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ARCh winners of Oxford City Cert of Honours 2019

A love of reading for pleasure and purpose can be key to a happy and successful life. Many children in Oxfordshire struggle however; they may lack confidence and not see themselves as readers, they may not have anyone to share reading with at home, have no books of their own or have just not encountered a book that interests them.

ARCh is an award-winning Oxfordshire charity that aims to change that by recruiting, training and supporting volunteers from the community and local businesses to give personalised support to children in primary schools across the county.

Children are selected for ARCh support by their school and benefit from two half hour sessions with their volunteer each week. Sessions involve sharing books, games and conversation. Volunteers continue to work with the same children for the entire year, allowing a special friendship to develop.

This year two ARCh volunteers, Richard Hunt and Joyce Day, were awarded Oxford City Certificate of Honour.

The honour is awarded to individuals who have carried out exceptional voluntary work in Oxford City. The work must be carried out over a substantial period of time, at least 5 years, and be of significant benefit to the community.

Richard has completed an amazing 18 years of volunteering to help children in Oxford enjoy reading. He began back in 2001, helping children in Cutteslowe Primary, later transferring to St Barnabas Primary.

He is a great reading role model, and makes his ARCh sessions fun and interactive, personalising them to individual children's interests and needs. He often uses playscripts with the children, praising them when they experiment with different voices to match the characters. Conversation is an important part of ARCh sessions and there is always lots to talk about in Richard's sessions, be it about the story, about a character's behaviour or about life in general.

Richard has found the twice weekly volunteering sessions to be beneficial to him as well as the children. He is much valued by the school. Fiona Hawkins, Head Teacher, has said that Richard is welcomed as part of the St Barnabas family.

Joyce has volunteered for ARCh in St Michaels Primary in Marston for 10 years now. Very popular with the children and staff alike, she is a very dedicated and committed volunteer. Despite sometimes suffering with ill health she has selflessly continued to make the journey to school for her sessions twice a week as she recognises how important continuity is for children ARCh supports. Joyce gains a lot from the volunteering herself and is highly valued by all at St Michaels.

If you would like to find out further information about volunteering opportunities with ARCh visit their page on oxonvolunteers.org or phone ARCh on 01869 320380.

Notes.

Sources:

https://oxonvolunteers.org/vk/volunteers/my_opportunities_info_ur.htm?pid=10033455

<https://archoxfordshire.org.uk/>

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