

WEA Awards 2016



# Making a difference: Impact of WEA Education

[www.wea.org.uk](http://www.wea.org.uk)

Workers'  
Educational  
Association

**A better world –  
equal, democratic  
and just;**

through adult education  
the WEA challenges  
and inspires individuals,  
communities  
and society



**Founded in 1903, the Workers' Educational Association is the UK's largest voluntary sector provider of adult education.**

With the support of nearly 350 local branches, 3,000 volunteers, 2,000 part time tutors and our active membership, the WEA helps improve lives and communities. By raising aspirations and enabling individuals to create their own change we are all reminded of the power of education. The WEA provides friendly, accessible education close to home. Students do not need previous knowledge or qualifications to join most of our courses, only a willingness to share with others their curiosity, ideas and experience. The incredible achievements and efforts of all who use, support and value the WEA are truly inspiring.

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## Welcome to the WEA Awards 2016

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**Since the WEA was founded in 1903, our mission has been to bring educational opportunities to every community in Britain. This simple idea that learning is for everyone and learning is for life underpins everything we do. High quality, student-centred, tutor-led education for adults can be life enhancing and life changing. It can raise aspirations and empower individuals to take control of their own lives. Above all, it helps people realise that anything is possible.**

The WEA Awards event is our way of recognising the power of education. The winners of the awards represent some of the best stories from across the Association. Every winner shows the impact education can have and it is a great privilege to celebrate their success.

Our awards are also a chance for us to say thank you to all our students, tutors, volunteers, members, staff, ambassadors and partners. Over 70,000 students study with the WEA every year and we are proud of the positive changes we make to lives

across the country. The commitment and dedication of everyone connected to the WEA makes this possible and without your help we wouldn't be able to work towards our vision of 'a better world – equal, democratic and just'.

Congratulations to the award winners and thanks to those that have made these awards possible – the students, staff and tutors who have shared their stories. You are an inspiration to us all.

**WEA Chief Executive and General Secretary Ruth Spellman**

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## Kansaikou Samateh

Olive Cordell Skills for Life Student

Being an asylum seeker, Kansaikou has been through some very traumatic experiences in his life and it is currently not safe for him to return to his home country. Due to his immigration status in the UK he has limited opportunities for ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) learning in the community and he's not eligible for the government-funded courses. Kansaikou was very shy when he first approached New Links project in Coventry but he expressed a desire to improve his English in order to find gainful employment.

Since coming to the WEA five months ago, Kansaikou has attended every single class and study group visit organised as part of the four courses he has enrolled on. His tutors describe him as an enthusiastic, curious and dedicated learner. He has been setting and achieving new personal learning objectives in each course and becoming more confident communicating in English with tutors, other students, visitors, and community contacts, including his recent interaction with potential employers at a Skills Show. Other students in his class notice and comment on the progress he has made.

During his time at the WEA, Kansaikou has improved his reading, speaking and listening, identified career goals and developed a plan by which to achieve these and has motivated other potential students to join the WEA/New Links courses.

As a devoted New Links student, Kansaikou helps demonstrate how education can change individual lives. He is proof that education increases individual interaction with other communities, organisations and services. Education has supported Kansaikou's integration into the local community and has helped him to develop his employability skills. His story shows that the WEA is an inclusive education provider working with some of the most disadvantaged individuals, whilst being flexible to meet diverse needs and providing opportunities to grow personally and professionally.

## Margaret McCormick

Olive Cordell Skills for Life Tutor



Beginning her career as a WEA tutor in September 2013, Margaret was soon tasked with teaching the newly reformed functional skills of Maths and English for the Newcastle Hospital Trust. Despite having no experience with NHS or workplace learners of any kind, her flexible approach to teaching and a clear passion for learning saw her adapt effectively to the new environment. Faced with students of varied age, ability and background, Margaret made them feel comfortable from the very first session. Margaret's contribution soon became greatly valued and recognised by the Trust, with recognition of her courses' important contribution to staff development, overall confidence and the improvement in patient care.

