



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

DONNA HALL

By Alex Erdinc - Volunteer Coordinator

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This month, our Volunteer Spotlight focuses the inspiring journey of Donna Hall who started as a volunteer here at The Hunslet Club, 18 years ago. Since that time, her career has gone from strength to strength, working her way up to become our valued Youth Work Manager & Safeguarding Officer. Donna makes such a positive impact on many young people's lives and is responsible for overseeing all youth projects at the Club, including our successful evening vocational program; the Monday Evening Project. She also took on responsibility for re-launching the Youth Club, where numbers are now thriving and set up the Activity camp provision, which now sees up to 100 children a day having fun during the school holidays.

Firstly, can you tell me a little about your story and what inspired you to become a volunteer at The Hunslet Club?

I first started coming to the club as a young member. I had 2 older brothers who came to do boxing & Rugby and I would tag along and do youth club. In 2004, the club advertised for paid support workers. I was unsuccessful in my application, due to a lack of experience working with children and young people. I knew this was what I wanted to do so I asked if I could do some voluntary work at the Club. Moreover, I started doing 15 hours a



week on a voluntary basis. At the time I was a single parent with a young child, unemployed and claiming benefits. I realised straight away that I loved helping at the club. I started helping with our education programme & volunteered in the DJ sessions and within weeks I ended up volunteering 5 days a week helping in all areas of the daytime education provision.



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By February 2005 more support worker vacancies were created. I re-applied and was delighted to secure a paid position working Monday to Friday 9.30 – 2.30pm. When I had my appraisal in 2008 I was asked the question: "where do you see yourself in 3 years' time?". It really made me think about what I wanted to achieve in the future. I was advised to look at taking a formal qualification in youth work. Then, I applied to do a degree at university. After 4 years, I achieved a degree in Youth and Community Development (BA Hons), all this whilst working a 30 hour week at The Hunslet Club. My degree, together with working at the club helped me to increase my confidence in dealing with young people's issues. I am now the Child Protection Officer for the club.

"I get a great sense of self-fulfilment watching the young people who come through our doors go on a journey to become responsible young adults"

Graduating in 2012, my career at the club has gone from strength to strength. I took on responsibility for re-launching the Youth Club, where numbers are now thriving and have built a team of amazing youth workers and sports coaches around me. I set up the Activity camp provision, which now sees up to 100 children a day having fun during the school holidays.



In 2015, I was promoted to Youth Development Manager where I oversee all youth projects at the Club including our successful evening vocational programme, the Monday Evening Project.

What do you like about working at the club & what does it mean for you?

Working at the Club is so varied. You never know what is going to happen and no two days are ever the same. I get a great sense of self-fulfilment watching the young people who come through our doors go on a journey to become responsible young adults.

What advice would you give to someone who might be thinking about volunteering here?

Do it, the club can offer you not only a sense of belonging and achievement. But by volunteering, this can help you understand where you want to go in life and can help you focus on your goals. If you are interested in helping children & young people reach their full potential, then why not volunteer. You will never know if you don't try!

Look out for more of our volunteers' inspirational stories in next month's volunteer spotlight. For more information about how you can get involved, visit our dedicated Facebook page [#hunsletclubvolunteers](#) or hunsletclub.org.uk/volunteer