

Portfolio

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1.Introduction

My chosen volunteering option is Salvation Army Gorseinon. I myself do not have a religion, although salvation army as a whole do as stated by Salvation Army (n.d.) "That is why we provide practical help for people in need, defend those who are vulnerable and abused, and fight against injustice. The service we provide are diverse, reflecting the needs of the communities we serve". From this we can see how through the work at any of these Salvation Army shops do affect the community and how effective they are with this, the Gorseinon Store that i am currently volunteering at has a community area at the end of the store which is used for events such as a repair area in which someone comes as the person who will repair these items and shoppers can bring their items that they would like to have fixed. They also hold things such as sewing classes. The store itself is an old LIDLs and therefore has plenty of spaces some separate. Each time i have come in for a shift i have been somewhere new, there are many stations such as Brik and Brak, Books, Toys, Electronic, eBay, Tills, Vans, Gift aid and Clothing Tagger, I am lucky enough to have had an opportunity on each of these. I have found that this has given me an opportunity to talk to everyone who works of volunteers there. I have also found that it is a very tight knit group along with how lovely all the customers are. This has helped me see how the local and not so local communities are. Through the opportunities to go out in the van I have met so many people, whether this be collecting furniture or delivering it to them I have found that this is a great way to see the community that I wouldn't necessarily see every other day. As stated by Salvation army (n.d.) "Motivated by our Christian faith we offer practical support and services to all who need them, regardless of ethnicity, religion gender or sexual orientation" their work as also stated involves "homelessness, Modern slavery, poverty, addiction campaigning and social policy older people and community- debt advice, unemployed isolation" i have found that the work that the provide and the people they help factors into what profession i aim to go into. The reach they have and the help they provide gives so much to so many people. With modern slavery having such an impact on communities Salvation Army offers and provides specialist support as stated by The Salvation Army (n.d.) "we provide specialist support to protect and care for all adult survivors of modern slavery in England and Wales through a government contract which was first awarded in 2011" with the continuation of this since then there is no telling the people that they have helped and how impactful this must be. They also share information on what to look out for in this case as The Salvation Army (n.d.) states "someone looks frightened, unkempt, malnourished or has untreated injuries, Someone else is paying for their travel: speaking for them, picking up and dropping them off from work at unusual times or they may not be sure of their own address" with these signs to look out for it may still be difficult to know. They also mention they want people to trust their instincts and to raise the alarm if something does not look right.

2.Placement Overview

Overall, the placement was an exciting opportunity for me and having spoken to everyone there and getting to know them its only getting better. Having as i have stated previously opportunities to do every station that was available gave me the opportunity to speak to everyone and actually get to know each person, here are a few of the people i have gotten to know in this placement. Jane, she loves sorting through linen and any clothes that come through, Dee, she works as a paid employee and if she does all of her hours comes in to volunteer to make sure work is kept up with, Corey, he's always running around to solve problems and works the most with eBay listings to ensure that high value items that may not sell on the shop floor as easy sell. Gareth, he is the area manager and often stays in the Gorseinon store he often will burst out singing to which ever song is playing. Sion, he loves helping out with Brik and Brak taking the trolleys and putting everything on the shelves. Dan, he is on the vans helping with collections and deliveries always having a laugh. Alex, he is also on the vans but has killed the most shredders of any person I know. Caren, she always baking something new whether it be Welsh cakes, muffins or any other form of cake. Josh, he is a manger who has an allergy of dogs but cannot help himself but to say hi to any that come in and quite a few do. These are just some of the wonderful people that i have met in this amazing placement. I find that the opportunities that i have had have shown me as I have stated previously an insight into the communities that they work within i have met so many regulars in the store and everyone has been so welcome. I worked long shifts within my hours some 9-5 and shorter depending on when i am available. Working in this store has given me so many opportunities and chances to meet new people learn new things and most of all help people. Many events happen within the store such as 10p books DVDs and CDs, which as you can probably tell means that any books on the shelves along with the addition of CDs and DVDs will cost you 10p per. There was also recently a build-up of pillows which Gareth put in an area and out for free, even after that we still have so many things including Brik and Brak have been the same with 50p per item. There are many things that i had never seen been used in the store such as the sign for not accepting donations which they don't like to use, it only comes out when the donation ins are full. On a recent shift i worked 10 bags on clothes were brought in with gift aid, GOV.UK (n.d.) states "Donating through gift aid means charities and community amateur sports clubs can claim an extra 25p for ever £1 you give. It will not cost you any extra" often people donate through this and if the store is lucky enough it may be a high value item which will be kept on a certain rack untill more high value items are collected for a day that the store decides. Things such as Prom dresses Wedding dresses motorcycle gear and so on are classed as high value items. At this moment they are preparing for a collector's sale which will include things such as comics books anything that is seen as collectable and valuable will be kept in storage until they believe they have enough to do a collector's event.

