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Northumbria shares continuing acts of kindness ahead of Christmas

The kindness of Northumbria staff and students has been felt around the world, from raising money for children in war-torn countries to feeding those in need across the city of Newcastle.

For the last few years Northumbria University have organised a Random Acts of Kindness competition, inviting staff and students to share how they have been helping the community and beyond, encouraging others to do the same.

In the lead up to the holidays, we were unsurprised to discover the fantastic ways people were lifting the spirits of those around them and going the extra mile to not only be kind, but to have an impact on lives.

Business and Marketing student, Jamal Sheikh was the student winner of the competition, having been voted for his determination to help those in need within his local community. Jamal regularly picks up [Too Good To Go](#) bags and delivers them to homeless people in West Jesmond. This has become less of a random act and more of a routine for him, helping whenever he can.

The other winning nomination was Karen Robinson, who works in the faculty of Arts, Design and Social Sciences at Northumbria and was nominated by a colleague for regularly devoting her time to helping charities. On Friday evenings she volunteers at the [Peoples' Kitchen](#) in Newcastle, and has previously been part of the Befriending Service with [Age UK](#).

Another member of staff was nominated for being there for their colleague when they needed support from a friend, taking time out of their busy week to accompany them at a hospital appointment for a breast screen. As written in their nomination: "Having her with me meant the world to me and for this selfless act of kindness and friendship she deserves recognition."

Acts of kindness go a long way no matter how big or small. This has been demonstrated in abundance from across the Northumbria community. Salwa Bowen, who was one of the shortlisted staff entries, shared how one small act can inspire nationwide action.

Wanting to educate her children on the importance of giving back to others, she set up the [My Little Heart To Yours](#) organisation, which raises money for children in war-torn countries. Her daughter was so passionate about the project, she inspired a team of children from across the country, who are helping her reach her individual target of £5000 through sponsored bike rides, swims and hikes.

At a bakery in London, Cyber Security Technology With Advanced Practice student, Talha Hafeez identified a food waste problem and came up with a solution. Working under an 'everything fresh' policy, food would ordinarily have been discarded at the end of the day. However, Talha came up with a plan which was supported by the bakery, to distribute the leftover baked goods to charities and homeless people across the city.

Northumbria staff and students are committed to supporting each other, following the ethos – it's on me, it's on you, it's on us – which means everyone looks out for each other and are good citizens in the community. Find out more about the University's [It's On Us](#) campaign.

-ENDS-

Notes to editors

Summary of staff shortlist

Anonymous

This member of staff was nominated for being there for their colleague when they needed support from a friend. Even though she had heavy deadlines, this colleague demonstrated kindness and friendship, and attended a hospital appointment for a breast screen after they had found a lump. As written in the nomination: "Having her with me meant the world to me and for this selfless act of kindness and friendship she deserves recognition."

Salwa Bowen

Salwa not only has been raising money for children living under the unlucky stars, but is educating her children on the importance of kind acts. She has organised a family fundraiser, running 1000 miles before Christmas and has so far raised £4000. You can find out more at www.mylittlehearttoyours.com

Karen Robinson

Karen routinely gives up her time on Friday evenings to volunteer at the People's Kitchen in Newcastle and is fully committed to the role she has there as a friend/mentor/supporter. She has created great relationships there. For several years, Karen also volunteered at Age UK, befriending older ladies who didn't have friends or family to accompany them on day trips.

Summary of student shortlist

Jamal Sheikh

Jamal regularly delivers Too Good To Go bags to homeless people living in West Jesmond. He has developed a great relationship with people in the community and helps whenever he can. This has become more of a routine for him than a random act, as he delivers the bags nearly every other day.

Anonymous

After finishing their shift at work, they came across someone in need of urgent medical assistance. They responded quickly by alerting their manager who was trained in first aid, helped ensure the person was still responsive by continuously speaking to them and waited until an ambulance came.

Talha Hafeez

Talha was employed at a bakery over the summer holidays which encouraged an 'Everything Fresh' rule, meaning that leftover food would be binned at the end of the day. Talha created a system at the bakery to pack food, call a charity to pick up the food and distribute the remaining to the homeless across the city once his shift ended.

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