

Article by Dan Webber as appeared in The Scotsman.com on Tuesday 1 Mar 2005

Older people urged to get involved

Charity chiefs were today launching the third stage of the Year of the Volunteer 2005 with the aim of encouraging older people to give their free time to a worthy cause.

Throughout March, designated "Older People" month, community groups nationwide are offering opportunities to volunteer and help others at a variety of events.

On March 1 the launch of the "Retire into Action" video and DVD will be attended by Home Office minister Fiona MacTaggart. Community Service Volunteers' Retired and Senior Volunteer Programme (RSVP) will hold a reception in Whitehall to launch the video which highlights volunteering opportunities available for the over-50s.

Older people from the West Midlands are invited to take part in a sponsored abseil or firewalk on March 2 to raise money for children's charity NCH. Both events will take place at Staffordshire University's College Road site in Stoke. For more information contact 01782 294 603.

From March 3 to 5 in Newcastle the "Time Of Our Lives" photography storyboard exhibition will be on show at the city's Laing Gallery. Organised by Age Concern, the exhibition aims to celebrate the lives and history of older volunteers.

On March 10 the "Big Knit" will be launched in Bristol. In an event organised by RSVP and Age Concern, knitters will make garments such as premature baby clothing, trauma teddies, snowmen and squares for distribution to local emergency services, children's hospitals and hospices, and deprived and sick children in Eastern Europe and Africa.

On March 14 Home Office minister Fiona MacTaggart will attend the launch of the Volunteering Initiative for the Third Age (VITA) at the Commonwealth Club in central London. Organised by WRVS, VITA is a two-year initiative which aims to increase the number of volunteers aged over 65.

On March 18 a volunteering fair will be held at Community House, Fore Street, Edmonton. The event, hosted by Age Concern Enfield, will give details on volunteering opportunities for people aged 50 and over. For more information contact Lisa MacMurdie on 020 8345 5577.

On March 19 in Birmingham, the "First Generation, More Dedication?" debate will take place. Organised by the charity REACH, which places volunteers with professional experience in UK voluntary organisations, the event aims to celebrate and promote the value and skills of older volunteers from ethnic minority communities.

National disability charity Vitalise is calling for older people to help give disabled people the best break they have ever had. Throughout March, Vitalise has set aside one hundred places for volunteers aged over 50 to spend a week helping to provide essential breaks for disabled people and their carers at its five centres in Cornwall, Nottingham, Southport, Essex and Southampton. To book a place contact Dave Clough on 0845 345 1970 or see www.vitalise.org.uk.

The Master Composter scheme is looking for volunteers from Cambridgeshire to run an event throughout March. The scheme is looking for volunteers to work in their communities, encouraging homeowners to compost in their gardens and reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill. Full training will be given. Other activities could include include running stands at local events, giving presentations to local community groups and writing articles for local newsletters. For more information contact Kate Heath on 024 7630 8202.

By Dan Webber
Tue 1 Mar 2005 10:30am (UK)
Community Newswire
The Scotsman.com