

YOU CAN VOLUNTEER HERE!

There's so much volunteering currently happening across the Partnership that we can barely scratch the surface! Kirsty Bennett rounds up some of the ways Partners have donated their time to supporting good causes...

PHOTOS: DREW GARDNER, JAMES MACKENZIE, MARK MACKENZIE



Waitrose's Stephen Meyer volunteers at the Butterfly Garden

Trust offers golden opportunities galore

It's been going since 2000 and over the last 16 years more than 700 Partners have been awarded, and completed, Golden Jubilee Trust (GJT) secondments with over 690 charities, notching up 278,000-plus hours of donated time – read more about some of the great causes that have benefited and Partners' own experiences in our timeline, below. As a registered charity, the GJT gives Partners the opportunity to work with charities without missing out on pay or benefits. Awards are made twice yearly – in spring and autumn – and the latest round of awards were made to 27 Partners last year, for secondments with charities ranging from Barnardo's and Vauxhall City Farm to Sense Scotland and Keep Wales Tidy.

Applications are open for this year's spring awards and there are a number of secondment opportunities advertised now on the Partner intranet at Home > Being a Partner > Benefits > Golden Jubilee Trust. *See also Comment & Opinion, p15.*

How's it been so far?



2000: STEVE REVELL

Sea Cadets, Northampton

Steve was one of nine Partners who were awarded Golden Jubilee Trust secondments when the scheme launched in 2000. Now a Partner at John Lewis Magna Park, Steve had a very specific job: he spent his week-long secondment rewiring a shower block for Northampton Sea Cadets.



2003: PAUL RICH

How Hill Trust, Great Yarmouth

Paul (above right) spent one day every week for six months working with environmental education charity How Hill Trust, based in the Norfolk Broads. Then a Partner at John Lewis Norwich, Paul applied his skills in marketing and promotions to publicise the charity's work.



2006: PAMELA WILLIAMS

Dogs Trust, Snetterton

Pamela's secondment with the Dogs Trust saw her roll up her sleeves. One day every week for six months, the John Lewis Norwich Partner worked at the charity, where her tasks ranged from cleaning out the dogs' kennels, feeding and walking them, to assisting adopters with paperwork.



2008: MALCOLM WILKINSON

Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust, Washington

Malcolm (from John Lewis Newcastle) spent his secondment at the Northeast branch of the endangered birds conservation centre for six months. His job included ground repairs, gardening and building work – all in an effort to protect birds from predators and to encourage breeding.



2009: CLAUDETTE HENRY

Mary Seacole Day Nursery, Reading

John Lewis Reading's Claudette was already a volunteer at the childcare centre when she secured her award. She spent three days a week there for six months, taking on the charity's events organisation and setting up 18 fundraising events for the year: one for each year the nursery had been open.



2011: TERESA DOLLEY

K3 Young People's Centre, Saltash

One of Teresa's first projects at the youth centre was to set up a football match between the youngsters and her branch, Waitrose Saltash (Partners lost, 9-2!). She then organised a schedule of activities such as horse riding and make-up sessions to entertain the 13-15 year olds.



2013: DOMINIC DE BRUXELLES

Chickenshed, London

Peter Jones Visual Merchandiser and experienced fashion and costume designer Dominic spent his GJT experience designing costumes for 150 performers to wear during the London-based theatre company's spring/summer show and fundraising gala Chayo and the Chill.



2016: KATE STANTON

St Vincent's Family Project, London

Group's Kate is one of 27 Partners on secondment right now. Working full time for 13 weeks, Kate's spent time with the family support charity in the crèche and assisting in speech and languages sessions. She's running her own class (a Valentine's Day cupcake master class for parents) next week.



It's a team effort

Usually volunteers visit the charities to help, but Partners based at Partnership Services stayed put to welcome a charity to them when Spedan House was made into a call centre in November last year, in support of the BBC's Children in Need appeal. More than 130 Partners donated their time to take calls on behalf of the charity, banking £117,157 in donations.

Some Partners, did, however travel to the Bracknell site to lend a hand. JL Cheadle's Alex Beresford was one of them: "It was an incredible evening and I'd do it all over again in a heartbeat."

It wasn't just Partners volunteering, though. TV's Sir Michael Parkinson officially opened the centre and took the first call, although the caller hung up on him, thinking it was a hoax!

Business in the community

Waitrose Partners gave more than 69,000 hours to their local communities in 2014/15 through their Community Matters Partner volunteering programme. Last year, 60 branches also took part in BITC's Give & Gain Day – a global day of employee volunteering.

At Waitrose and John Lewis Sheffield, 44 Partners spent the day with the Friends of Charlton Brook, improving a local park through activities such as clearing streams.

This year's Give & Gain Day is in May and Waitrose will be its exclusive sponsor. "We're proud to be the only retailer to get involved," says Tina Varns, Manager, Sustainability and Ethical Sourcing, Waitrose.



Volunteer and party!

Partners' enthusiasm for volunteering extends to private events, too. Several Partners volunteered their time at national festivals, both through the Partnership and in their personal lives. John Lewis's calls for Partner volunteers to support its sponsored festivals OnBlackheath (above) and Kew the Music last summer proved popular with Partners – among them, John Lewis Stratford City Partners. "It was an epic day and I had a lot of fun," says Paolo Cucchiara, the branch's Chronicle Local Editor (above right).



Mentoring makes a difference

It's a big commitment but a worthy one, and several Partners are dedicating their time to mentoring charity clients and young people across the UK. Some of the mentoring programmes currently taking place include practical skills-based mentoring, such as the reading support being offered by 13 Group, Partnership Services and John Lewis Victoria Partners at Westminster City School.

Partners' mentoring also includes supporting students with career planning or business skills development. Mentoring took this form at John Lewis's Blakelands Distribution Centre which last year hosted a challenge testing the business acumen of A-level students in a simulated business environment. In Group, Partners have been mentoring homeless people through London charity The Passage since 2011. *Read our interview with Group's Mairead Ahern and The Passage's Anne-Marie Rael, p7.*