

Volunteer Case Study

CHRISTINE BARBER

5 words that sum up Christine's overall experience of the project:

Joy | Optimism | Positivity
Sociability | Satisfaction

About Christine

Christine lives in Canterbury and thinks it is a great idea making art available for the elderly. She loves volunteering and finds it a rewarding experience. Before retiring she worked in London for a housing association. She didn't have time then for handicrafts, painting or hobbies. After retiring became a volunteer with Age UK Canterbury, five years ago.



Read Christine's personal insights on the project:

- My biggest overall personal achievement.....
- My most rewarding highlights.....
- Changes I noticed: impact & outcomes.....
- How the project helped me: the legacy...

➤ My biggest overall personal achievement

- Years ago I did painting of china plates, tiles and wall plaques for people as well as painting door numbers
- It was only when I volunteered for the ‘Our Work of Art’ project I was inspired to want do some painting for myself, which I intend to carry on doing now.
- I became more outgoing and confident after the training sessions
- After the creative sessions with participants I made new friends.
- Encouraging the participants to help paint the murals, was one of my biggest challenges but I overcame this.

➤ My most rewarding highlights

- Bringing people together and working towards the finished exhibits.
- Two men in the group on the table I was working with at Age UK Canterbury day centre were very keen to start with. But, they were distracted by the other men who just sat around the table making remarks and laughing amongst themselves.
- I mentioned this to a staff member who remarked that some of this group often refused to join in any activities.
- With the help of Pat another volunteer, who joined me, by sitting around the table and chatting to these men, we encouraged the ‘reluctant’ ones.
- They did a bit of colouring and we got them to join in and design and then paint tiles for the mural.

- Pat was a great help as she has a natural way with people. A lot of men can put on a ‘bravado act’ to hide all their insecurities.
- I also attended, contributed to and supported all the photobook group meetings in Whitstable. I enjoyed and learnt a lot in the process about layout and design.

➤ Changes I noticed: impact & outcomes

- The participants were given the attention they deserve as older people and all had their own unique style with the tile painting.
- The men who were reluctant to join in at first thoroughly enjoyed their sessions.
- I enjoyed helping other older people to be more outgoing and join in the groups.

➤ How the project helped me: the legacy

- All the mentoring team were very patient and supportive with the volunteers and participants.
- I am really looking forward to working on the next art project in the summer [Our Work of Art Rural Outreach 2019] and am very happy that things are continuing.