

CENTREPOINT SUNDERLAND

On 21st September 2016 the then Company Commander of No2 Montgomery Company of the Order of the Fleur de Lys, John David Watts, presented a cheque for £750 from the Fleur de Lys Foundation to the Senior Fundraising Officer of Centrepoint Sunderland, Amy Appleton. Their plan was to create a garden in the back yard of one of their facilities in Sunderland.



Amy was invited to, and attended, the No2 Company annual muster on the 1st April 2017 at Durham Cathedral and gave a 5 minute talk to the members to give them an idea of where some of our fundraising efforts go. Centrepoint Sunderland used to have 4 facilities. Due to lack of funds they have had to close one of them but they still have 3 remaining. They have a 6 bed house with 24 hour support for up to 6 young adults with complex health needs who are supported until they are able to live independently, the second facility is for young adults who have previously been in care and the third facility is 8 flats for age 16-25 for young families with up to 2 children.

There was a delay in completing the 'yarden' project due to planning permission but once it was completed we arranged a visit. On the 17th August 2017 we met with Amy and the manager of the facility who was committed to the project and passionate about it. They were using it as extra communal space outdoors for the young people to socialise. One of the young people had adopted the 'yarden' and had taken it upon himself to tend it on a daily basis. Before they had the 'yarden' the only communal space they had was the kitchen/dining room and they said it has made a big difference to them. They had further plans to create a raised vegetable patch in a different part of the yard once they had sufficient funds so they could grow their own vegetables to use.

While we were there they told us about their own fundraising efforts to participate in the Great North Run and for an annual sleepout and advised all money raised locally stays locally.

As Secretary of the No2 Montgomery Company of the Order on 2nd November 2017 I participated in the Centrepont Sunderland sleepout at the Stadium of Light (home of Sunderland FC). It was a very moving occasion, albeit a cold and uncomfortable sleep, and I met some of the young people who had been helped by Centrepont Sunderland. We also had an opportunity find out more about the work they do and how they have developed their own 'toolkit' to help the staff to support the homeless young people under their care with any mental health issues. Their idea of the sleepout being on a Thursday evening is to experience how difficult it is to go to work the next day.

I raised nearly £600 which the Fleur de Lys Foundation match funded with a donation of £600 that John and I delivered by hand on 7th December 2017. They showed us where the planned vegetable patch was going to be.



On the 7th March 2018 Centrepont North East held a supporter's event at the National Glass Centre at Sunderland which John, myself and Kenneth Embleton, also a member of the Order, attended. We listened to speeches from several members of the local and national Centrepont team and some of the young people who had been supported by Centrepont. The Order's support was acknowledged.



I was unable to participate in the 2018 sleepout but did participate on the 14th November 2019 and raised in excess of £500 thanks to donations from members of the Order, family and friends.

Denise Muncaster (No2 Montgomery Company Commander)

14/6/2020