Margaret's effective teaching style and readiness in providing one to one support has seen a very high pass rate. This has meant students consistently move on to further education or achieve career progression. This has included health care assistants, porters, theatre staff, domestic assistants and administrators. As well as this, groups of learners vary from Entry level to Level 1 and Margaret has overcome the challenges in employing resources and teaching methods in a way that is accessible to all.

As a result of the achievements of Margaret's functional skills courses, Newcastle Hospital Trust have been working in partnership with the WEA as a provider of other training and courses including Conflict Resolution, British Sign Language, Minute Taking and Academic Writing Skills.

Embodying the ethos that it is never too late to start a life of learning, Margaret's first experience of adult education was a numeracy course which she began in her forties. Margaret has now progressed to studying for her PhD and says it is a journey through which she has fostered a growing passion for the power of learning: "Today's agenda is all about raising people's aspirations. It's about raising their skills, getting people into employment or training, closing the gap between those who have and those that haven't and encouraging people to continue learning throughout life."

## Rotherham Branch

WEA Volunteer Award

Helped by the fact that seven of their current membership started off as WEA students and have been stewarded all the way from the classroom to a position as branch member, our Rotherham branch has accumulated a brilliant group of volunteers and now boasts more members than ever before. With three of these ex-students having taken on key roles within the branch, along with the retention of its long serving treasurer of 15 years, a sturdy balance of old and new has seen the branch go from strength to strength.



The branch members are active in visiting classrooms to encourage other students to become involved with the work of the WEA and they have generated an impressive increase in student numbers with their commitment to promoting courses. The group have recently come up with the idea of producing a termly newsletter to share with students information about what is happening within the WEA. One branch member is also sitting on Yorkshire and Humber's Regional Committee. The diligence and work ethic of Rotherham Branch has proved invaluable in providing support and contributing to the success of field staff.

Among the branch's achievements in 2015 is their successful hosting

of Yorkshire & Humber region's inaugural summer fayre. With boundless enthusiasm, the team went about arranging the event and a couple of branch members also manned a stall on the day. The event raised an excellent £500 towards the WEA Mental Health Appeal and two individual branch members received a recognition certificate from Adult Learners' Week in acknowledgement of their wonderful work.

Course Programme Worker Maxine Turner is delighted with the branch's recent success: "It's a privilege to work alongside the Rotherham branch members who, more often than not, blow me away with their enthusiasm and pro-activism, but also with their wicked sense of humour. As all members come from the local area, they understand the needs of the community and tell it like it is, as only Yorkshire folk can! Long may they continue to engage with the people of Rotherham.

## Rachel

WEA Student Award

In the last two years, Rachel has attended a host of WEA confidence building, communication and assertiveness skills courses. The courses are delivered for women facing a range of challenges and issues, many related to addiction, physical and mental health problems and domestic violence. For many, attending regularly is challenging.



During the period the courses have run, Rachel has attended almost every session of every course despite being a single parent, dealing with residual problems of addiction and having to find suitable accommodation for herself and her young daughter.

Not only has Rachel attended the classes, she has actively used the skills she has learned in everyday life to help her to resolve some of the issues stated above and has identified skills she needed to develop.

Rachel has applied the skills learned on this course, particularly using body language, listening and assertiveness skills in important meetings with various agencies, and she has been successful in using assertive techniques when dealing with difficult situations and people. Rachel also suggested a new topic for the second in the suite of courses: dealing with verbal aggression. This was found to be so useful by all the students that it now forms a two hour session in the course.

Due to her progress and ongoing support of the course and students, Rachel earned the affectionate title 'team leader' amongst the group. She herself stated she never considered herself capable of working with others until she earned this nickname. She has actively recruited students she felt would benefit from the course and regularly shares relevant examples and benefits she has experienced through use of the skills she has gained. Students on these courses often do not have the confidence to attend, but Rachel's informal style of friendship and support to her peers has been invaluable to helping new students feel comfortable.

