



Millennium Volunteers



GOVERNMENT OFFICE
FOR THE EAST OF ENGLAND

REGIONAL MV OF THE YEAR AWARDS

Young Volunteers sweep the board



Regional MV of the Year Cassie Hales with MV Contract Manager Helen Dye

The outstanding voluntary work of Young People across the East of England was recognised at the Regional Millennium Volunteer of the Year Awards that took place at the Millennium Stadium at the Rowley Mile Racecourse in Newmarket on Sunday 13 March.

Millennium Volunteers (MV) is the Government's flagship programme to provide volunteering opportunities for young people aged between 16 and 24. MVs are involved in hundreds of projects throughout the East of England covering a range of activities as diverse as cleaning out the pens at Whipsnade Wild Animal Park to setting up breakfast clubs for young parents.

Category winners received a framed certificate, a trophy and vouchers to the value of £100. The overall regional winner received £400 in vouchers and has been invited to attend a reception at 10 Downing Street in June, when a national winner will be selected.

The vouchers were sponsored by Suffolk County Council and VYSER (Voluntary Youth Services Eastern Region). The event was compered by BBC Radio's Becky Betts who was herself one of the first Millennium Volunteers in the region. She now runs BBC Radio Suffolk's Action Desk.

2005 is the Year of the Volunteer, a year-long celebration of the amazing work volunteers do and a call to action to get more and more of us volunteering. It is also the year in which the Russell Commission published its report 'A national framework for youth action and engagement', a document detailing the Commission's recommendations for delivering a step change in youth volunteering in the UK – a step change in diversity, quality and quantity.

The winners of the Regional MV of the Year 2005 in the East of England were:

- **Regional MV of the year and winner of the Youth Action Award: Cassie Hales - Lowestoft, Suffolk**

Cassie Hales has contributed more than 1000 hours of volunteering towards MV. Since helping at a charity shop she has developed her skills. By contributing and creating ideas. By assuming responsibility for ideas and making them happen in the many organisations and initiatives she has worked with. Mentoring fellow young people Cassie has helped to formulate their ideas and turn them into action on projects like the Big-I. She has led the way for young people, inspiring them to participate in events like a Christmas Fair held in aid of Cancer Research. Now initiating and implementing projects independently, like the Lowestoft Recycling Scheme for Christmas, she has demonstrated a commitment and passion for young people and their issues. She represents them through the Connexions Youth Council and was integral to Suffolk's response to the Russell Commission. She is currently pioneering Sparks, a programme for 13-15 year olds she devised. Cassie has overcome adverse personal circumstances and proved repeatedly that she is an exemplary young volunteer capable of making a difference, both in herself and in the world around her.



The winners of the Regional MV of the Year 2005 in the East of England

- **Arts Regional MV of the Year : Shaid Ali - Watford, Hertfordshire**

Shaid Ali took a leading role both on stage and off in conceiving and producing a topical and relevant drama that addressed the issues of drug dealing and use. First involved with a Drugs Misuse Needs Assessment that MV ran locally Shaid then used his knowledge and experience to make the drama happen, by recruiting and motivating students at his college. Passionate about developing peer pressure

against drugs Shaid became a leader promoting active involvement from an ethnically diverse group of young people. Debuting on Wednesday 16 March 2005 the performance brought together the local community to convey a clear message about drugs emphasising that motivated young people like Shaid Ali can make things happen.

- **Care, Support and Mentoring Regional MV of the Year: Lucy Canton - Waltham Abbey, Essex**

Lucy Canton has helped at the All Day Breakfast Club in Waltham Abbey since the spring of 2004. Cheerful, punctual and keen to help in any way possible Lucy has supported the young mothers who attend in learning new skills by putting their children at ease through various crèche activities which promote social interaction. The club serves the wider community via a variety of referrals and Lucy is dedicated to improving conditions for all involved. Continually devising new activities and full of enthusiasm Lucy has become an integral part of the club. She is someone who has simply been there for everybody.

- **Community Regional MV of the Year: Hannah Sewell - Beccles, Suffolk**

Hannah Sewell is an active volunteer for a local crime prevention panel who encouraged the members to make a crime concern area safer. By bringing together the panel and a youth group Hannah demonstrated that young people could work together to improve their community in a successful and sustained manner by taking ownership of a problem. Continually volunteering she is also a senior member of two rural youth groups where she gives advice and helps others address the social issues that concerns them. Hannah's reputation in her community is one of total commitment towards her endeavours. She gives a voice to young people and critically helps other young people find theirs.

- **Environment Regional MV of the Year: Charlotte Lowry - Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk**

Charlotte Lowry has worked in both conservation and environmental education at Dunwich Heath in Suffolk come rain or shine. She has gained many skills and much knowledge about country management and the natural world through her constant labour. Growing in confidence she has imparted this information by leading groups of children from varied backgrounds in practical conservation tasks adapting her style to the needs of the individuals concerned. Volunteering has given her clear ideas for the

future and has helped her achieve the goal of volunteering abroad in Coast Rica. Charlotte may have moved on to fresh challenges but she has passed her skills and dynamism on ensuring that her legacy is a positive one.

- **Sports Regional MV of the Year: Richard Madden - Lowestoft, Suffolk**

Richard Madden has used sport to keep young people at risk of social exclusion engaged with school and society. Overcoming his own problems Richard has shown to others that they can get fit and become part of the community. Relating well to his peers Richard has worked as part of a team to plan and implement the sporting activities he has run. By making young people aware of the local services available and educating them in general fitness he has opened their ambitions in addition to his own, challenging issues of race, culture and disability in the process. Richard is a positive role model who has used his difficult experiences to empower himself and others through sport.

- **Team Regional MV of the Year: Crucial Crew – Suffolk**

The Crucial Crew is a team of six volunteers involved in an educational program with middle students aged 10-11. The focus of the project was to use role-play to help young people learn how to reject peer pressure and resist drugs. Reliably working initially with over 1600 children the group instigated the necessary research required and then autonomously adapted the task to the children's differing needs and requirements. Subsequent lessons at the schools were built on the group's work and the volunteers were invited to take part. Crucial Crew are Hannah Sewell, James Marriot, Michael Hutchinson, Emma Hill, Sarah Lassman and Ross Lawrence.

The Government Office for the East of England Millennium Volunteers Contract Manager is Helen Dye.

For more information on Millennium Volunteers, the Russell Commission and the Year of the Volunteer please visit the following links:

Millennium Volunteers	http://www.millenniumvolunteers.gov.uk/
Russell Commission	http://www.russellcommission.org/
Year of the Volunteer	http://www.yearofthevolunteer.org/