanks to him, almost the entire community knows about our charity and have a positive impression of Hearing Dogs.



*"A big thank you to Hearing Dogs, Room to Reward and to Geoff Lofthouse and the Imperial Hotel Llandudno for making our visit so memorable. What a superb hotel it is. We are heading back home tomorrow after visiting our two daughters.
I am known in the area as the Hearing Dog man - what an honour!"*



Margaret – League of Friends: Bridgnorth Hospital

Margaret is Vice President and a founder member of the League of Friends of Bridgnorth Hospital. She helped start the charity 60 years ago and, at the age of 90, continues to play an active role on behalf of the League, a very active and dedicated group of volunteers who raise funds to buy much-needed equipment for the hospital.

When Bridgnorth Hospital and its operating theatre were threatened with closure, Margaret avidly campaigned against this.

Neither closed.

Today, Bridgnorth Hospital is a busy 25 bed Community Hospital.

In recognition of Margaret's continued involvement as a volunteer, she was awarded an MBE in the 2018 New Years Honours list.



"Thank you for the wonderful stay we had at Sidmouth Harbour Hotel - it was beautiful!"

LEAGUE OF FRIENDS
BRIDGNORTH HOSPITAL

Alan and Beryl run a charity in Uganda for children who are orphaned, aids-affected or living in poverty who would otherwise be unable to go to school.

They have built several schools and now help more than 400 children, as well as running a home for teenagers who are parentless.

They sadly cannot spend as much time in Uganda as they used to but they have built a great team to continue their amazing work.

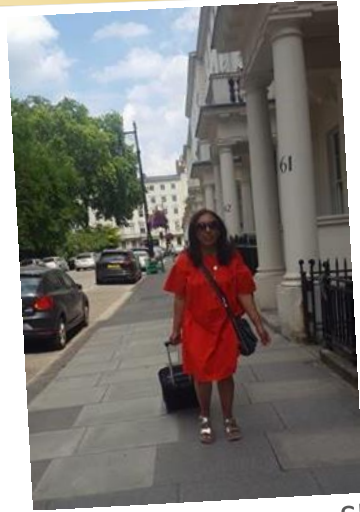
They are truly nation builders and changers.



"Thank you so much for our break at Dalhousie Castle. We really enjoyed our stay and really relaxed there. James, the General Manager, made us very welcome and gave us a tour of the castle telling us of its history. The food in the Dungeon restaurant was amazing, one of the best meals we have ever tasted!"

Fiza performs a variety of roles within the organisation, from supporting vulnerable women on our Helpline to co-delivering our Positive Relationships Programme in schools with young people. She is always reliable and consistent and is known throughout the organisation for being a volunteer to call upon in times of need. Fiza also provides support within our refuges. Her friendly and professional manner help build trust and her understanding of the difficulties the women we support face means she is always empathetic and non-judgemental.

Fiza has offered us so much as an organisation and has asked for nothing in return. She is truly a Hidden Hero and well deserving of a break away.



"It's such a good gesture towards us volunteers, my family were so touched too! We had such an amazing time, so a massive thank you to you guys and Georgian House Hotel for making it possible!"

Hannah and Rachel – Over the Wall

Hannah is a dedicated and committed volunteer, who brings a little bit of joy and sparkle. She has had some very challenging teams when she has been a Team Leader, not only from a young person perspective, but also a volunteer team perspective. Hannah always gives our young people the best experience. Volunteers like Hannah, for an organisation like OTW, are one in a million.



At our South Serious Illness Camp 2016, Rachel was a Team Leader. It was a challenging camp for Rachel, but she never let it affect her leadership or her engagement and support with others. This demonstrated to me that she will always put other people first and that she is a 'professional' and dedicated volunteer. Volunteers like Rachel are few and far between.

OVER THE WALL
a seriousfun camp
founded by paul newman



Fenella - Whizz-Kidz

Fenella has made an incredible impact to the youth group she volunteers at in Exeter, and also to the way volunteering works at Whizz-Kidz generally. Having volunteers like Fenella is so important at Whizz-Kidz: not only is she a brilliant role model to young people as a wheelchair user herself, but her dedication to ensuring that Whizz-Kidz is inclusive and accessible to volunteers and young people alike is fantastic.



"I was overwhelmed to be nominated. It was completely unexpected, as volunteering with the young people at this charity is a reward in itself!

I chose to stay at Salcombe Harbour Hotel. The room was lovely and the view was stunning. It was so peaceful and relaxing watching all of the boats going in and out of the harbour. The food was wonderful and the staff attentive and thoughtful. It was a fantastic break. Thank you."

Whizz-kidz
move a life forward

Julie - Havering Volunteer Centre

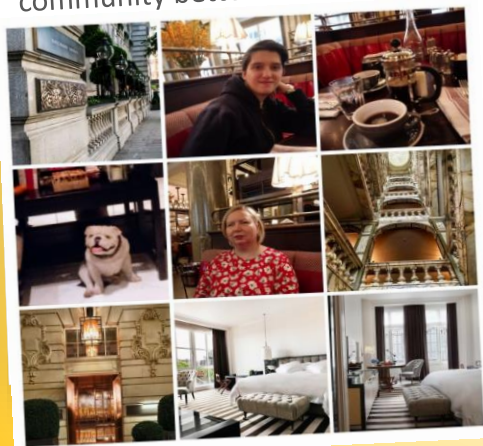
When I started this new charity in 2016, Julie was one of the first to offer her support and become a volunteer with me.

As a very busy Volunteer Centre, we have seen over 3000 individuals register to become volunteers in our community. This produces an awful lot of paperwork and administration tasks. Julie has been instrumental in ensuring the office runs smoothly implementing new admin procedures ensuring we record everything accurately and safely.

She is steadfast loyal and cheerful. She has overcome many hurdles in life and her road to recovery was her passion for volunteering. She is living proof that you can overcome issues especially if you have hope, friendship and empathy.

Julie is the backbone of our Volunteer Admin team. She teaches new admin volunteers her skills with enthusiasm. She is happy to turn her talents to wherever they are needed.

Way to go Julie, you are a real hero, a beacon of positivity and a valued volunteer making our community better.



"Everyone at Rosewood London from check in to check out were marvellous. Nothing was too much trouble for them. The reception team gave us tips on sightseeing and the best places to visit. They were so knowledgeable and super friendly - we were made to feel like film stars for the weekend! I love my volunteering and this weekend away was the icing on the cake. I cannot thank everyone enough"



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