



Tales from the TSI Network

# Supporting Volunteering For All

All across Scotland

## volunteering after bereavement - East Dunbartonshire Voluntary Action



Eleanor had been through some really tough times following a family bereavement. This 61-year old was depressed and anxious. She didn't go out much and didn't want to see anyone. When she was attending a local job club, it was suggested she speak to EDVA about volunteering.

Despite having been a very friendly person, through depression Eleanor had become very isolated. She was not in a good emotional state to commit to

volunteering, let alone hold down a job. Could EDVA's encouragement plus peer support volunteering help Eleanor?

### How East Dunbartonshire Voluntary Action has helped Eleanor

Lorraine Moir – Development Officer at EDVA - supports people into volunteering, predominantly on an outreach basis, including twice-monthly visits to the local job club where she will encourage people to consider volunteering.

This is how she met Eleanor, who was feeling so low and just couldn't see how she could volunteer, far less hold down a job. With her knowledge of the local area and network of contacts, Lorraine's thoughts turned immediately to Group Recovery Aftercare Community Enterprise (GRACE), a charity designed for those who have been through trauma just like Eleanor. With different daily activities focusing on confidence building and self-awareness, and peer support central to its services, it was well known to Lorraine for its great work and positive outcomes. She's never referred anyone who didn't want to stay.



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Lorraine explained about GRACE and through their chats, established Eleanor's interest in Pins and Needles activity, where people learn to knit, crochet and sew. Persuading her to experience it for herself, referral was promptly made. Peer-support volunteering proved the answer for Eleanor, allowing her to mix with people facing similar issues but in a friendly environment where everyone supports each other. Discovering that Eleanor also liked to walk, Lorraine referred her to a Health Walk project run by East Dunbartonshire Leisure and Culture Trust, another organisation well known to Lorraine. Although initially apprehensive, Eleanor embraced that too, taking part in fun, one hour walks designed to help people become more active while meeting new folk and learning more about the local area.

In her work, Lorraine meets lots of people like Eleanor and recognises the importance of providing opportunities where they don't have to commit, instead being flexible, dipping in and out of activities when they feel comfortable to do so. When their confidence grows, she encourages them more. If Eleanor hadn't been happy in this approach, then Lorraine would have looked at other available paths.

### **How Eleanor has benefited**

**Eleanor went from being very isolated to socialising far more, making great strides and through her peer support, helping many others who have been through hard times. Feeling far more positive, she's now looking for part time employment** - not easy for anyone, far less a woman in her early 60s. She stresses it must be part-time though, as she doesn't want to miss out on the volunteering that she thoroughly enjoys, nor meeting her new pals who will be friends forever.

Lorraine still takes great delight in seeing Eleanor when she's out and about - a confident woman and very different to the one she first met. For Lorraine, this kind of job satisfaction is tremendous, seeing how her involvement can help make such a positive difference to the life enjoyment of others.

**EDVA is the place for volunteering  
in East Dunbartonshire**

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**Voluntary Action Scotland is the national  
network of Third Sector Interfaces**  
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