Rachel's development and application was such that she was asked if she would like to become a WEA volunteer. She was enthusiastic, and volunteered on a 7 week course. Rachel intends to continue volunteering as she views this as crucial to building a CV for the next stage of her life. During the briefing for the role, the importance of role-modelling the skills was discussed. Rachel has done this in a very professional manner, assisting with basic course mechanics, skills demonstration and basic administration. She was always on time and her appearance was always highly professional. Whilst her energy and proactivity meant she performed at a high level, she was disciplined and able to remain silent for long periods whilst contributing in an appropriate and motivational way. She achieved the difficult task of transition from student to volunteer, maintaining friendship with her previous peers, whilst keeping an appropriate emotional distance in class and welcoming new students.

# Refugee Writers Group

WEA Student Group Award

The Refugees Writers Group is made up of nine learners who produced individual stories based on the theme of 'journey' as part of Scottish Book Week. WEA Scotland received support from the Scottish Book Trust and the Scottish Trade Unions Congress (STUC) to facilitate the group and to encourage the learners to write about their journeys, personal or physical from their home towns, family and friends to where they are now. in Glasgow.

The STUC campaigns to promote positive images of refugees and to highlight the journeys and sacrifices many make to come to the UK, as well as demonstrating the contribution they make to our society, economy and communities.



English is not the first language of any of the students in this group and prior to enrolling on this course none had experience of creative or story writing. Some of the stories the group produced were read out by the learners and WEA staff at the rally at the end of the STUC's annual St. Andrew's Day March. The rally was held at the Glasgow Film Theatre, which was full to capacity and where the audience received the stories in complete silence. The writers received the best reception of all the rally's speakers.

Members of the group face a number of significant challenges on a daily basis. Some are they waiting to be reunited with their families, and others are attempting to access social, housing, education and health services. With little support and inexperience of the UK welfare system, accessing the labour market and navigating the benefits system is also incredibly difficult.

Despite these obstacles, every member of the group saw their writing as an opportunity to increase their English language skills and to tell their stories to a wider audience, showing that refugees give up more than most can imagine and yet still want to give back to the new communities in which they live. That the students chose to attend this course while building a new life in Scotland, is a testament to their commitment to learning.

The Refugee Writers Group are also winners of this year's WEA Scotland award.

# Heather Dommett

WEA Tutor Award

Heather has been teaching for the WEA as a sessional tutor on community courses for almost three years. She specialises in community education and has qualifications in Information, Advice and Guidance and Post-Compulsory Education. She teaches a range of courses including 'Introduction to Teaching Adults' and 'Introduction to Helping in Schools' as well as various employability and craft courses. Heather's real strength lies in supporting less confident students who are taking their first steps back into education.



Heather's students describe her courses as fun, lively and welcoming. It's clear that she brings out the very best in them and she is consistently supportive and encouraging. There are numerous examples of the impact Heather's efforts have on her learners, for example, when teaching different employability courses, Heather always conducts an end of term mock interview. She puts extra time into planning by compiling a list of interview questions appropriate to each individual student's particular career interest, making this an invaluable experience for WEA students.

The impact of Heather's teaching is clear, but her thoughtfulness also boosts student morale and confidence. For the last class of term, it is usual custom to have a small party where students bring and share foods from their native countries. Unfortunately a last session coincided with Ramadan so many students were unable to eat, Heather encouraged the students to bring in food anyway and she provided plastic tubs so they could take samples of different dishes home to eat after sunset. Heather also asked each person in the class to share a recipe from their native country. She then created a recipe book in her own time for all to share. This recipe book has now been distributed amongst other centres and used as good practice.

All who work alongside Heather are impressed by her ability to gently foster progression and develop a thirst for learning among students. She is a great ambassador for the WEA and for social purpose, actively encouraging students to take part in fundraising activities and campaigning. In doing so, she helps strengthen the reputation of the WEA in Oxfordshire.

Heather is open and nurturing and makes everyone feel welcome and recognised regardless of their background, academic ability or skills. She is a fantastic tutor and truly embodies the value of the WEA.

