



Hi Everyone,

This month we want to spread the word about our fantastic befriending service here at Creative Support. Volunteer Befrienders empower our service users to achieve many great things; anyone who accesses our services can ask for this support. In this newsletter you will find out more about what a befriender is and how they can support you, or people you know, at your service. If you are interested in finding out more about our befriending service, you can contact the Volunteer Team by emailing volunteer@creativesupport.co.uk.

Our Volunteer Befrienders

Each year Creative Support befrienders give around 6,000 hours of their time and skills to help people improve their confidence, access the community, achieve personal goals and develop new relationships.

Every befriending partnership is completely unique and befrienders are matched with service users based on their goals and shared interests. We meet with some of our befriending pairs to find out more...

Carol and Claudia

Volunteer Befrienders support a number of people who access our Scunthorpe Community Housing Related Support Service. Carol tells us about Volunteer Befriender Claudia:

“My befriender Claudia has been supporting me for about 6 weeks. She goes to the shops with me as I have trouble going on my own. We have a coffee, chat, catch up and it’s nice to see someone like Claudia as I’m quite socially isolated. Claudia brings a different outlook on things and is a similar age to me so we have lots in common. For the future, I’d like Claudia to help me build my confidence in using the bus, as I can have trouble getting to places on public transport.” We’re looking forward to hearing how Carol gets on!



Doris and Elaine

Doris lives at one of our Extra Care services in Tower Hamlets and has been supported by Volunteer Befriender Elaine for over a year. They enjoy going on trips out in London together and having a good chat. We asked Doris some questions about having a befriender:

What do you like to do with Elaine, your befriender?

“Most of the time we just talk. We did watch a TV programme yesterday about animals, because she is just as interested in them as I am. We have a lot in common, you see. We’re both fond of classical music too - she goes a lot to opera and ballet and I did when I was younger.”

What is your favourite thing about having a befriender?

“She’s so kind; it’s all I can say really. Having company keeps me alive. We can talk and laugh about things. She knows London well; she lived here from when she was young. We talk about different places. It’s something to look forward to every week and I’m very fortunate to have someone like that.”



David and Victor

David, who accesses our Creative Support Northamptonshire service, has benefitted greatly from the support of his befriender:

“I am very happy with my befriender Victor because

without him I would not have left the house. He has introduced me to new friends and enabled me to gain confidence to speak to more people, I definitely want to continue.”

Thank you David for sharing this!



Roy and Jenell

Roy requested the support of a befriender to help him focus on healthy eating and gain the confidence to go to the gym regularly. With the encouragement and support of his befriender Jenell, he now goes to the gym regularly and has lost an amazing 5 stone! Roy tells us what it's been like to have a befriender supporting him to make these changes in his life:

“Having a befriender is a good opportunity to help you achieve goals. Each befriender brings their own experience, interests and skills and I got matched with the right person who has helped me with my goal; Jenell has improved my confidence around eating healthily and we go to the gym together where she helps me with the equipment so we can focus on different exercises.

Jenell has been my befriender since January 2017 and has built up trust with me. She has helped me settle down and have a routine. When you have a befriender, you decide what you want to do during the time when you meet with them. Jenell asks me what I'd like to do and also gives me ideas of things we could do, but ultimately

Service User Consultations

This year, the Volunteer Team have begun holding Service User Consultations across our different services to coproduce volunteer roles with the people we support. Natalie, our Volunteer and Community Engagement Officer, got to visit some of our London services to hold consultations and they proved to be a great success!



During the consultations, service users gave us feedback about their interests and what they would like to do. Following the feedback we developed some unique and interesting volunteer roles that reflect the needs of the people we support. Some of the new roles included bespoke befrienders for specific service users and a volunteer to run a weekly games night to provide an evening of fun and socialising.

We are keen to hold more service user consultations across our services - if you would like to hold one at your service please get in touch with the Volunteer Team: volunteer@creativesupport.co.uk.



..... you decide what you want to do and what you'd like achieve with your befriender's help. If you've not had a befriender you should go for it - you have nothing to lose!"



Coming up...

For **Volunteers' Week** coming up in June, we are looking for your great volunteer stories and photos to share on our social media channels. If you know a Creative Support volunteer who is doing a great job, or want to share your volunteering experience, please get in touch.



We are currently finalising our plans for **Summer of Sport**, so watch this space! Let us know what you have planned and how you aim to get active. With the World Cup well underway as well as Wimbledon and Tour de France, there are plenty of opportunities to plan some great events at your service in July and even try a new sport!



As always, we are very excited to be taking part in **PRIDE** events across the country this summer. We have some new Creative Support Pride merchandise available; please contact us to get your hands on t-shirts, balloons, stickers and more!



Don't forget, we are also launching our annual **'Get Creative' Arts Competition** in August, in which you could have your artwork featured in the Creative Support 2019 calendar!

We love hearing about the great things that services are getting up to, so please keep sending your stories and pictures to marketing@creativesupport.co.uk.