



The European Year of Volunteering 2011

We worked closely with Midland Heart across the West Midlands. Midland Heart manage over 32,000 properties across the Midlands, providing rented housing, homes for sale and care and support services



As part of the European Year of Volunteering, Groundwork and Midland Heart teamed up to put on a number of volunteer events across the Midlands with a variety of community groups, residents, schools and local partners. The idea behind these events was that they were to act as a catalyst for further community involvement and activity, encouraging residents to take an active role in developing and maintaining local green spaces for community benefit.

“Groundwork WM has developed a good working relationship with Midland Heart in the last few years to add value to the regeneration activities of both organisations. Midland Heart is one of the largest social landlords in the Midlands and is geographically wide spread. Working with Groundwork on the European year of Volunteering has opened up many more opportunities for our customers and their neighbours to get involved with activities that are based on their doorstep and benefit their neighbourhood. We have linked together to support our resident group activities as well as engaging young people specifically in our supported housing schemes. This projects have allowed our residents to be “eased into” the concept of volunteering in a very gentle and well supported way with tangible results that they see as soon as they step outside their front door.

In turn Midland Heart has been given another platform to engage communities with their locality and develop pride in their neighbourhood and have partnered residents associations and school to do this.

This has been a very positive partnership between the two organisations resulting in 13 events in 5 locations and engaging 87 residents and children.” – Jo Burrill, Midland Heart

Examples include:

Centenary Drive

Residents at Centenary Drive had expressed an interest to housing officers at Midland Heart in having raised beds installed within the estate. An underused parking area in the centre of the housing estate was used to create raised flower beds, built with local residents and planted by children from the neighbouring school. This project is the first stage of a longer term development with hopes to install food growing beds which will be allocated to local residents, and linking to the local school as an educational resource.

The event saw 13 residents of all ages volunteer their time to help build 3 raised beds, and plant them up with the help of 20 children from the local primary school



*“It’s been really good, and great to see the children involved, hopefully they’ll get some ownership and it’ll benefit the whole community”
– Jayne, volunteer*



Murdock Road

Murdock Road is a hostel with 16 bed spaces for young people aged 16-25 who are homeless or in housing need. The team helps to support young people with mental health issues who may be supported through the Early Intervention Service. Service users at the hostel had expressed a large level of interest in having raised beds for food growing, and also some outdoor seating, helping to make use of the green space at the back of the hostel and provide an area for social interaction and gardening. Groundwork teamed up with staff from Midland Heart, volunteers from the centre and local residents to create raised planters with a bench attachment. The service users who volunteered their time talked about the sense of ownership they felt for the garden as a result. Some of the service users have since progressed onto further volunteering opportunities with Groundwork and other partners



In all, we had 11 volunteers from the centre help out, and 2 members of staff from Midland Heart.

"I didn't think I would get as involved when I first came to help out, and yet here I am now! It's been really good fun and I can't wait to plant potatoes in one of the raised beds" – young volunteer

"It's been great to see people volunteer their time to benefit all users of the centre, learn practical skills, and eventually start growing food too" – William Hughes, Team Leader, Midland Heart