

A Day in the Life of a Volunteer Driver

Judith Bennett moved to Birmingham when she was 19 to begin her training as a Physiotherapist. She lives with her husband and has three grown-up daughters. Judith has been volunteering at the Hospice for 1½ years, and she drives one of our three Hospice vehicles.

What inspired you to begin volunteering at the Hospice?

I have a lot of fondness for the Hospice movement generally. Through my work, I had dealt with children's Hospices and really valued their work. I just wanted to get involved!

What is your professional background?

I worked as a Chartered Physiotherapist specialising in paediatrics. I have been retired for 2 years.

Describe a 'typical' day as a volunteer driver

I arrive at the Hospice at around 8.30am to be given my run. I then sit with the other drivers and we discuss routes and generally have a chat and a laugh together. I get kitted out in my lovely high visibility jacket, collect the mobile phone and pick up the keys to the vehicle (I prefer to drive the Fiat Scudo). Once the Nurse Escorts have finished their briefing, we head out on our route. We can collect up to three people in one run. The routes have taken me to parts of Birmingham that I do not know, but I am always learning, which is good (it can be nerve wracking when I get lost, but we manage!). During the journey I try to build up a rapport with the patients and get to know them, we even have a joke. Building up this rapport is important to me, as it makes the journey part of the patient's experience of the day. I make sure that the patients arrive at the Hospice in time for their tea and toast. I then return to the Hospice at 2.30pm, check to see if there are any changes to my run, and then take the patients home. Finally, I return the vehicle, and the nurse escort back to the Hospice.

What are your hobbies & interests?

Looking after my two grandchildren, aged 4 months and 2½ years, is an absolute joy! I also enjoy reading, walking, going to the theatre and ballet, cross stitch and embroidery as well as helping out at my local church.



John Rose has been a volunteer driver at the Hospice for over 12 years! John uses his own car to transport patients to and from the Hospice.



Originally from Buxton in

Derbyshire, John and his wife have lived in Moseley for 35 years. They have a son who is a Lawyer in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and a daughter who is a Dentist in Winchester.

What inspired you to begin volunteering at the Hospice?

A Hospice in London had cared for my parents-in-law; they helped to make their last weeks and days happier, by taking them to and from Hospital, and helping them to stay in touch with each other while they were both in Hospital (they had no access to transport of their own and were entirely dependent on the service provided). It was not until 25 years later that I decided to volunteer at St Mary's as my way of giving something back.

What is your professional background?

I moved to Birmingham to work as a Teacher; I taught English and History. More recently, I am a self employed Financial Advisor and Mortgage Broker, specialising in the 'buy to let' market.

Describe a 'typical' day as a volunteer driver

I deliver and collect patients from the Day Hospice. I leave my house at around 9.30am, collect two patients from their homes and bring them in to the Hospice. I return to the Hospice at approximately 3.00pm to take the patients home. Over the years I have learnt a great deal from the patients I transport to and from the Hospice, for example, Birmingham war-time experiences, I've been told all about show dogs in Australia, and I even had a patient who would foretell the weather (better than the forecasters!). I really value the patient's company.

What are your hobbies & interests?

I play tennis a couple of times a week, but also go fly fishing for salmon as and when I can. I also enjoy playing golf.