



BILLY'S VOLUNTEERING STORY

Background

Billy arrived on a spousal visa last year and in the first few months, he decided to upskill by attending a coding course online, which he completed in February 2024. Since then, he had been applying for work, particularly in this field but found entry level jobs very difficult to find.

Who did you speak to about volunteering?

“The volunteer centre in Salford was really helpful. Having had a chat with them about the benefits of volunteering, I felt encouraged to look at volunteering as a way to gain more experience.”

Although Billy had no teaching background, we recommended the IT Assistant volunteer role at Sovereign House in Salford as he could utilise some of his coding skills and gain valuable experience at the same time

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Was there anything that hindered you and what helped to overcome this?

“Yes, I was initially hesitant as I didn’t feel my knowledge would be enough, to be of benefit in that role. In hindsight I know that this was misplaced”.

Billy had a conversation with the Volunteer Centre about what the role involved, and we advised that he wouldn’t be leading the session but supporting the children in their learning.

Billy also thought that, as he was looking for paid work and was hopeful something would turn up soon, he didn’t want to commit to something because it wasn’t fair on the organisation. However, after talking with us at the volunteer centre, he felt encouraged to try.

“The encouragement to try volunteering anyway was the biggest thing that got me started and not to expect to be ‘captain superhero guy’ 😊 but just to be there to help in any way you can. So, I was encouraged to just go for it”

In April he applied for the volunteer role at Sovereign House whilst he continued in his search for a job. Billy has been volunteering there since May and has had a really positive experience. His first words to me when I caught up with him to ask how things were going were, “Yeah! I love it!”

What kind of things do you do in the role?

“The teacher does most of the lesson but if the students need any assistance or don’t understand anything, that’s where me and the other assistants come in. I have been helping 2 brothers that joined on the same day as me. They would have missed some things already covered and have some gaps over other students that have been consistently there – so I have been supporting these students so the teacher can focus on the lesson instead”

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What was one of your favourite moments?

“The students had to do a presentation with google slides and one particular student wanted to show her presentation to me when she had finished - she was really proud of what she had done which resulted in everyone then wanting to do the same and share theirs”.

Billy thought that was a lovely moment, as the students up until this point were still getting to know him and a bit shy.

What impact do you think this has had?

Impact in class: Billy felt able to contribute as an extra source of information and support to the children in lessons. As an assistant, he can get to those that need support quicker, so the kids don't have to sit there waiting for help. Helping an individual who needs some support, means the rest of the class can keep going with the lesson from the tutor.

I caught up with Irene at Sovereign House recently and this is what she had to say: “Billy is eager to learn and, despite not having much programming experience before joining us, he has shown great initiative and dedication. Having access to the teaching materials beforehand enabled him to study the lesson plans and effectively assist the teacher in class, providing support for the children. He is helpful, patient, punctual, and communicates well, and has gained a lot from volunteering with our Computer Learning Programme.” (Irene, Sovereign House)

Personal Impact: “I feel better about myself as I was getting into a slump and not getting any traction with all the applications, I was submitting at the time...It gave me a way to contribute... I wanted to be a benefit to something or someone and doing this made me feel good about myself. Prior to volunteering, I was getting drained and demotivated, going through application after application. Volunteering gave me something to look forward to every week...I felt it was really good for my wellbeing”.

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Impact on career choice: He 'loved' it so much that by the end of the 3rd session, Billy thought about a career in teaching and went on to successfully apply for a school-based training role starting in September. Volunteering at Sovereign House helped him to have more belief and confidence that he could take it forward as a career

Is there anything you would say to volunteers who are looking to get involved in the Salford Community?

“Yes! Find something that you think you are interested in or that might help in your attended career path or just something you could learn for yourself. If you do that, you will probably enjoy it. If it is career-related, then you are more invested in it. It can also help you realise whether you do want to go into that career or not, it can be very clarifying. But just find something and do it. I didn't think about going to teach as a career path until I realised how much I enjoy it; it can open up new possibilities that you didn't realise”

The benefits of volunteering

There are many benefits to volunteering such as wellbeing, making new friends and supporting others but it can also help with learning new skills and gaining valuable experience. As with Billy, it can also open you up to other possible pathways that might not have been considered before.

If you want to talk to us about opportunities in Salford, please visit our portal, email us at volunteer@salfordcvs.co.uk or call 0161 787 7795 and ask for Claire and Grace

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