

Brent Active Citizens Project News

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Best of Brent recognised at Citizen Awards which was organised in conjunction with Brent Association of Disabled People

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A Wembley resident who gave up her free time to help the Metropolitan Police with everything from the monitoring of rehabilitation programmes to the care of witnesses was one of 80 local people honoured by the Mayor on Wednesday night (5 December) at the Brent Active Citizens Project and Brent Association of Disabled People Awards, a special ceremony recognising outstanding commitment to volunteering.

Yasmine Loonat, a former IT manager who has given up a day a week since March to volunteer with Met Police Volunteering Programme, received a certificate from the Mayor, Cllr Harshadbhai B. Patel, in the Council Chambers at Brent Town Hall in front of 150 other Brent residents.

All 80 award winners were nominated by the local organisations where they had been volunteering. These organisations included Brent Metropolitan Police, FortuneGate Community Housing, Preston Park Primary School and Paragon Health Care Centre. Representatives of many of the organisations were present at the awards, along with local councillors, Leader of the Council Paul Lorber, MP Sarah Teather and members of Brent Association of Disabled People, who co-hosted the evening.

Mahmud Rahim, the Volunteer Programme Manager for Brent Metropolitan Police said "I've got only good things to say about the Brent Active Citizen Project, who referred Yasmine and Shyamala to us. We do a lot of joint work with them and we're very happy to be associated with them in encouraging people to get out and do things, and be 'active citizens' has got to be good for all of us in Brent."



From left: Jenny Melrose, Deputy Director of BACP, Volunteer Yasmine Loonat and Cllr. Harshadbhai B. Patel, the Mayor of Brent



Mahmud Rahim, Met Police Vol. Project Coordinator, (third from left) volunteers and Leader of Brent Council Paul



Vincent Cox, Director of Brent Association of Disabled People, and Volunteer Ndey Saidu Pepe with Cllr. Paul Lorber, Leader of Brent Council

For more information about the Brent Active Citizen Volunteer Award Programme please call 020 8 903 7744



**The Brent Active Citizens Project is moving to:-
York House
Empire Way
Wembley
Middlesex
HA9 OPA**

We would like to say thank you to all the organisations who supported BACP

COMMUNITY ACTION DAY

VOLUNTEERS TRANSFORM LOCAL NURSERY GARDEN

Teams of volunteers from the Brent Active Citizens Project, the Metropolitan Police Volunteering Programme, Park Royal Partnership and Brent Park Services worked side by side to tackle the garden of a local nursery in Brent, as part of the fourth annual 'Community Action Day' initiative organised by Park Royal Partnership.

The gardening challenge, one of fourteen which took place during October 19th & 20th across 8 different sites, was organised by the Brent Active Citizens Project and was one of the largest the project had ever undertaken. It involved a major clean up of the grounds of St Michael's Nursery, St Mary's Road, Harlesden, which had remained unused for several years.

The challenge was kick-started by a team of employees from Brent Park Services who kindly gave up several hours of their busy day to start the clean up operation, using special equipment to remove the stubborn weeds which had engulfed the garden. They were then joined by a team of up to 25 volunteers, who, armed with forks and spades, loaded weeds and debris onto wheelbarrows to help complete this major task.

Now cleared, the garden will eventually be transformed into an educational play area for the 36 children who currently attend the nursery.



(Comment from Sharon Best (Deputy Manager of St Michael's Nursery)).

"St Michael's Nursery provides high quality, affordable childcare. We work closely with the community. One of the issues raised by Ofsted was to improve the outdoor area. The garden challenge will hopefully enable us to make a step in the right direction."

The new garden will enable children to develop physically, enjoy imaginative play, plant vegetables and flowers and watch them grow. We will also be able to extend the learning areas outdoors. Plus the added health benefits of being able to go outside in all weathers. Thanks to Brent Active Citizens Project and all the volunteers/organisations that have made this possible."

For more information please contact Tsige Dejene, 0208 965 7708, or Charmaine Goodridge, 0208 965 7707, at the Brent Active Citizens Project



Volunteer's Corner

I have always wanted to work in an office environment, but I needed more experience. I didn't know who to contact at first, and then I met a friend who recommended that I get in touch with Brent Active Citizens Project. I decided to give the project a call and an interview was arranged for me to come in the following day. During the interview I was shown a number of administrative volunteering opportunities, including

one for a placement officer with the Brent Active Citizens Project. This position particularly appealed to me so I applied.

After being interviewed separately for this role, I was accepted. I was later introduced to the team, inducted and given a volunteer Job Description.

Volunteering with the Brent Active Citizens Project has been fantastic, it has enabled me to communicate and interact with and relate to people from different backgrounds. It has also improved my confidence and enabled me to gain new skills as well as expand on the skills I already have.

Volunteering has been an exciting challenge for me and is an excellent pathway back into employment.



Oluwakemi Eruola

The Brent Active Citizens Project in conjunction with the Hammersmith and Fulham Volunteer Centre is offering a free Skills for Food Programme for unemployed people who are living in Brent. Skills for Food is a free programme for people looking for work in catering, food manufacturing, food retail, hotels or restaurants. It combines pre-employment courses and work experience that will improve chances of getting a job.

Travel and childcare costs can also be covered whilst you are participating in the programme.

What is Available?

Practical information to help you back into work, such as tax credits finances, childcare etc.

Initial Skills Assessment to help identify your strengths and weaknesses and additional help will be needed for employment support, confidence building, communication skills, CV production, job search and interview skills, accredited training customer service training, workshop giving you practical advice on providing excellent standards of service voluntary work experience, chance to try out your career.



