

Literacy Volunteers



20 YEARS AS LITERACY VOLUNTEER

Literacy Volunteer Floss Abbott celebrates her 20th year as a Volunteer this year. Floss became part of the scheme in 1990 having spotted an advert in the Nottingham Evening Post asking for Volunteers. At the time she had not long retired from her career as a paediatric nurse and was working at Sure Start on a voluntary basis but wanted to do something tangible to benefit young children and saw Literacy Volunteers as an ideal fit. It enabled her to use the skills and experience of working with young children gained during her nursing career whilst at the same time learning how to help children develop in other ways.

Since joining the scheme Floss has been based at Dunkirk Primary School and estimates that, over two decades, she has helped well over 100 children as a Volunteer. On average Floss sees three children per week, usually for a year, but sometimes this can be extended depending on the needs of the child.

Commenting on her amazing anniversary achievement, Floss said *'I have enjoyed my 20 years at Dunkirk Primary School and I would like to thank the children for their curiosity, humour and willingness to engage in reading, discussion and playing games.'*

My thanks also extend to all the staff; they have made me feel very welcome and are always willing to help me. Without them I would not have been able to be a Volunteer.

Literacy Volunteers have encouraged me, given me all the relevant training and supported me "in post". They also provided me with games and books that have enabled me help the children develop the essential life skills of reading and communication.

The first group of children whom I helped are now in their late twenties and possibly parents themselves. My hope is that they too read to their children.'

My reason for joining Literacy Volunteers was quite simply that I had been given educational chances and I wanted other people to benefit from similar opportunities. My background is in nursing, mainly paediatric and I progressed my career from being a junior student nurse at the Nottingham Children's Hospital (a bit of a skivvy in those days!) to a Paediatric Nurse and have been very fortunate to work in various hospitals around the country.'



More than words: Floss Abbott has been a literacy volunteer at Dunkirk Primary School for 20 years, visiting once a week to talk, read and play games with children on a one-to-one basis, to give them confidence and help them enjoy reading. Floss's contribution was celebrated at a ceremony attended by Lord Mayor Brian Grocock and Deputy Lord Lieutenant Judith Swann. The Lord Mayor presented Floss with a thank you letter from city council leader Jon Collins and pupils sang songs and danced before presenting her with cards, flowers and a framed piece of art they made.

PICTURE: DUSTIN MICHALOVS REF: NODM20101108A-002_C