



Queen Mary's Grammar School
Headmaster: R J Langton, M A

Volunteers Week 1st-7th June 2019

Background Information

<https://volunteersweek.org/>

Volunteers' Week is a chance to celebrate and say thank you for the fantastic contribution millions of volunteers make across the UK. It takes place 1-7 June every year and is an opportunity to celebrate volunteering in all its diversity.

Read also: **The Value of Work Experience and Volunteering on the school website, under parents and students, student resources, careers.**

Events this week

QMGS will be celebrating Volunteers week in 2 ways:

1. Head of Year assemblies
2. Friday Form Period

1. Head of Year Assemblies (transcript below from the assembly)

Some of you may have heard of the 'five steps to mental wellbeing', promoted by the NHS, among other organisations, which states that in order for us to maintain optimum mental health, we should aim to have a balance of the following in our lives:

(<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/improve-mental-wellbeing/>)

- I. Connection - connect with the people around you: your family, friends, teachers and neighbours and spend time developing these relationships
- II. Being active - taking a walk, going cycling or playing a game of football. Find an activity that you enjoy and make it a part of your life.
- III. To keep learning - learning new skills can give you a sense of achievement and a new confidence
- IV. Giving to others - even the smallest act can count, whether it's a smile, a thank you or a kind word. Larger acts, such as volunteering, can improve your mental wellbeing and help you build new social networks



Queen Mary's Grammar School

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- V. Being mindful – being more aware of the present moment, including your thoughts and feelings, your body and the world around you. It can positively change the way you feel about life and how you approach challenges.

You will also know that one of our school mottos is 'Life to the full', and the other, Quas dederis solar semper habebis opes reminds us that it is in giving to others that we are truly rich. It is therefore appropriate that this week we join the National Council for Voluntary Organisations to mark Volunteers' Week from 1st – 7th June, and recognise that by volunteering, we are not only helping to build a better world, but simultaneously reap benefits for our own wellbeing.

One of QMGS's many strengths is that it is full of enterprising, ambitious, generous and passionate staff and students who already undertake a lot of voluntary work. If you have ever been on a school trip, you have benefitted from the voluntary work of a member of staff whose role of organising or accompanying that trip is not likely to be in his or her job description. Any club or society run at school, What If Society and History Society, for example, exist because of the generosity of Mr Reynolds and Miss O'Neill, and the voluntary hard work put in by students preparing presentations. Many staff and students undertake fundraising activities, from samosa sales to Gurjivan Sohal's 'Hunted' game, coming to Y12 this week, which sees 'hunters' tracking 'fugitives' around the school in order to raise money for Stand Up 2 Cancer. Others give their time to social action, such as the Wellbeing Group and the Change Your Mind teams.

QMGS also volunteers in the local and international community. Mr Hughes and the Skiffle Group perform at a variety of locations across Walsall and beyond, entertaining local residents, Mrs McPhee and pupils visit Acorn care home once a month to help elderly people maintain their connection to the outside world, and Mr Rendu has led World Challenge expeditions abroad to help build community facilities.

And then there is voluntary work carried out by staff which is outside of QMGS: Mrs McPhee's Dementia Friends information sessions, Mr Hughes' tours of the National Memorial Arboretum, through DKMS Mrs Mehta's campaigns for people to register as blood stem cell donors to help save lives. There are doubtless many more examples.

Whilst all of this work clearly benefits other people, we'd be fooling ourselves if we were to say that it was entirely altruistic. After all, the reward from taking part in such activities can be to have something that makes you stand apart from other candidates in a pupil senior leadership team,



Queen Mary's Grammar School

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university or job interview, either in itself or because through the volunteer work you have learned new skills and developed them. If you intend to study the same three A-level subjects as many of your friends, then it's likely that at the age of 18, you will be taking exams in the same three subjects as many others up and down the country. Exam results alone won't give you the edge over those others, as, if there are thousands taking the same combination of subjects, there are likely to be many others who get the same results as you. How will you make yourself stand out?

On Friday, your form tutor will give you more information as to how you can get involved in volunteer work no matter what your age. Until then, think about what type of work appeals to you, and when you might be able to fit it into your week. Without your help, our communities both at home and abroad won't be able to make as much progress as they could have done. Can you spare the time?

2. Friday Form Period

The aim of the Friday form period is to use this session to inform pupils about volunteering opportunities in the local area and beyond as follows:

Please to be shown the Walsall ACTION website:

<https://walsallaction.com/about/>. If pupils are interested in making Walsall a better place to live, they can contact the organisation through its website or through Mrs McPhee to enquire about volunteer work. One thing they can do is register their street for a 'bin day litter pick', where they commit to checking their street for litter one day a week before the bins are collected. [Please mention at this point that Mrs McPhee is also in the process of organising a QMGS litter pick in Walsall town centre before the end of the school year, so please see her to put your name down if interested.]

Another thing they can do to help Walsall ACTION is 'micro-volunteering', where they simply like and retweet relevant posts on social media and commit to talking about the town positively instead of focussing on problems, or encouraging others to see the town from a more positive perspective. If they are old enough to be on Twitter, they can follow the accounts below to help them do this:

@WalsallACTION
@YouthofWalsall
@One_Walsall
@walsallforall

There is also the hashtag #proudtobewalsall.



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Youth of Walsall is an organisation for 11–18 year-olds which aims to empower young people to have their voices heard through meetings every Thursday evening, local projects, meeting with key decision makers and representation on local boards and in groups. One of their most recent projects is to create a PSHE lesson plan on knife crime which we hope to trial here in school soon. If you are interested in joining, see Kamran Khan or Ameen Mahmood of Y12, or Zayaan of Y7, who are already members.

Of course, there will be members of your form who are not Walsall residents, but this does not stop them from spending an hour a week picking up litter in their local area, or offering to volunteer their time listening to younger children read at their old primary school or carry out a sports coaching session when QMGS has staff training days or early finishes. There may be an opportunity at a local animal shelter, outreach work through their place of worship, or they could carry out their own fundraising. Those above the age of 16 could enquire about whether their local charity shop might be looking for volunteers.

Another option is to join St John Ambulance cadets, a programme for 10–17 year-olds where you learn basic first aid skills and volunteer in your local community by providing first aid at events.

The following link has a video showing a young person talking about her experience as a Cadet: <http://www.sja.org.uk/sja/young-people/cadets.aspx>

Further Resources

<https://do-it.org/>

Search for volunteering opportunities near you!

<https://onewalsall.org/volunteering/>

Volunteering roles with various organisations...

<https://www.walsallhealthcare.nhs.uk/work-with-us/volunteering/>

https://www.macmillan.org.uk/get-involved/volunteering/why-volunteer.html?gclid=EAlaIObChMlvJyv6I7N4AIVKpPtCh3VewETEAYASAAEgLVx_D_BwE&gclidsrc=aw.ds

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/get-involved/volunteering-fundraising/volunteer/>

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/volunteer>

<https://www.bhf.org.uk/how-you-can-help/volunteer>

<https://www.acorns.org.uk/get-involved/volunteer/>

SMcP, 31/05/19