## Get Out, Stay Well

WEA Staff Award

**The Get Out, Stay Well project team has developed funding proposals and secured new business and educational approaches through a contract with NHS Stoke-on-Trent Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). This has led to the development of new partnership arrangements, new courses and the engagement of new students facing multiple disadvantages. An example is a partnership with pulmonary nurses to offer WEA chair based gentle exercise provision for patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.**

In terms of new educational approaches, the team has produced and distributed an instructional DVD as a result of student feedback. The DVD demonstrates chair based exercise and so gives a visual aid/support to those who are keen to practice outside of a session, those who are unable to attend in person, and those with low literacy



levels. The team has also developed an innovative hospital discharge support service. Through community based gentle exercise and tailored health literacy courses, this helps people who are about to be, or have recently been discharged to stay out of hospital.

During project delivery the team has had a very successful level of engagement from dieticians, Bariatric Dietetic Assistants, respiratory nurses, physiotherapists and 'hospital at home' services, matrons, ward managers, as well as patients in a range of settings. All

stakeholders have recognised the value of education within the discharge pathway and the need to give people in-depth post-discharge support to maintain and improve their health and help reduce GP appointments and avoid re-admission.

To date the project has seen over 400 people engaged in information and advice sessions and a fantastic range of people involved in the project with the youngest person aged 26 and the oldest aged 98.

This innovative project is providing substantial value to the WEA, by developing provision in collaboration with NHS staff and thus raising the profile of the Association among medical professionals and the general public.

## Field to Fabric

WEA Innovation and Contribution

**The Field to Fabric project was a hugely successful partnership involving over 165 students. Together, the students designed a garden showcasing the materials used by Lancashire's textile industry to produce cloth.**

The project helped students of a demographic generally considered the most vulnerable and least likely to engage in education or training, gain life skills, greater independence, the confidence to challenge the perception of others and the motivation to progress on to higher education activities.

A vast number of positive outcomes have come about as a result of the project - including a successful funding bid of £53,000 with the Heritage Lottery, a bronze award winning garden at the RHS Flower Show in Tatton, an exhibition at the Atkinson gallery in Southport with local press interest and an invite to exhibit at any of the RHS Flower Shows in 2016.

The project was viewed by over 80,000 people at the RHS show alone and the bronze award, as well as helping build constructive links to other partner organisations, has been effective in promoting the work of the WEA both internally and externally. The success has also had an influence on Lancashire Museum's school level education and a WEA tutor is working with both the museum and the Institute of Chemistry to further promote our work.

The demographic of those who engaged in the project included people with multiple physical and learning disabilities, community carers, black and minority ethnic women, those with language needs or lower than a level 2 qualification, ex-offenders and those recovering from abuse. With the project specifically targeted towards these socially and economically disadvantaged members of society, the collective success of all those involved is a wonderful expression of our ethos and a true WEA success story.



# Under 1 Roof

Eastern Region

**Under 1 Roof Training and Development Centre (U1R), owned and run by St Martins Housing Trust, support vulnerable adults who are either homeless or at risk**



**of homelessness to develop skills that help them to live independently in the community. Each year, Under 1 Roof runs a project called The Fair Weather Learning and Performance Project to showcase the skills of their members. In 2015 WEA Eastern Region joined forces with U1R to offer some courses as part of the project.**

The U1R Fair Weather Learning and Performance Project culminates in a musical event at The Waterfront – a well-known music venue in Norwich that has supported the event for the last couple of years. Members taking part in the project plan and execute the event, as well as perform on stage, often for the very first time in their lives.

By running a number of linked courses, participants are provided with learning opportunities which are connected with running and organising an event. Not only does this provide them with life and employment skills, but it also builds a sense of community and a teamwork ethos, something, due to their personal circumstances, many of them haven't experienced before.

The courses have all been based around the development of the event, starting with a photography course, enabling them to produce their own publicity material. Following on from this, U1R members attended a website and social media course to support them in promoting and marketing the event successfully.

Finally, an event planning course was delivered so all participants learnt the roles and work associated with organising and running an event while the practical and active work gave further valuable life and employment skills training. Many of the U1R members involved with this project have had no previous experience of IT related subjects or working in a group, but they have all thrived and the confidence levels as a group and at individual level, have been a pleasure to see develop.

