

Big Hearts volunteer wins award

An Edinburgh-based volunteer has received the Inspiring Volunteer Award from Volunteer Edinburgh for her work on Big Hearts' That's Me! programme.

Milly Whitehead (18) has spent the last year volunteering on the programme, which aims to make a positive impact on teenagers and young adults who could benefit from wellbeing support.

Since joining Big Hearts, the official charity of Heart of Midlothian Football Club, Milly has been supporting young people on the programme, and is delighted she is being recognised for her efforts.

She said: "It was very unexpected! I just got it in my emails and I was very surprised, but it was a great thing to tell my family.

"Obviously I don't do it to be rewarded for it, but it's nice to know that the effort I've put in has been seen."

Seeing the wellbeing of a young person she has supported improve gives Milly an enormous sense of gratification.

She added: "It's nice when I see them in new friendship groups, seeing them do well and progressing.

"A few of them have got on to new courses at college. It's really nice to see them in a new environment and growing."

Milly has also seen a huge growth in her own confidence through dedicating her time to the programme. Speaking about the difference it has made to her, **she said:** "I'm here to make an impact, but I didn't expect it to have such an impact on myself too.

"My dad has been telling everyone just how much I've grown over the past year. It wasn't something he expected I would do.

"It's just an environment where I've felt myself since joining. I've felt a lot more confident.

"I love the club, so it's nice that there's something I can be a part of. It's opened my eyes to more things that they're doing and it's really nice to see."

Pauline Fraser is the Volunteer Development Officer at Big Hearts. She is delighted for Milly winning the award.

She said: "It's very well deserved, 100%. When she first came along she was very quiet, but she has improved a lot since then.

"She's around the same age as some of the participants, so that was good for her I think. She was a bit of a role model for them.

"She has volunteered at our fundraising Gala, she's volunteered at Big Hearts Day, and what a difference in that short space of time."

Big Hearts Community Trust is a registered charity operating from Tynecastle Park, home of Heart of Midlothian FC. Since 2015, they have been using the power of football as a vehicle to improve lives across the communities they serve.

In the past year, Big Hearts engaged with over 8,000 adults and children in need, with support from over 250 dedicated volunteers.



Milly Whitehead