

Hear from locals about how good it is to get involved in volunteering

Volunteers who have helped Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland say the work also improves their own health and wellbeing.

The charity has more than 8,500 volunteers all over Scotland who donate their time. But the biggest impact is on the volunteer's own health and their lives.

Some of the charity's volunteers are sharing their personal stories in an appeal to not only help recruit volunteers, but to share why they love volunteering for Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland and the incredible difference it has made to their lives.



Judith Stewart

Judith Stewart, 67, from Edinburgh has been a volunteer at the Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland in Bruntsfield for almost two years.

In her working life running a café and outside catering business, Judith Stewart was used to long hours and a busy schedule.

So, when she retired two years ago, she was determined to put her newly found free time to good use. And she's doing just that as a volunteer at Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland's shop in Bruntsfield, Edinburgh.

Judith says: "About two years ago, I decided it was time to retire, but then it hit me like a brick – I had absolutely no plans for what to do in retirement. And I thought, 'what am I going to do?'"

"I'd always admired the Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland shop in Bruntsfield – its window was always so beautifully done and everyone in there so welcoming.

Judith, a mum to two adult sons, had another personal reason for wanting to volunteer with CHSS. Her husband of 44 years, Charles, has heart issues.

She says: "The work CHSS does is so important, so it feels good to be part of it. I feel I'm doing something worthwhile that matters.

"My husband says I come out of the shop buzzing! I like meeting new people and working with people. I love the surprises you find when opening up donations.

"I'd say to anyone thinking of volunteering, just do it. It's so rewarding."



Margaret Daly

Retired college lecturer Margaret Daly lives in Edinburgh and has been a retail volunteer with Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland for more than 10 years, first at the Morningside branch and latterly in Bruntsfield.

When Margaret retired, she knew she wanted to volunteer to give something back to her community.

She is married to Eric and has two grown-up children and two grandchildren and lives in Edinburgh. She said: "It's the best thing I could ever have done. I'd thought about it for so long but always put off actually going into the shop to apply to become a volunteer.

"But as soon as I got involved, I knew it was the perfect fit for me.

"I love it. I spent my career teaching human resources, finance management and economics at Stevenson College in Edinburgh. I didn't want to do any voluntary work that involved admin. I'd had a Saturday job in a baker's when I was a teenager, so I knew I'd be fine in the shop!

"I love working at the till and at the front of the shop, talking to customers and being part of a great team."

For Margaret, the best part of volunteering is the chance to meet people and be part of something positive.

She says: "Working in a charity shop is also great for learning about new things, like the many different sort of clothes designers there are and interesting things about bric-a-brac. Every day is a school day!

"People always remark about how lovely the shop is, and we all feel such pride in it.

"I would recommend to anyone to give their time volunteering. Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland is so supportive. There's lots of training and back-up, and everyone is encouraged only to do what they're comfortable with. It's a great experience."

Liz Wigelsworth, Head of Volunteering at Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland, said: "We have amazing volunteers, and we are so thankful for everything they do. Our volunteers are absolutely vital in helping us support people across Scotland. They help to provide our services, help run our many shops and

assist us in creating exciting fundraising events. Without them we simply couldn't reach and support as many people as we do.

“Volunteer with us and not only will you change people's lives, but you'll be making a huge difference to your own health and wellbeing, it's a 'win-win' for everyone. One volunteer recently told me that 'volunteering is good soul food' so make 2022 your year to make a fresh start for yourself and others and help us to ensure there is no life half lived in Scotland.”

To get involved and find out more, email our volunteering team on volunteering@chss.org.uk



CHSS Bruntsfield