The project has been a hugely successful example of how group dynamics, individual endeavor and support can really change people's thoughts, opinions and outlook on life. Participants found they have now developed skills that can help them in the pursuit of employment and creating a better future for themselves.

All of the individuals engaged in the project have seen a spike in their confidence and self-esteem, a boost to their job and work related skills and they have shown how beneficial a community spirit can be. This increased confidence has resulted in further study, applying for tenancy and engaging in employment searching with the support of the U1R training and development team.

# Understanding and Working with Groups - Women's Work Studies

East Midlands Region

**The women on the Understanding and Working with Groups course came to the WEA, via partner organisation Women's Work, facing a number of challenges ranging from histories of abuse and addiction to mental and physical health problems. Issues such as panic, lack of confidence and physical mobility difficulties meant that many found it difficult to leave the familiarity of home. The women attended a programme of learning intended to build confidence and resilience in group situations and during this time the women supported each other through learning, to overcome these obstacles.**



Six months on, the different outcomes for the women involved in the group are very positive: one student is now a WEA volunteer, another was offered a volunteer tutor role on an art course, three students have gone on to gain paid employment and five have progressed to a more challenging WEA course.

Now, the number of women who access Women's Work and have heard about the success of these courses has increased considerably. This has meant that the tutor is now running two groups each week to accommodate numbers. A more advanced course to allow for further progression will be run for the first time later this academic year – essentially a fourth course with new more challenging content.

All of the women who joined the Women's Work course stated that their attendance had a positive effect on their health and wellbeing. Having been unable to mix with other people in the past, some of the women were reporting that they felt relaxed, comfortable and happy working with the group.

For some of these students these courses represented the start of, or a step towards, successfully reintegrating with the community from which they had been isolated for some time.

## Fauzia Adan

London Region



**Fauzia has worked for the WEA as a sessional Skills For Life tutor since 2007 and in that time she has taught over 75 courses. Her tremendous enthusiasm for her work has never faded and she always goes the extra mile to ensure that her classes are interesting and lively. If Fauzia discovers her students have a particular passion or interest it will be somehow brought into the session and shared by everyone.**

Many of Fauzia's students first attended her classes with very little English and she has worked tirelessly and patiently to help them overcome challenges. Many of those

original students are now working towards Level 2 English and have plans to train as Community Interpreters, carers, teachers or are working and volunteering in their communities.

As well as encouraging and supporting her students, Fauzia works to promote the WEA externally through her contacts in the local community by consolidating partnerships with groups such as the Iranian Women's Association and the Carramea centre in Harrow. Fauzia also facilitates events which combine students on different courses encouraging and fostering new friendships. Within the WEA Fauzia has encouraged students to progress on to other WEA courses such as Community Interpreting and to take part in various WEA events. Students who are learning in Primary Schools are encouraged to get involved in Parent Associations and act as learning ambassadors promoting WEA classes to others.

Fauzia herself arrived in the UK as a teenager with very little English and achieved academic success through hard work and determination. Students see her as a role model and are inspired by her learning journey. Fauzia lives in the local community and has the remarkable ability to connect with her students. She also encourages her students outside the classroom, by getting involved in the work they are doing in the community; all of her efforts foster cohesion in a multi-cultural neighbourhood.

Students in Fauzia's classes come from Somalia, Afghanistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Iran, Iraq, Poland, Romania, the Czech Republic and China and range in age, with some students in their 20s and some in their 60s. Fauzia is responsible for the inclusive and supportive network amongst the students and the lengths she goes to in encouraging students in the classroom and beyond are an inspiration to us all.

## Johurun Nessa

North East Region

**Johurun has been working on our Greening Wingrove Project for nearly two years. Her first chance to get involved with project work, Johurun described the initiative as 'a real learning experience, with every day presenting a new challenge'. Johurun had been working without a project manager for over three months, shouldering a big responsibility for the project, alongside her fellow colleague. During this time, she did an outstanding job in pushing the project forward and has developed new approaches and various ways to continuously develop it.**

Johurun has identified the need to connect with the community in a number of innovative ways including the creation of community living room projects that will enable vulnerable members of the community to come together, be signposted to services and get involved in the community as a whole. She also conceived the idea of running WEA taster courses to upskill the community and bridge the gap between the project and the WEA.

