

Fun, challenges, learning, inspiration, new opportunities, even romance!

What it has meant to be a sports volunteer -

Rohima Begum, aged 16 from Stechford, West Midlands

I was interested in volunteering but at first I didn't think about sport, but rather art or some sort of community service. After I had joined the extra curricular school club and signed up for the junior sports leader award, our teacher came up with an offer to attend a one-day conference at Millennium Point. I thought 'what a great a chance to get away from school', so I signed my name up straight away!

After attending the one-day conference I was inspired by having spoken to so many other volunteers. I felt sure this would be a great experience and would aid in my future career. Soon after a volunteer development officer did the relevant checks on me – I really did exist! Finally, I was ready to take on the challenge of volunteering and I chose to go the Special Olympics at Stechford Cascades. To be honest, I didn't know much about the Special Olympics at first; I just knew how to get to Stechford and decided to give it a go.

Now I had a placement I decided to do some research. The Special Olympics is really interesting. My volunteering started on the 14th of February, just after I turned 16. I worked with the Special Olympics team and it was very rewarding. The young people had learning and physical disabilities. To actually see people I was coaching follow my instructions and achieve at their sport was brilliant. I was treated like an adult by the parents, carers and coaches and my confidence improved.

Through this part of my sports volunteering I have met a lot of people who have inspired me and made me approach a new career path, which I thought I would never enter into. I hadn't considered a career in sport, but after working at the local swimming pool I have found that there are numerous activities going on with swimming, and I am very interested in becoming a lifeguard and swimming instructor.

I not only volunteered with the Special Olympics, but I have been an official at both the Birmingham Street Games, where I aided in a football tournament, and the Birmingham Youth Games, both of which were most enjoyable. I have really widened my social circle and knowledge of sports through these events. I am proud of myself

Rohima Begum, from Birmingham inspired by special Olympics
West Midlands volunteer case study, July 2005

for entering into this aspect of volunteering. I've found that my future college is very impressed with my volunteering and this may even help me enter university, as this is an extra enrichment activity. In the future I hope to carry on volunteering. I'd like to help at the 2012 Olympics, which would be amazing. I hope to clock up as many volunteer hours as I can and widen my social circle even further, as there's even been a hint of romance through volunteering!

I've thoroughly enjoyed it and learned so much, and I would like to thank all the people who allowed me to help them.

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