

Volunteer Case Study

MARIA KEMP

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

Wonderful | Exciting |
Fulfilling | Enjoyable |
Uplifting

About Maria

Maria lives in Canterbury. Whilst visiting the mental health charity, Take-off, a support worker (Fay) noticed that Maria was a 'people person' and put her in touch with Catherine at Espression Arts about this project. Maria decided to become a volunteer for Our Work of Art because she loves helping people, making them smile and she feels has so much to give.



Read Maria'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

- I had been having a bad time at work, after giving 12 years devoted to the work place.
- After finishing my job, for six months I felt I had no self-worth. I was depressed and was able to go out but only as far as my back garden.
- This project helped me overcome my life difficulties. I now feel more settled my mind.
- Working with older people and seeing the pleasure on their faces, says it all. I love bringing the spark back to the older people at Age UK.
- With just some encouragement and guidance they made some great art.
- I am becoming more experienced at crafts too which is important to me.

➤ My most rewarding highlights

- Giving a little time brings a smile and makes people happy.
- I developed more understanding about clay and also gained more friends.
- I also believe that the Our Work of Art project succeeded in bringing joy to others as well as to me.
- I was proud of making a clay vase, painted like a stick of rock.

➤ Changes I noticed: impact & outcomes

- Being part of the project gave me the confidence to come out into the public. It proved a real buzz for me.

- I had always previously thought children were ‘my life’ but this project experience proved otherwise,
- I am a confident crafter and I find crafting easy.
- I see myself as a very caring person. I feel I gave much to others over the project helping them to become more confident in their craft.
- Catherine always gave me compliments that made me feel wonderful. I am grateful for her letting me be involved in this wonderful project.
- I have helped others to learn how to crochet and sew.
- I have made new friends.

➤ How the project helped me: the legacy

- Catherine, at Espression Arts, helped to build my confidence. This was through offering me opportunities to help in the studio shop, sometimes working on preparation for the creative sessions and at other times supporting the toddler groups.
- Catherine, throughout the project, gave me a lift to all the creative sessions at the Age UK centres.
- I met many volunteers throughout the project some of who have kept in touch.
- Given I am not on email or on facebook, the volunteer network meetings at Espression Arts have been fantastic for keeping me in the loop, and catching up with the team for a chat.
- Even though I see some of the volunteers outside of the network meetings, I feel these meetings have brought us all closer together.