Achieving what she has in the best possible unassuming manner, partners and local authority personnel have all expressed how fantastic Johurun is. She has really evolved as the lynchpin of the project and its links between the WEA and the local community it serves. By maintaining her professionalism, determined work ethic and an approach to treating everybody with respect, she has become a positive example to those in the community.

Encompassing a very diverse group of people who speak more than 70 languages, Johurun's idea for community living rooms is a fine example of WEA inclusivity and continues to enable people to come together no matter what their background.



# Ray Bullock

North West Region



Back in 2000, Ray was one of the main people involved in setting up Endurance, a route for helping individuals in difficult circumstances to work with him in a safe location away from the unhealthy environment which controlled them. Since then, Ray has supported the learning and development of many students through the successful delivery of almost 200 WEA Courses.

Through the endurance initiative, Ray works with alcoholics, addicts, people who are sleeping rough, people with mental health and learning difficulties as well as socially excluded individuals. By organising residential trips, Ray is able to take different groups of students to calm environments where they're able to concentrate on their learning.

Other preparatory and writing courses supported the personal growth and development work of the residentials and from 2002 onwards, including all our WEA training areas and programs, Ray has worked with approximately 200 students each year. It was around this time that Ray decided to apply the community ethic of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) to an Endurance training program. Having recently finished a BA and MA in Writing and Philosophy at Liverpool John Moore's University (LJMU), Ray thought it would work well to build part of their Writing program into the residential.

He took part in all of the LJMU residentials as mentor and produced a mentoring program. He used the education, mentoring and residential skills, plus the AA community principles as the basis for an innovative training program. Though its training has expanded and developed in many ways, the principles behind its courses are unchanged and the WEA has been able to provide the support, advice and direction for the training from the beginning.

OFSTED have repeatedly praised the work of Endurance and the WEA in inspections. Working with Endurance enables the WEA to reach other external organisations and network groups in the statutory and voluntary sectors with a proven track record of success. Ray's thoughtful approach and the time he's committed to Endurance has enabled many people to change their lives.

Ray wanted the other members of the Endurance team to be credited, including Cath Humphris who added the education accredited part of the programme and Tommy Jones who added to the community part of the programme. Tina Scrivens and Jane and Paul Casey were responsible for expanding the programme and all tutored on residentials and other courses. Ray would also like to extend his thanks to his good friend Alan Farrish.

# Refugee Writers Group

WEA Scotland

The Refugees Writers Group is made up of nine learners who produced individual stories based on the theme of 'journey' as part of Scottish Book Week. WEA Scotland received support from the Scottish Book Trust and the Scottish Trade Unions Congress (STUC) to facilitate the group and to encourage the learners to write about their journeys, personal or physical from their home towns, family and friends to where they are now. in Glasgow.

The STUC campaigns to promote positive images of refugees and to highlight the journeys and sacrifices many make to come to the UK, as well as demonstrating the contribution they make to our society, economy and communities.



English is not the first language of any of the students in this group and prior to enrolling on this course none had experience of creative or story writing. Some of the stories the group produced were read out by the learners and WEA staff at the rally at the end of the STUC's annual St. Andrew's Day March. The rally was held at the Glasgow Film Theatre, which was full to capacity and where the audience received the stories in complete silence. The writers received the best reception of all the rally's speakers.

Members of the group face a number of significant challenges on a daily basis. Some are they waiting to be reunited with their families, and others are attempting to access social, housing, education and health services. With little support and inexperience of the UK welfare system, accessing the labour market and navigating the benefits system is also incredibly difficult.

Despite these obstacles, every member of the group saw their writing as an opportunity to increase their English language skills and to tell their stories to a wider audience, showing that refugees give up more than most can imagine and yet still want to give back to the new communities in which they live. That the students chose to attend this course while building a new life in Scotland, is a testament to their commitment to learning.

The Refugee Writers Group are also winners of this year's WEA Student Group award.