Clients from Brent Refugee Forum who have completed Skills for Food Training with Falestine, Project Coordinator of Brent Refugee Forum, and Cllr. Paul Lorber

If you are an organisation working with unemployed people in Brent, please contact the Brent Active Citizen Project. For skills for food training and volunteering opportunities.

NLDC Project Launch

Over 30 people attended the launch of the NLDC project at the Unity Centre, Church End, on Wednesday November 28th. They included representatives from Brent Adult & Community Education Service, Brent Active Citizens Project, Brent Association for Voluntary Action—who form part of the steering group, as well as volunteers and members of the public who wanted to find out more about the project.

After Sue Hasty had introduced the event, Hugh Deeney outlined the scope of the project and described the ways in which local communities would benefit.

The aims and objectives of the NLDC project are fourfold: education and training, capacity building, sustainability and employability. Staff, volunteers and potential volunteers are already being recruited for the PTTLS training which was started in January which leads to a level 3/4 teacher training qualification. Other capacity-building training courses will include ESOL, literacy and numeracy and upskilling in employment-related issues such as confidence-building, job search, CV writing and applications.



Hugh Deeney, Service Development Manager of Brent Adult Community Education Service, launching the NLDC Project

BACP and The Matrix Accreditation

BACP are delighted to announce that the project has, jointly with Hammersmith and Fulham Volunteer Centre, achieved Matrix accreditation. BACP's contribution towards achieving the Matrix accreditation standard through teamwork, and the dedication in ensuring volunteers were placed into training or employment, was immense. The professionalism across the whole organisation in providing information, advice and guidance and the success of the projects can be heard from the volunteers themselves.

“From the moment I walked through the door, I knew that this centre was the one for me.” “The centre staff have motivated me, helped me to recognise my skills and have supported me to overcome my barriers. I have a clear action plan in place.”

With such a positive view, we feel rightly proud that the hard work put in to our development work through pre-employment training, CV preparation and interview technique training with our clients to help them into work, and our monitoring and evaluating of projects enabling close partnership and business liaisons. have helped the organisation to deliver a strong programme to the local community.

The professionalism, strong business sense, forward thinking and strategic planning, together with its ultimate commitment to volunteers, all contributed to the organisation achieving the Matrix quality assurance accreditation in our delivery of IAG.

HR Information, Advice and Guidance Project is now based in Brent for two days a week

The HR Information, Advice and Guidance Project aims to contribute to the community through upskilling voluntary organisations in Human Resources management by providing information, advice and guidance. Based in the Brent Active Citizen's Project office two days a week, we welcome contact from any voluntary organisations in Brent who may need help on recruitment, employment contracts, or other employment issues. We also undertake small seminars throughout the year.

If you want to discuss this further please contact Jenny Melrose, HR/Deputy Director - jennym@hfvc.org.uk

BACP organised its first Xmas gift drive in Brent; just in time for Christmas. Hundreds of toys were donated by The Walt Disney Company and distributed to a number of local nurseries, which included St Michael's Nursery (St Mary's Road, Harlesden), St Michael's Nursery (St. John Keble School), St. Mary's Nursery, Little Angels Nursery, St. Michael's Nursery (St. Matthews Community Centre) and Brent Sickle Cell Society. The gifts were handed over at the BACP office to representatives from the above nurseries, who were overwhelmed by the quality and amount of gifts donated. BACP would like to say thank you to Tammy McFeggan for the gifts donated by The Walt Disney Company.

Xmas Gift Drive



**Charmaine Goodridge,
Project Coordinator of BACP, handing the gifts to local Nurseries**

BACP Wins Funding from John Lyons to deliver 3 year Youth Volunteering Programme.

We are pleased to announce that the project has been awarded 3 years of funding to deliver a volunteering and employment based project for young people between the ages of 16-25, living in the boroughs of Brent and Hammersmith and Fulham.

The project aims to do the following:-

Provide young people in Hammersmith and Fulham and Brent with employment skills and experience through volunteering and work placements in the voluntary, public and business sector.

Signpost young people into further education and employment, through partnerships with advice agencies, colleges and businesses in the borough.

Capacity build community groups in both boroughs, through training, advice, volunteers and partnership work and provide them with good practice on the use of volunteers within their organisation.

Provide young people with one to one support training sessions and job search. The job search and supportive services will assess the client's needs with regards to employment, provide 1:1 advice and guidance on job applications; assistance with CVs; assistance with job interviews; extra training and counselling in job search for those people whose first language is not English; continuous support and confidence building to clients from placements and job hunting through to employment.

Remember that we are moving to:-

**York House
Empire Way, Wembley
Middlesex
HA9 OPA**

Volunteer Reading Help

Confident children, literate for life



Would you like to inspire children to read?

Volunteer Reading Help is a national charity which recruits and trains volunteers to work with children in local primary schools. The aim is to increase the children's confidence and self-esteem in a relaxed environment, so that reading becomes enjoyable and achievable – you might read with or to the children, allow them to choose and look at books they find interesting, and play games together. The London North West Branch covers the boroughs of Brent and Barnet, and our volunteers come from all cultures and backgrounds, with ages ranging from 18 to over 80.

What we will give you:

An interview (we will require references and will carry out an enhanced CRB check)
11 hours of training
A box of books and games to use with the children
Ongoing help and support

What we ask of you:

Completion of the training course
Commitment of 3 hours twice a week during term time for at least 3 terms
If you would like to volunteer, have an enthusiasm for reading and enjoy being with children, please contact us:

**Harriet Watson
Volunteer Reading Help – London North
West Branch
020 7372 7523
www.vrh.org.uk**