

Young volunteers needed to help with Libraries' Summer Reading Challenge

Young reading enthusiasts are needed to help Norfolk children choose reading books, and help them complete an exciting challenge, at the county's libraries this summer.

Norfolk County Council's Library and Information Service is looking for volunteers aged 13-25 to get involved in this year's Space-themed "Space Chase" Summer Reading Challenge, due to start in July. Last year, more than 11,500 children took part.

The annual reading event for primary school children involves borrowing and reading at least six different books, getting rewards including stickers and a certificate and medal when the challenge is complete. The scheme relies on the help of up to 150 young volunteers who support Norfolk library staff at each of the 47 libraries.

Imogen Pearce, a UEA student aged 20 volunteered her time last year at Norfolk and Norwich Millennium Library:

'I absolutely love reading and I love talking to people about novels. I believe it is incredibly important to encourage individuals to read both for educational purposes and as a relaxing, stress-relieving pastime. So, when I was looking for work experience and I came across the volunteer scheme for the Summer Reading Challenge I knew it would be perfect. It gave me the opportunity not only to encourage reading, but also to help develop my interpersonal skills.

The whole experience was so enjoyable and rewarding! The staff were incredibly kind and supportive to work with and it was wonderful to see the children develop so much with their reading and confidence as they progressed through the Challenge. Volunteering has been a fantastic addition to my CV; I've developed key skills such as communication and responsibility, which employers are really impressed by. The experience has also led to further opportunities to volunteer with the library, which is very exciting!'

Volunteering sessions take place between mid-July and beginning of September, during the school holidays. We ask for a commitment of 2 hours per week although there can be scope to do more, depending on the activities which are running.

Volunteers who are undertaking a Duke of Edinburgh award can use their volunteering towards the awards with a volunteering element. All young volunteers will receive a certificate to recognise their contribution and the library service offers young volunteers a reference for applications for work or further study.

If you are interested in helping out this summer, speak to staff at your local library or e-mail volunteercontact@norfolk.gov.uk to request an application pack.

For more information on other volunteering opportunities, please visit www.norfolk.gov.uk/libraryvolunteers.

