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# Double award success for Macmillan volunteers at Cumberland Infirmary

Posted on Tuesday 22nd May 2012

Volunteers who provide much-needed support to people affected by cancer at the Cumberland Infirmary in Carlisle, have won a national award in recognition of their valued service.

Macmillan Cancer Support volunteers are the winners of the Deborah Hutton Macmillan group award. The award is for volunteers who provide practical support and care to people affected by cancer, beyond the expectation of their role. Furthermore, one of the volunteers, Sheila Barrow, has been awarded the Deborah Hutton individual award.

The team of 11 volunteers were put forward for the award by their former manager who felt that they have really gone 'above and beyond' what it expected from them in their roles as volunteers, by running the Macmillan Cancer Information Centre in the Cumberland Infirmary.

The Centre can be found in the Atrium area of the hospital and is open Monday – Friday from 10am until 4pm. The volunteers offer advice and support to anyone affected by cancer, including the family and friends of somebody who has been diagnosed with cancer. Most of the volunteers have a link with cancer in some way, either from personal experience or that of a family member.

As well as providing a listening ear, there is a wide range of information booklets to take away and the Centre provides a Citizen Advice Bureau drop-in with a Macmillan/CAB Benefits Advisor on Mondays from 10am – 4pm. Two of the volunteers also coordinate a 'Look Good, Feel Good' pamper session once a month, offering make-up advice to people who are having or perhaps have just finished treatment. They have found these sessions to be a huge success and they provide a real boost to cancer patients.

The Centre provides an out-of-hours telephone service with an answer phone, and volunteers aim to return phone calls as soon as they possibly can. Information booklets are available to pick up anytime from the Centre.

Pam Harbach, Chair of the volunteer team, said: "We are honoured to have been given the Deborah Hutton award in recognition of the team's hard work over the past year.

"Being diagnosed with cancer is a frightening time so the main thing for us is making ourselves available for people who want to have a chat or are looking for advice. We are all very passionate about what we do and find volunteering at the Centre very rewarding."

Sheila Barrow has won the individual Deborah Hutton award for her work on the Macmillan library project which is a joint venture between Macmillan Cancer Support, North Cumbria University Hospitals NHS Trust and Cumbria County Council Library Services. Macmillan funded the project which began in 2009 and saw nine libraries throughout Cumbria being provided with information stands which offer booklets and books relating to cancer advice and support. Some of the information stands are manned with volunteers who are available to have a chat and give advice. In 2011, the project was launched in a further nine libraries in the region.

Sheila is the representative from North Cumbria University Hospitals NHS Trust and has been instrumental in the project from its earliest days and made a strong and vital contribution to its development. As well as ordering and replenishing the leaflets in the libraries and doing drop-in sessions, Sheila manages and coordinates a number of other volunteers.

Helen Towers, Reader Development and Stock Manager for Cumbria Libraries, said: "Sheila is very reliable and dedicated whilst being the most positive and optimistic person you could wish to meet. Whilst we have very clear roles for our volunteers within our project, Sheila went above and beyond what might be expected and this is why she was nominated for, and won the award."

Sheila will be presented with her award at Carlisle Library on Monday 18 June and the group award will be presented to the volunteer team at The Whoop Hall in Kirkby Lonsdale on Wednesday 11 July at a 'Meet Macmillan' day which celebrates Macmillan Cancer Support in Cumbria and Lancashire. Six of the volunteers will also receive a Bronze award at the ceremony in recognition of five to ten years' service with Macmillan.



The Macmillan volunteers. L-R: Sheila Barrow, Chris Shaw, Brenda Smith, Ellie Haughan, Pam Harbach, Anne Radcliffe and Maurice Williams

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