## Improve your English Skills

Southern Region

**'Improve your English Skills' is a group of 14 students of varying ages and ability. A number of individuals in the group faced personal challenges, ranging from low self-esteem, dyslexia, physical disability to mental health issues and learning difficulties.**

Although there were numerous challenges facing the group, they were able to set realistic targets and take ownership of their learning through strong peer collaboration. This resulted in a positive learning experience in which all learners' contributions were valued and respected.

As a result, all learners achieved their individual learning goals and in some cases they exceeded their targets. The progress made by the group has been inspirational and most importantly the students themselves have seen the enormity of the journey they have been on. Following the course, all of the students expressed a desire to progress further and enrolled on the subsequent 'Improve Your English' course.



A crucial part of the 'Improve your English Skills' course was making a leaflet or newsletter. The students paired up and the whole process involved peer collaboration. Students were matched together based on their confidence and experiences with IT, meaning those with little knowledge were paired with students who had some experience in using computers. In working in this way, students were able to share skills and support one another.

The whole process was learner centred from the design, layout and content of the document. The activity highlighted the cohesiveness of the group and the respect they had for each other. This is a group of students who have travelled a very long way since first approaching the WEA and who have supported and worked together from the outset, embodying the inclusive and accessible spirit of the WEA.

## Bea Storey

South West Region

**Bea is a volunteer teaching assistant in the creative art classes that are part of WEA South West region's InReach programme for students with Learning and physical disabilities. Every week, Bea gives up a whole day helping out and supporting students in both morning and afternoon classes.**

She helps individuals and small groups, gently encouraging and motivating them to produce individual pieces which become part of their creative folder. She has a lovely manner which suits this student group well. At 25 years old, Bea has shown a great commitment, dedication and enthusiasm to her volunteer role and her efforts embody the spirit of the WEA.

The tutor regularly discusses ideas for planning courses with Bea. Volunteering has improved her confidence and helped her to find part-time work. Bea has herself had challenges of dyspraxia and dyscalculia to overcome. Bea has found volunteering very rewarding, in her own words it has helped build her confidence and encouraged her to get out of the house more and socialise more. Since volunteering with the WEA Bea has now secured a part-time job in a cake shop but is still committed to volunteering every week. Bea fully embodies equality, diversity and inclusion and her attitude to all students embraces a 'can do' spirit no matter what an individual's disability may be. Her happy disposition helps the course promote positive wellbeing, an aim of our InReach programme.



## Jane Smith

West Midlands Region



**A positive and inspirational tutor who goes the extra mile for her students, Jane's thorough approach to teaching crafts and sewing classes has ensured that beyond the skills involved in creating practical works, her students have acquired the historical background relating to each new project undertaken. This has given them knowledge above and beyond expectations when starting the course and has helped the class produce consistently high levels of work.**

Having started her journey with the WEA as a student in 1999, Jane is a fantastic role model for her students and she embodies the opportunities that the WEA can provide individuals in challenging circumstances. Fitting her Maths, English and

Access courses around a hectic home life with three young children, Jane's confidence improved and she progressed to becoming Volunteer Educational Advisor in 2007. After completing an award in Education and Training course in 2014, she became a WEA tutor at the beginning of 2015.

Jane has been excellent in reaching out to her local community. Her sewing class worked together to complete a group banner depicting both local wildlife and a map to indicate WEA outreach by displaying where each student had travelled from. This is now on display at Lea Hall Miners Club. Her craft course students also created decorations and used these to decorate the Christmas tree in the local library. As an example of how Jane has always been resourceful in sourcing quality materials for her classes in a way that has made the WEA visible in the local community, a local garden centre who donated some plastic pots to the class were rewarded with a group photograph of the finished project, along with a note of thanks and a label identifying the group as attending a WEA course.

As Jane teaches very diverse groups of people, her creative approach to learning and sensitivity to the needs of her students has been invaluable in encouraging individuals to progress. She has been especially nurturing in her relationships with students with anxiety or a lack of confidence; an example of this is her idea to provide each student with a 'stop/go' card to indicate whether they felt able to show their work during feedback sessions. Jane's journey from student to volunteer to tutor is an inspiring WEA success story.

