

Gwynedd Volunteers who were nominated for Wales Volunteer of the Year Award 2011

Through this award, an opportunity is provided annually to acknowledge and appreciate committed volunteers who have made a difference in their communities. The Award is administered by the Wales Council of Voluntary Action, and in February this year, a challenge is set to people across Wales to nominate someone special who has inspired them by what they do as a volunteer. There are five different categories:-

- young person under 25
- trustee
- adult
- groups (consisting of two or more).
- green volunteer

Throughout Wales, over 230 nominations were received, nine of them from Gwynedd – one young person, five adults, one trustee and two groups.

Young Person (under 25) Category



Betsan Roberts –volunteering with South Gwynedd Domestic Abuse Services.

Betsan started to volunteer whilst she was a student at University, and continues to do so having started to work full time. She is part of a team that offers practical and emotional support to victims of domestic abuse, and her contribution is very valuable to the organisation. She regularly takes the on-call line for up to 24 hours at a time. She also directly supports women and children in therapeutic activities.

(Nominated by Gwenlli Haf –Volunteer Coordinator for South Gwynedd Domestic Abuse Services)

Adult Category

Emma Cluer – volunteering with Tan y Maen Centre, Blaenau Ffestiniog.



Emma has been volunteering at Tan y Maen – a mental health resource centre – for over 10 years. She has suffered with Cerebral Palsy since childhood – but her commitment, positive attitude and perseverance as a volunteer is an inspiration to the service users and to others. She is able to overcome her own disabilities, and helps with the ‘drop-in’ facility, helps with organising events, welcomes service users and deals with telephone enquiries. She is also a Board Member of the charity – representing the charity’s volunteers. In her own quiet way, she is able to put people at ease – takes time to talk to people, and to discuss any problems they may have. Everyone at the Centre views her as a friend and her sense of humour and outgoing personality contributes to the caring happy atmosphere at the Centre.

(Nominated by Gareth Thomas, Centre Co-ordinator at Tan y Maen).

John Jones – volunteering with Caban Bach - Barnardo's Family Support Services.



Caban Bach, in Blaenau Ffestiniog is aimed at promoting dads' inclusion in their children's development and enables dads to enjoy playing with their children. John has been volunteering with the project for the past three years – his main role being an activity leader, but predominately running kayaking sessions. As one of the founder members of 'Clwb Padlo Blaenau', his passion for kayaking is infectious and he is an inspiration to others. John coaches, mentors, supports and works hard – not for praise – but because he enjoys life and enjoys contributing to improve the lives of other people. Interestingly, three letters of support from other organisations in Blaenau were received with John's nomination form. Quoting from one of the letters "It's a pity that there isn't more than one John Jones in this area – but that would be impossible!" Congratulations John!

(Nominated by Mr. Francis Filzek – Barnardos Family Support Services)

Hugh Roberts – volunteering with Barmouth Communities First



When someone dies, what usually happens to their old photographs? Quite often they are thrown away – and because of this, it was felt that a lot of local history was lost. In July 2007, Barmouth Communities First received a suggestion from Hugh Roberts - a local resident, to set up a website to collate, display and keep for posterity some local photos. Hugh has literally spent hundreds of hours to set up this amazing site, and the fruits of his labour can be seen – all the photos categorized and in chronological order – with a choice of subjects such as the town, carnival queens, schools and local people. Through this popular website, Hugh has been in contact with people from all over the world. The project has also drawn the whole community together. Barmouth Communities First have organised coffee mornings to raise funds for the Community Theatre, and Hugh gives freely of his time to show the photographs on a large screen for those who are unable to access them on a PC. If anyone deserves an accolade for volunteering, Hugh Roberts most definitely does.

(Nominated by Mrs. Nan McCready - Barmouth Communities First)



June Taylor - volunteering with Tŷ Peblig, Caernarfon.

As a volunteer, June runs the food co-op on a weekly basis. The food co-op encourages people in the community to eat healthily and ties in with the gardening club. She also helps out with other activities – with special events such as fun days, bonfire night, Christmas dinners, and the gardening club. She regularly participates in the 'Miglo' walking group and is a member of the Partnership committee. Helping the people of the Peblig Ward in Caernarfon has helped June herself – it's given her a confidence boost and has given her more positive attitude to life. Congratulations June!

(Nominated by Linda Jones, Tŷ Pobl Peblig)



Julia Warrell – volunteering with South Gwynedd Domestic Abuse Services.

Although Julia has significant commitment elsewhere, she is very flexible and endeavours, beyond expectations, to assist the South Gwynedd Domestic Abuse Services as a volunteer. She transports service users to appointments, and attends events to raise awareness and to promote the services of the organization. Her contribution is much valued and deserves recognition. Thank you Julia.

(Nominated by Gwenlli Haf –Volunteer Coordinator for South Gwynedd Domestic Abuse Services)

Trustee Category



Rhian Ellis - volunteering with South Gwynedd Domestic Abuse Services.

Rhian has been an active and dedicated volunteer with the South Gwynedd Domestic Abuse Services for over nine years. She is now a director on the board and continues to support the organization with financial matters. Her many years of experience as a volunteer proved invaluable as she led the Group through a time of considerable change – when they changed their status to become a limited company. It's a pleasure to acknowledge her commitment and loyalty to the organisation.

(Nominated by Gwenlli Haf –Volunteer Coordinator for South Gwynedd Domestic Abuse Services)

Group Category



People of Bangor Community Group.

As a group of hard-working, diligent people, they meet regularly to organise events and raise the profile of Bangor. Amongst their successes are Bangor Carnival, training sessions and organising an ice skating rink in the city before Christmas to attract more shoppers. They work as a community with Bangor's community, and are an excellent example to other groups. They deserve to be praised for their good work – all for the benefit of the people of Bangor! Congratulations.

(Nominated by Siân Elin Powell – Bangor Pride)

In the photo:- John Wyn Jones—Chair of the Group receiving a certificate from Mr Elfyn Llwyd MP

WRVS Front of Hospital Services, Ysbyty Gwynedd



A team of dedicated volunteers deliver a remarkable Front of Hospital service at Ysbyty Gwynedd - providing information, signposting, greeting visitors, finding wheelchairs, directing / escorting people to their destinations within the hospital, delivering e-mails to patients, raise funds for the hospital with recycling schemes (old mobile 'phones and ink cartridges) – it is a long list. But the value of the service provided is much more than the list - it is about the improving the experiences of the people who need their support. These are quite often vulnerable people facing difficult situations. The nomination is made on behalf of the many people whose voices are heard every day praising the services provided by the volunteers. In the words of one satisfied client - 'they should all be fitted with shining haloes". Congratulations!

(Formally nominated by Dawn Cooper, Head of Patient Experience, Betsi Cadwaladr University Local Health Board).

It is vital that the people who took the time and trouble to nominate these dedicated volunteers are not forgotten – without their efforts it would not be possible to sing the praises of these special people this year. So a big thank you to all the nominators – and remember there will be an opportunity for YOU to nominate at the beginning of next year!!