

Could you use your parenting experience to help support a local family?

With the new school year now upon us, thousands of parents across Greater Manchester will be waving goodbye at the school gates for the very first time.

Over the years many of our volunteers have told us that this can be an emotionally difficult time for them- they have hours to fill until the end of the school day and they miss having small children at home.

Whilst we understand that many parents whose children have started school will return to work, there are also many others who are left at home with time on their hands. Just giving up three hours per week, can change a family's future, it can improve the life chances of local children and it can help to build stronger communities. Not only that, but volunteering for Home-Start is hugely beneficial for our volunteers too. Don't just take our word for it, read what one of our existing Home-Start volunteers says.

Sally- Ann said: "I know that I am fortunate in that I didn't have to work when my son started school, but this did mean that I felt like a spare part from 9am- to the end of the school day. There's only so much housework and shopping you can do! I missed that little person running around and the energy in the house.

My friend told me about Home-Start and thought I'd be ideal as she knew how much I loved small children. The training was fantastic, even though I was already a parent, the training course for Home-Start goes through many different things, such as safeguarding. I learnt so much.

My first family I visited after I dropped my son off for school, just three hours once a week. Over time, the mum I supported told me how much of a difference I was making and how much she looked forward to me coming. I was chuffed! Home-Start volunteering feels like such an achievement, I can honestly say I get just as much out of it as the families do.

My Home-Start journey began 7 years ago, that little boy of mine who I dropped off for his first day at school is now about to start secondary school! In that time I have supported four families- my first mum who was new to the area, a family of multiple births, a young mum and a family where the dad had a disability. Every family is different, every time you knock on their front door- you learn something new, not just about them, but about yourself too.

Any parent- mum or dad, whose own children have just begun school, please consider volunteer for this amazing charity."

There are six Home-Starts working in communities right across Greater Manchester. Each Home-Start runs training courses across the year. To find out more about the charity or to volunteer, please visit www.gmhomestarts.org.uk

