

Volunteering with Reigate Sea Cadets – Lara Smith



I moved to Surrey four years ago and wanted to volunteer as a way of getting involved in the local community. Because I work 9am to 5pm as a project co-ordinator, I needed to find something that would fit around this. I was a Sea Cadet when I was younger, so was really pleased to discover that there were opportunities to volunteer with Reigate Sea Cadets during the evening and weekends.

I'm a uniformed instructor and help out with the cadets' marching band, and absolutely love it. I do this for a few evenings a week and sometimes at weekends, but some volunteers get involved for just a few hours a week, so it's a great role if you want to fit volunteering around a busy working life.

I now have a young child of my own, but with the cadets I feel like I also have a family of more than 30 kids. Working with the same young people and seeing their successes is hugely rewarding. A recent highlight was when the marching band performed at the Tower of London – it's a good job I was marching at the back so that no-one could see the tears streaming down my face!

How can people find out more? Please email armedforces@surreycc.gov.uk



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Volunteering with the Army Cadets: Suzanne Young-Hotz – part time administrator, carer, grandmother and Cadet volunteer

Tell us about your volunteering roles

My main commitment is with the Cadet Forces. At first I was a member of the Air Training Corps civilian committee where I've had many roles from secretary to chairman. Then back when there were very few women in the Army Cadet Force I volunteered as female cover and my role progressed from there.

What were your motivations for volunteering?

I always needed to give something back to the community. Throughout my life I've got a lot of support from other people...wherever you are there are people who give voluntary support to you and in the same way you give something back. When I saw that my children benefitted so much from Cadets I felt I should help out.

What have you gained from it?

The MOD sets a high standard of skills for Cadets instructors. I've now done my MCGI (NVQ level 7) through the Cadet Vocational Qualification Organisation program supplied by as well as a long list of qualifications within the Cadet Force. So I have benefitted an awful lot through it.

As well as this, I find my role hugely rewarding. Especially seeing the difference that we make to young people and enabling them to enjoy themselves, gain qualifications and have fun.

What difference does it make?

We have the opportunity to make a huge difference in young people through Cadets. I have watched many Cadets who are not performing well at school go on to achieve qualifications (CVQO, DoE and CCAT) and start a career through the support available to them at Cadets.

We also give them opportunities that would otherwise not be available. Like our exchange trip to Australia. But most of all we give them fun! I always maintain whatever you do in life, if you enjoy it you learn.

Do you have any advice for someone who's thinking of volunteering?

There are a lot of potential volunteers out there that say 'I can't give anything, I have no skills and/or I have no time' but we all have skills that we are not aware of and not all volunteering requires a regular commitment.

Volunteering gives as much back as you put in. So try it! Even if it is just for one day, you never know what will happen!

Find out more about volunteering with the Army Cadets - <https://armycadets.com/volunteer-with-us/>



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