

## Ripon Museum Trust Young Volunteers Club



*Lucy and Will on the front desk at the Prison and Police Museum*

Happy First Birthday Museum Young Volunteers Club! We are proud that in just one year young volunteers are now an integral part museum life.

A small programme and very much a work in progress. We combine developing heritage specific skills such as interpretation of historical resources and object handling training with transferrable skills such as working in teams, interacting with visitors and event organisation. The Club meets one Saturday morning a month and young volunteers aged 10-25 years are involved mainly during school holidays, special events. We have gone through a steep learning curve about the challenges of coordinating a diverse group of young people, harnessing their energy and enthusiasm, integrating them with an established and older team of volunteers across 3 museums.

### **Why did we decide to recruit young people?**

- We need more volunteers!
- The average age of volunteers is 69, we rely on volunteers for all areas of our operations.
- Increasing enquiries for work experience, Duke of Edinburgh volunteering and from late primary, early secondary age young people.
- Good local network through schools and the youth service.
- Positive feedback from young people who had already volunteered with us.
- A fantastic volunteer with relevant skills and experience prepared to devote some time and energy to coordinate the programme.
- 3 months of a small amount of funding from an ACE learning project.

Ripon is in rural North Yorkshire where the challenge of access to leisure and cultural services is exacerbated by poor public transport and isolation from peers. We hoped that

the MYVs club would offer an alternative opportunity, develop a fondness for volunteering and lead to a new generation of volunteers.

By building on this positive foundation we promoted the club on a small scale locally, planned the initial activities and very importantly discussed the plans with existing volunteers.

### **The Benefits**

It has been fun! We have learnt a lot!

We now have a young volunteer representative “change leader” as part of our museum resilience programme reviewing strategy and values alongside trustees, staff and other volunteers.

Our museums offer a rare opportunity for people of different generations to meet and work together. The involvement of the young volunteers has had a positive impact on our museum community of staff, volunteers, visitors and our partners.

For the MYVs we hope and they tell us that volunteering has helped build confidence and they have grown personally in a safe and supportive yet challenging environment.

“The people you work with are kind”

“I like dressing up, doing role play and entertaining the visitors”

“Volunteering has been an amazing opportunity for me.....preparing for the world of work.....it has given me a lot of confidence...”

“The best thing about volunteering is mixing with a range of age categories and celebrate the history of the town and share memories”

### **What Next?**

- We realise it takes a lot of time and effort to engage fully with young people,
- We have not yet really reached those more socially isolated,
- We need to do more work to promote the opportunities and benefits
- We need to communicate more and differently, 2 MYVs are setting up their own Facebook page and planning social events for the older, young volunteers.
- We currently rely on existing already stretched resources.
- We still need more volunteers!!

We are committed to continuing to work with young volunteers and are prioritising attracting grant funding in order to develop and expand.

**Contact email Details of the person to contact for more information**

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Callumn restoring an original funeral bier now on display at the Workhouse museum