



Tory's Story

I met Tory at the Salford University Jobs and Volunteering Fair in October along with three of her fellow students, who wanted to explore volunteering, to build experience alongside their degree.

The students were really enthusiastic about getting involved in something, so I highlighted the wonderful work at Laudato Si' centre, Wardley Hall, an environmental garden where individuals come and discover ways to understand about themselves and the environment. Adults and children can walk away feeling a sense of hope, enabling them to make positive changes in their lives.

The Volunteering Role

Sarah, the resident Gardener and Wellbeing Coordinator there had been looking for some volunteers to help coppice their willow dome; this involved cutting back and weaving all this year's growth (a fair amount!). As a commitment to sustainability, a third is of it is weaved back into the dome, a third is kept for their own forest school and carving/weaving programmes and a third is given freely to communities and organisations that want to create their own willow sculptures.



November Volunteering

I had the opportunity to catch up with one of these students, Tory, on her second day, volunteering with Wardley Hall.

Whilst we cut back willow branches with secateurs, we had a long chat about her interest in the environment and how she was finding the volunteer experience so far.

Sarah, our wonderful coordinator for the day, also showed us how to weave some of the willow back in and then provided a mini tutorial on how to weave the rods into wreath bases for their upcoming workshops.

Where did the interest in the environment and the course come from?

Having finished an English Language degree finished in 2018, Tory spent a while working various office and retail jobs, thinking through the sort of life-long career she wanted – something that was meaningful and rewarding but also which had a positive impact on the world around her.

By chance, she attended a university open day on conservation for her sister and it became apparent that the environment was something she really connected with. It had really inspired her, and she knew then she wanted to pursue this as a career, starting with a part-time Master's degree in Sustainability in September.

“It is nice to do things where you know you are having an impact and helping others”



What prompted you to come to the Jobs Fair and get involved in Volunteering?

When she came to the Jobs Fair, she hadn't really thought much on the type of volunteering she could do but was open to exploring different roles. Tory was interested in the idea of helping support at Wardley Hall as it was an opportunity for her to get 'stuck in' practically with something that supported sustainability and the environment.

Being so busy at university meant that it was impossible to commit to regular volunteering so the project at Wardley Hall gave her flexibility to do something when she could but was relevant to her studies.

"It is nice to do things where you know you are having an impact and helping others"

How have you found the volunteering so far?

Tory shared that it felt good to be outside, doing something in nature - it was a nice change from sitting at a desk. It also meant that she was supporting an amazing project, knowing that her volunteering was helping, even in a small way, to support sustainability.

Tory reflected this had provided a huge boost to her wellbeing. Being neuro-diverse, she has found the course very rewarding but demanding. There is a lot of work involved and, although fully committed, she reflected that it could be sometimes quite overwhelming.

"Volunteering is really rewarding, and it relaxes me... calms me down from a very demanding course. I have been quite stressed and overwhelmed recently but being here has just completely taken me away from those feelings. Being out in nature calms me down"

It was great to hear Tory's journey and the impact that her volunteering has had on her. Tory has enjoyed it so much that she is intending to come back a few more times to help support in other areas of the garden and woodland, as and when her studies allow

To learn more about Laudato Si' centre, Wardley Hall and its fabulous projects, please visit here [Laudato Si' Centre - Laudato Si' Centre](#)

If you would like to learn about how volunteering can link in with your studies, please get in touch at volunteer@salfordcvs.co.uk