3.Reflective Analysis

I found that once i completed my hours that i had no intention of just stopping and want to do more, i have decided to stay with my placement until early August, giving me the opportunity to gain more insight and get more opportunities within this community. Throughout volunteering at The Salvation Army, i have gained valuable insight into working with the public and supporting

local communities. The experience has helped me recognise the importance of patience, communication and teamwork when working with a wide range of people. This placement has also shown me how rewarding community-based work can be, which has reinforced my decision to go into careers where i can help others and make a positive difference. I would also like to improve my confidence further and continue building my problem-solving skills facing new challenges in busy environments. I felt true enjoyment in this placement and experienced so many opportunities gaining knowledge and understanding of things that i was unaware of previously.

4.Skills Development

Skills i have developed include Teamwork and Collaboration, community and social awareness, problem solving, and adaptability. Teamwork and collaboration, i demonstrated this through the ever-evolving group of people that i would work with on each day, with each of their talents and skills that i see along with how collaborative the volunteering is with so many opportunities and experiences that i have undertaken within my time there. Community and social awareness, i have experienced this through the communication with the local people who visit along with the regulars who are in each day looking for something new. This has also given me the opportunity to gain a good relationship with them having an opportunity to converse with them and help the best i can with their experience within salvation army. Problem solving and adaptability, with each shift i experienced none were the same with something new to be learnt or some new experience i can undertake, with problems such as certain furniture not fitting certain ways and finding new ways to move it to ensure that it gets to the customer. Adaptability comes with moving from station to station ensuring that i can go from one to the other without being Unsure of what needs to be done. With having to do something new every day whether it be on the shop floor or in the van, and experience like that i enjoy. Something new and a challenge with each day being different. Each of these skills i have developed but that does not mean i cannot develop them more with more opportunities within salvation army.

5.Future Development Plan

I have found that working in such an amazing volunteering space that it has given me insight into how i can progress in the future and how i can engage with communities the best. I believe gaining further experience in roles that involve helping the public and working within communities will allow me to improve and better my ability to work with and help a wide range of people. Working with Salvation Army has also helped me understand the importance of community support even further and how organisations can positively impact people's lives. I would like to find more opportunities to make a difference and support people. These experiences will help me prepare for my future career and professional development as a whole.

6.Conclusion

In conclusion i believe that the opportunity i have had has helped me gain a valuable amount of experience and understanding of local communities within Salvation Army and also seeing how

these communities' work. I have found this very insightful and a valuable opportunity for me going forward. Being that i have worked in service before i found that the knowledge i have gained from that has helped me settle in well and gain more experience especially experiences that i would not have gotten if i had not volunteered here. It has allowed me to gain practical experience in a busy working environment while developing key transferable skills such as teamwork, communication, community awareness and adaptability. Working in different areas of the store and alongside a variety of people has helped me grow in confidence and improve my ability to work effectively with others. The placement has also given me a greater understanding of the importance of charities and the support they provide to local communities. Overall, this opportunity has been beneficial to both my personal and professional development, and the skills and experiences i have gained will be useful in my future education and career.

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