

Testimonial by Hannah Aged 14

"I enjoy volunteering because..."

I enjoy volunteering because... well, where do I start? I guess the main reason is because it is so fulfilling and rewarding, for both the children and me.

Sometimes, the littlest things can be the most rewarding, like coaxing a smile or even a small laugh from a less responsive child, or having a more active child listening to and carrying out my instructions, or having a child who normally isn't very affectionate giving me a big hug.

Another reason why I enjoy it so much is it's one of the greatest feelings to watch a child, especially a special needs child, develop and start to learn new things through play. Feeling like I'm helping them, and improving their quality of life by playing with them and teaching them new things, and just watching them grow up, is truly one of the best feelings there is.

It's a major confidence boost as well, every time something I've decided to try out works out well, or a child repeats a phrase we've taught them, I become more confident in what I'm doing.

There's also the fact that everyone who works there or volunteers there are so friendly and caring. I've lost track of the amount of friends I've made just from turning up and talking to new people.

Plus, it's always just SO much fun. During playschemes we get to go to exciting places like farm parks and big soft play areas and even Legoland and Thorpe Park, meaning lots of fun for us and the children we're with!

And if we're at the centre after school or on Saturdays there's always so much to do, like playing games like cops and robbers in the playground or chilling out in the sensory room. I know I've done well if when the parent comes the child doesn't want to go home!

Then, at the end of the day, even when I'm so exhausted I feel like crawling home, the thought that I made a difference and made someone happy, even if it was only for a couple of hours, is enough to keep me coming back each day, ready to make more of a difference, make more friends, and help improve the quality of life for more people. =]