



Don't just take our word for it; find out what our Cranfield Trust volunteers have to say about their project work:

"Interesting and rewarding without requiring a huge time commitment."

"Working with the Cranfield Trust highlighted social challenges on my doorstep that I was unaware of; being able to play a small part in trying to overcome them was both educational and rewarding."

"I have found the work stimulating, rewarding and beneficial in terms of my own professional practice and development. I have enjoyed working with each of the three projects enormously and am happy to be considered for future projects."

"Being a volunteer can be demanding however it is very satisfying to be able to work with our Charity clients to help them solve a problem or complete a project. They are without exception hugely appreciative of our involvement. The Cranfield Trust does a fantastic job and I encourage you to get involved if you can."

"I've found the projects very stimulating because they are so different from the kinds of organisations I normally work for so they are a good opportunity for me to extend my skills and work in different contexts, and to be creative about how I work."

"Volunteering with Cranfield increased my confidence particularly regarding going into a new environment and being able to add value."

Sharing your skills is truly rewarding

Interview with Ann Francis, Cranfield Trust volunteer - taken from the January 2009 issue of 'Pioneer' the Strathclyde Business School Magazine

Ann Francis (MBA, 2000) leapt at the chance to increase her involvement in the charity sector when she first discovered that the Cranfield Trust engaged business school alumni in executive volunteering.

She most recently volunteered to devise a business plan for the Stella Project, the leading agency addressing drug and alcohol-related domestic violence and abuse. The project works across all 33 London boroughs to improve services for survivors, their children and perpetrators of domestic violence affected by drug or alcohol abuse. The Stella Project is a partnership between the Greater London Domestic Violence Project (GLDVP) and the Greater London Alcohol and Drug Alliance (GLADA).

Ann worked with the project to prepare a business plan with a particular focus on making the organisation more sustainable and reducing dependence on local authority contract income.

She tells Pioneer, "I've always worked in the telecoms sector, apart from a year's interim I spent as a deputy director at Macmillan Cancer Support.

"I'd done a lot of voluntary work with my partner and I was interested to find out what it was like to work with a big charity, but I concluded that my contributions have more impact with smaller companies. I was headhunted for my current job, as head of UK business development and regulatory affairs with Colt Telecommunications."

Ann became involved with the Cranfield Trust in 2006, through a friend, and was impressed with the way it matches people's skills to individual charities' needs.

"I'd done a lot of strategic work," says Ann, "and Karen Bailey at the Stella Project needed assistance with her project, as well as wanting to gain some personal development from our collaboration.

"The transfer of learning and skills made the assignment particularly interesting and challenging for me. I was not just helping Karen but explaining the thinking behind our approach. We gradually identified what was needed for Stella and created a strategy and support objectives."

Ann's Strathclyde MBA grounding has proved helpful in her career and indeed in this particular project, she says;

"The tight timescales were one of the challenges and the transfer of learning turned out to be personal development for me, as well as for Karen, who, incidentally, has been promoted to a senior position.

"I gained a great deal from the project itself and it has helped me to adjust my business style. I was really moved by the feedback from Karen. In her world, our skills are a rare resource. "

Karen Bailey says; "With Ann's support and guidance I was able to undertake a thorough and systematic review of the achievements and the strategic position of the Stella Project. This guided the development of a strategic plan with three overarching aims and has really focused the direction of our project.

"I regularly use the plan to keep the project on track and to ensure the correct direction of travel when developing new initiatives and partnerships.

"One of the objectives was to develop our partnership work with other voluntary sector agencies in the field and as a result we have been successful in obtaining funding to deliver a joint project with Adfam starting in early 2009. The support and advice from Ann was invaluable."

The Greater London Domestic Violence Project is now at a stage where it plans to develop into a national charity supporting issues of sexual as well as domestic violence. It is about to request support from another Cranfield Trust Volunteer.