

Heather at Food Facts Friends wins new volunteer award

Heather Mortimore is a volunteer at Food Facts and Friends in Penicuik where she has offered her time since April 2020. Volunteering is in the blood as she confirmed that she and her family used to help out with results at athletics meetings, but her new volunteering role is a very different task.

She has done exceptionally well over the last year however, and last night she won the award for Outstanding New Volunteer from Volunteer Midlothian. Heather who also works as a carer, said : "I knew I had been nominated but I wasn't expecting to win. I think we are now distributing around five or six times the amount of food we did before the pandemic. I like working here as a member of the team. There is nothing better than someone coming in and being able to help them. We try to help as much as possible and food is a basic need. It has evolved and is now taking more of my time than I had thought, but in a nice way. Now I wouldn't be without it."

Manager Mark Wells said: "This is a nice achievement for Heather as she has worked very hard, and that is the reason she was put forward for it. We have over 40 volunteers here and the uptake has grown in the last year."



Food Facts & Friends Penicuik run a food bank and much more
Heather Mortimer just won an award for New Volunteer ©2021 The
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<https://twitter.com/VolMidlothian/status/1400525764802453505?s=20>

The Food Facts and Friends charity operates from the former Royal Bank of Scotland premises at 42 John Street in Penicuik which they rent from RBS for a peppercorn rent. Last month the charity provided food for 313 adults and 234 children. A further 347 people came to their community table on non-foodbank days although manager Mark Wells thinks the increase may be due to the café being open again.

In 2020 the charity handed out approximately 52,929.5 kgs of food to more than 2,699 families and a further 122 emergency bags for those awaiting a formal referral. During the Christmas period the charity handed out a further 7.8 kgs of food for entire Christmas dinners – chicken, turkey and roast beef with all the trimmings. In common with other similar charities in Edinburgh Food Facts and Friends get the surplus items from supermarkets such as M&S, Morrisons and their nearby Greggs. Local people also contribute their own donations and the charity is about to begin a major fundraiser to buy their own van.

In a week or two they will also have an online banking facility as staff from TSB will visit a couple of times a week when the local branch closes.

The charity works on a referral basis, but they always have something for anyone who pops in whether it is a cup of tea or a Blessing Bag which can be handed over in an emergency. The café was busy when I visited the charity on Friday, with people filling out their shopping lists and having a cup of tea and a roll or something from Greggs while they waited.

There are two strands – the food bank and the community store where people can choose up to five items.

Meantime during Volunteers Week it was good to meet Heather and Mark, as well as the other volunteers on duty today, Linda, Mags, Morag and Maxine who are making a difference to so many lives in Penicuik.

Heather won the New Volunteer award from [@VolMidlothian](#) at their online awards ceremony. She volunteers with Food Facts Friends in Penicuik Well done! pic.twitter.com/mwdU1yJhrs

– Edinburgh Reporter (@EdinReporter) [June 4, 2021](#)









