

Volunteering at Nottinghamshire Neighbourhood Watch – A Personal Account - Katy Adamson

I recently graduated from the University of Nottingham and during most of the time that I spent there, I volunteered with Nottinghamshire Neighbourhood Watch as a Multi-Scheme Administrator and later as a volunteer helping to develop the 'Student Watch' scheme.

Why did you want to volunteer?

I first wanted to volunteer for Neighbourhood Watch to make a difference to the people around me and to give something back to the student community. I studied Criminology and Sociology at university and had a keen interest in helping to prevent and reduce crime, especially for young people. During my university years in Nottingham, I lived in typical 'student' areas, such as Beeston and Lenton and understood the extent to which students were targets by criminals and the high rates of crimes against this particular group within these areas. Acknowledging the continuation of the same crimes, such as burglary, and the limited support from the police force towards students, I wanted to volunteer with Neighbourhood Watch in order to make students aware of actions they can take towards reducing crime against them and to make the student community a more caring and safe neighbourhood.

Personal and Professional Development

The experience of volunteering with Neighbourhood Watch has been fundamental, to not only my personal development but also my professional development as an individual. Through working with various individuals, such as Policing Partnership Officers and those from Nottinghamshire County Council, the volunteering experience enabled me to build on my existing experience and knowledge about various organisations and allowed me to improve my writing, listening and networking skills, as well as improving my confidence through meeting new people and voicing my own opinions through my involvement in Neighbourhood Watch meetings.

In addition, volunteering gave me the opportunity to conduct primary research with students, whereby I created a questionnaire and conducted a focus group as part of developing the Student Watch scheme. This helped me to gain key research and communication skills needed for the application of my dissertation in my final year of my academic studies, whereby I conducted questionnaires and interviews with female police officers.

Conclusion

My experience with volunteering for Neighbourhood Watch has been greatly positive and I would really recommend it to anyone who is unsure whether or not to volunteer with the registered organisation. The large amount of effort and time Sue puts into not just the organisation itself but to every individual team member is something that is often rare to find, and she made me feel so appreciated and supported throughout my whole experience. The team itself (consisting of a diverse set of individuals in terms of their ages, where they are from and their roles within the organisation) are all so lovely. Ideas and suggestions for the future development of Neighbourhood Watch are always welcomed and individuals with one view are consistently motivated to embrace other ideas in order for the organisation to be as successful as possible.

Working in the voluntary sector is something that is required in contemporary society when looking for employment and applying for a job. From searching for jobs which I am wanting to go into, I have found that a lot of the necessary skills needed can be developed and built through volunteering with Neighbourhood Watch.