

A Wonderful Example of Befriending in Orkney!

Rhena got involved with the Adult Befriending Service in Orkney after a friend recommended it. She was matched with Jenny for telephone befriending in January 2020 and then this progressed to face to face befriending. Rhena looks forward to Jenny's weekly visits, "I look forward to her coming. She cheers me up as she's such a happy person. We just yarn and have a lot of fun. The time just goes so quickly. She's great company and we have a lot of laughs."

Rhena feels Befriending has made a difference to her life, "Jenny makes me feel more positive about life, I feel listened to, valued and respected. She keeps telling me I'm great!"

When asked if she could give the befriending experience a score out of ten Rhena replied, "I'd give it 11! There's nothing better you could do!"

Unfortunately, there is a shortage of volunteers coming forward to give up an hour of their time every week to befriend lonely, isolated older people in our communities. Jenny Stone was trained by the Orkney Adult Befriending Service in 2019. As if befriending one person wasn't enough, Jenny also befriends Julie via telephone. Julie explains what her weekly telephone calls from Jenny mean to her, "They make a great difference to me. We get on very well and we talk about everything."

Jenny first heard about Befriending from an advertisement on Facebook. She had previously enjoyed her time working as a home carer.

"Befriending is very special to me because it gives an opportunity to connect with people that I wouldn't have had the opportunity to do in any other role. Rhena and Julie are a joy! They are both such wise, experienced and interesting people who are so kind and formidably intelligent, extremely gifted in so many ways and have a lot of wisdom to offer this world. They have a wonderful sense of humour and there are no dull moments, there's always a great sense of fun. The hour I usually spend with each of them goes really quickly! Julie and Rhena each have their own unique characters and quirky wit and humour, and I can't imagine life without the weekly visits and phone conversations now. There is a sense of trust and the confidential side of it means they can feel at ease to speak freely. There is a sense of accomplishment providing companionship which they know they can rely on. It truly is a privilege to know both of them and I am grateful to have the opportunity.

I would simply say to any person considering befriending that it is one of the most rewarding things you could ever do. There's a sense of closeness and trust that is completely unique to befriending, and each new conversation is so thought provoking and opens up a whole different perspective on life. I would heartily and unreservedly recommend befriending to anyone who might be interested in it."

