Bromley
THE LONDON BOROUGH
www.bromley.gov.uk

Update

VOLUNTEER SPECIAL SPRING 2013

YOUR ONLINE ROUND UP FROM BROMLEY COUNCIL

Talking about Active Citizens

Councillor Scoates is Bromley Council's Volunteer Champion

So many of our residents give their valuable time for the good of their local community - the fact we have over 3,000 voluntary organisations in this borough is testament to this. Our Council wants to acknowledge and promote the valuable contribution the people of Bromley make through volunteering. Under our 'Active Citizen' initiative we also want to encourage what for many of our residents is a way of life by helping people find out the ways they can give their time and get involved. From working in a charity shop to becoming a school governor, from taking part in our Council's Friends' initiative, to mentoring a young person, there are so many avenues to becoming a volunteer. In this **Special Update** *you can get a flavour of how people in Bromley are fitting volunteering around their busy lives.*

More than a mentor

" I'm there for them and no one else "

Update met Geoff Wright who recently won a Safer Bromley award for his fantastic commitment to mentoring young people.

Geoff said, *"I am just part of the range of help such a young person receives. I supplement the valuable work of professionals such as teachers and social workers so the mentoring I do contributes to a much wider holistic approach. What is really important is for a child to know I choose to be there for them – not for me* but them and no one else." Geoff added, "It is challenging but so rewarding if I can help a child realise their own potential and help them reach the point when they no longer need my support."

If you're interested in finding out more call 020 8461 6240 or email jane.belding@bromley.gov.uk at the Education Business Partnership.

Win win with time bank

"It has completely changed my life. I have met new friends, I am more independent and my life is more worthwhile" Volunteer

Have you always wanted to learn flower arranging or brush up on your French? With Age UK Bromley and Greenwich's **Community Volunteers Time Bank** you can earn a time credit for every hour you give to help an older person. It might be occasional shopping, companionship and gardening, working in the day centre, DIY or helping with other services.

You can then spend your credit by choosing from over 90 skills or going to an interest group such as for art, craft, poetry, local history or flower arranging. Over 400 people and local organisations give their time as members of the time bank across the borough unlocking our greatest resource – time. Find out more about giving and receiving through the time bank at www.ageukbromleyandgreenwich.org.uk.

Can we do-it? Yes we can
- getting involved with your local community

We're often asked by residents how can they get involved in their community? Our strategic partner, Community Links Bromley supports people who want to do their bit.

Said Diane Diamond, Head of Operations and Volunteering, *"Through the Volunteer Centre there are lots of great ways residents can use their skills and valuable time to help out. The opportunities are varied and too many to list here but it can be anything from an hour spent mentoring a child, getting involved in the Council's Friends' initiatives, helping an older person, or teaching someone vulnerable to use a computer for the first time. Or someone might want to use their IT or administrative skills to help the smooth running of a voluntary organisation or become a trustee or a* school governor – I could go on and on.

"Most opportunities are registered on **www.do-it.org.uk**. *Or talk to one of our volunteering advisors any time from Monday to Friday, 10 am to 4 pm on 020 8315 1905, about finding the right opportunity for your skills and time."*

And I'm feeling good

Our time is precious but giving yours not only makes you feel good. It does you good! Find out about the work commissioned by Volunteering England into the research of the health benefits of volunteering at **www.volunteering. org.uk/iwanttovolunteer/why- volunteer**

The list includes living a longer life, improving family relationships, meeting new people and improving our self esteem and outlook on life.

So giving your time really can make you feel healthier and happier – and that's a fact.

Being a school governor

Schools are keen to attract people in the community to become governors. No formal qualifications are needed for this all-important role and you will work as part of a governing team to take important decisions about the organisation and management of the school.

Said Councillor Scoates a school governor, *"Of course being a governor may appear demanding, but you are offered as much training as you need. It is tremendously rewarding to work with the head teacher and staff to foster the highest expectations of our pupils and what they can achieve so we can make sure each and every pupil gets the best from their time at school."*

Visit **www.bromley.gov.uk/ schoolgovernors** to find out more.

A Friend indeed

Joining or starting a Friends' group is a great way to get involved in your community. One such is Friends of Glentrammon and Foxbury Wood who braved a cold Easter to plant an orchard for visitors to enjoy for years to come. They've been together since 2010 and working with their village society and the Council won £50,000 to fund a host of improvements.

Said Stephen Ernoult, Chairman of the group, *"To think when we formed we had such a long to do list and only two years later we have achieved so much. What with the playground extension, the accessibility improvement, the new benches and now the orchard, we have made it the go-to park in the area. What we have achieved is testament to the Friends model and the commitment of our volunteers and the support received from the Council."*

As well as Park Friends, we have Street Friends who report problems such as graffiti in their street and Snow Friends who help clear the snow and ice in winter. If you're interested in joining or starting a Friends' group or finding out about volunteering in Bromley visit **www.bromley.gov.uk/volunteering**

Our website is here to help, all day, every day