## Katie Croft

Yorkshire & Humber Region



**Regularly going above and beyond the call of duty, Katie has shown tremendous commitment to her students and has worked tirelessly with WEA staff to successfully maintain, promote and develop high quality adult education. In being prepared to meet with students outside of course sessions, offering telephone and email support and doing anything she can to help them on their next steps towards employment and higher education, Katie has always made herself available in a capacity that exceeds the requirements of her role. Her dedication and willingness to respond to her students' needs has had a very positive impact, helping them to overcome challenges and acquire the skills and confidence to progress.**

Katie has worked hard alongside WEA staff to assist with recruiting and supporting students on the Helping in Schools programme. She has also helped to pilot the new SEND course materials and worked closely with the Regional Tutor Team in order to develop materials for the Regional Tutor briefing last July. On occasion, she has even become to the 'go to' person in assisting staff members to develop and deliver new courses.

In helping to build up a network of contacts within a range of local partner organisations and encouraging students to become ambassadors for provision of courses and activities, Katie has consistently been mindful of promoting the work of the WEA. She has also attended engagement events, open days and award events to promote new courses and regularly uses the internet and social media to publicise our work.

An excellent role model for students and extremely inclusive in her approach, Katie fully embodies the values of the WEA. She promotes the idea that education is for everyone and works hard to ensure that students with even the greatest needs can take part and achieve their potential.

# Membership

The WEA has always campaigned to raise awareness of how adult education can transform individuals and society. We believe in lifelong learning and equality of access to learning. Our members support our work and help make our voice heard.

**Our Mission & Values are very clear:**

## Mission

- Raising educational aspirations
- Bringing great teaching and learning to local communities
- Ensuring there is always an opportunity for adults to return to learning
- Developing educational opportunities for the most disadvantaged
- Involving students and supporters as members to build an education movement for social purpose
- Inspiring students, teachers and members to become active citizens

## Values

- Democratic
- Equal
- Inclusive
- Accessible
- Open

**That's a big commitment by any organisation!**

## So where do our members fit into this?

The WEA is governed and supported by its members. That means you have a say in how the WEA is run and what it offers.

## What do we offer our members?

The opportunity to show support for an organisation that has consistently provided high quality adult education for over 100 years with developmental and leisure courses that challenge and inspire students.

## What do our members do?

That's up to you. Just becoming a member demonstrates your support for the work we do.

- If you already attend a class being a member connects you directly with the organisation.
- If you have some free time you can volunteer with us on an ad hoc or regular basis.
- Our governance is an active body drawn from the membership and participation starts at the grass roots level.

However much you choose to become involved, just by becoming a member you are demonstrating your support of the WEA's mission and values. Every new member increases our ability to make our voice heard in campaigning for equality of access to adult education.

Find out more at <http://www.wea.org.uk/getinvolved/join>



## How you can help



### Geoffrey

Geoffrey is 93 years old and has lived alone since his wife's death 20 years ago. He has been diagnosed with dementia and before starting a WEA course was hesitant to speak, suffered from memory problems and never left his house.

Having enjoyed drawing in the past, Geoffrey was told about our 'Painting for Health' course. During the classes he researched and produced work in a variety of styles and was encouraged by his tutor to discuss his paintings. As a result, Geoffrey became more interested in a range of issues.

A fellow artist who has known Geoffrey for years has been amazed at the improvement in his memory, his humour, his mobility and new found confidence. Geoffrey has recently moved to more suitable housing and hopes to continue with his classes in the near future.

**Voluntary donations, whether from individuals or acquired through fundraising activities, add weight to our cause and help us acquire funds from other charitable donors. The WEA makes such a difference to people like Geoffrey and it is the support of people like you that makes this possible. Ask for a copy of our easy to use guide which contains information and ideas to inspire you to put the FUN into fundraising. Alternatively you can make a donation via Virgin Money Giving, Direct Debit, sending a cheque made payable to Workers' Educational Association or calling 0845 815 0114 to use a credit card. Go to the website <http://www.wea.org.uk/donate> for more information.**



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