

News release

PR 549

24 April 2007

For Immediate Release

Town Hall, Reigate, Surrey RH2 0SH
Direct tel: 01737 276015/016
www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk

MAYOR AWARDS BOROUGH'S VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers from around the Borough were recognised for their valuable contribution to the community at a special awards ceremony at the Town Hall on Wednesday night (18 April 2007) when the Mayor, Cllr David Pay, announced the winners of this year's Mayor's Community Awards.

Two volunteers received the top award for 'Outstanding Contribution to Voluntary Service in the Local Community'. Margaret Kercher, aged 80, who lives in, Banstead, was honoured for her life-long commitment and dedication to young people in the Borough through her volunteer work with 7th Banstead Scout Group. Eileen Wood from Reigate was rewarded for her valued work with Reigate Priory Museum, which has benefitted schools and the wider local community.

Margaret began volunteering at 7th Banstead Scout Group in 1947 to 'help out for a couple of weeks'. She continued helping on a weekly basis and in 1966 became Cub Scout Leader. In spite of moving away, first to Edenbridge in Kent, then to Wallington, working full-time and bringing up two children of her own, Margaret rarely missed a weekly meeting. In 1991, after 25 years as Cub Scout Leader, Margaret returned to being Skills Instructor, and then in 1998, she took on the role of Group Treasurer. Margaret is still helping out today, having spent almost 60 years guiding and helping the many young people who have passed through the Scout group.

Eileen has worked voluntarily at Reigate Priory Museum for 20 years, becoming its Curator 12 years ago. She organises exhibitions and has coped with the rigorous demands of the Museums and Galleries Registration. Eileen has built up a support team of at least 50 helpers who staff the museum, help to create and construct the exhibitions and maintain and conserve the museum's extensive collection. The registration of the museum

and the practical support she provided during the restoration of the murals and staircase in Reigate Priory are amongst her many notable achievements.

The Mayor said: "During my year as Mayor I have been constantly reminded of the tremendous work done by volunteers. One person giving a few hours of their time every week can make a huge difference. It is impossible to measure the enormous contribution they make to the Borough's residents.

"I extend my congratulations to all the very deserving award winners and my sincere appreciation to them all. These awards celebrate not only the winners but the whole field of Voluntary Service and I would like to whole-heartedly thank the all the Borough's volunteers who give so much of their time to the selfless service of others."

'Team Awards' went to the many volunteer drivers and escorts of Age Concern Merstham, Redhill & Reigate for their dedication, time and commitment to voluntary service in the local community. The service has been operating for 32 years and many of the drivers and escorts have volunteered for a number of years. Jean Drew, Linda Bradburn and Val Brookhouse of Reigate and Banstead Council for Voluntary Service also received a team award for their hard work and commitment - the dedicated trio have assisted the work of the CVS for the past ten years.

Fifteen awards were made to individual volunteers for their 'Dedication and Commitment to Voluntary Service in the Local Community':

- Vera Clarke and Mary Thain, both aged 84 and from Banstead, were rewarded for their long service, over the last 25 years and 32 years respectively, with Age Concern Banstead.
- Alice Brookfield volunteered for East Surrey Hospital Voluntary Services, working on the hospital's busy information desk for 14 years. Sadly, Alice died a few weeks ago, aged 89, and her daughter, Ann Sumpter, received Alice's award.
- Barbara Fuller, Elsie Cordery, Joan Burton and Gladys Hebden, who all live in Merstham, were nominated by Age Concern Merstham, Redhill & Reigate for their valued contribution to the local community.

- David Hodges from Burgh Heath has been volunteering at The Children's Trust, Tadworth for 22 years in various capacities, including as volunteer driver, trainer, fundraiser and public speaker.
- Freda Clark from Redhill was rewarded for her work with Furnistore, which she established in 1994.
- Ron Rogers received an award for his unstinting support to Reigate & Redhill Live at Home Scheme since its creation in 1997.
- Clare Franklin from Redhill was nominated by 9th Reigate Scout Group in Lower Kingswood. She originally joined as helper as teenager and has been Scout Leader for the last 30 years.
- Lois Hatt of Redhill has volunteered for 7th Reigate Scout Group for 18 years in various roles and since 2004 has been Group Scout Leader.
- Ray Connolly, who lives in Reigate, has run Reigate Priory Football Club since 1995, when he became Chairman. He referees matches, carries out repairs at the club, cleans and often runs the club's bar. Before running the club he was responsible for setting up the Under 11's team and running mini matches for younger age groups.
- Joyce Lloyd Malcolmson of Kingswood was nominated by the Parkinson's Disease Society for the leading role she plays in the Society's Sutton, Kingston and Epsom Branch, which covers the north of the borough to the M25. Joyce makes herself available seven days a week to offer advice to members.
- Tricia Hawkes from Horley was rewarded for 'going the extra mile' in the support she offers families as a volunteer for Home-Start.

The Mayor presented each of the award winners with a framed certificate in recognition of their valued contribution to the community and the winners of the Outstanding Contribution Award also received a crystal trophy.

The Mayor's Annual Community Awards scheme was introduced in 2004 by then Mayor, Philip Circus, to recognise the contribution made by volunteers and to celebrate the role of the voluntary sector in serving the Borough and its residents. The annual awards scheme is organised by Reigate & Banstead Borough Council in partnership with Reigate and Banstead Council for Voluntary Service (CVS).

Gareth Owen, Manager of Reigate and Banstead CVS, said: "The CVS was pleased to work in partnership with the Council once again on the Mayor's Community Awards scheme to recognise those people who make such a valuable contribution to the local community. The scheme helps to raise the profile of the work volunteers do and thank them for their time and commitment in helping others."

"I congratulate the award winners and thank them for their continued dedication to serving their community."

Nominations sent to the CVS were short-listed and the winners decided by an Awards Panel made up of the Mayor; Cllr Julian Ellacott, Executive Member for Partnership; past Mayor, Mrs Brewster; the Mayor's Chaplain, John Joseph and Janet Rimmer of Reigate and Banstead CVS. Winners of the Outstanding category were selected by the panel from entries in the other award categories.

ENDS

Photo captions:

1. Margaret Kercher received her award from the Mayor
2. The Mayor with the awards winners.

Notes for Editors

Further details on each of the winners and why they were nominated is attached.

For further information please contact Claire Lapping, Communications Officer on 01737 276016 or email claire.lapping@reigate-banstead.gov.uk