

Lenna Lou is a Social Action Volunteer with Team Westminster



Lenna volunteers with Team Westminster's Social Action Programme. Before volunteering, she was working in the financial sector, consulting and headhunting within the fields of Operations, Marketing and Business Development. However, after being made redundant from a FinTech firm (Financial Technology) she decided that she would volunteer her spare time in between looking for job opportunities, as this had been something that she had wanted to do for a while. This led her to contact Westminster Council about volunteering in the borough and was her way of giving back something to the community.

Lenna's first Social Action Volunteering Day involved helping to organise a party for the elderly residents of St John's Wood, where she played an active role in helping plan the entertainment for the event. The sing-a-longs, charades and cake made the day of some special residents who were celebrating their birthday! One lady, in particular, was celebrating her 95th!! Lenna thoroughly enjoyed her first Social Action day, saying how *"it was really fun meeting people from all backgrounds and a definite eye opener"*.

It wasn't long till Lenna caught the volunteering bug. Following her first Social Action Day, Lenna signed up to assist in organising a picnic in Regent's Park for a group of elderly residents, where she set up the picnic area, took photos during the day and helped tidy up after the event. Through organising the event, Lenna was able to use her skills in marketing to make it a truly memorable one for the local residents. One resident noted how *"It was lovely to have some wonderful company in such beautiful surroundings. I hadn't been to Regent's Park for years!"*

This was soon followed by another Social Action Event where Lenna was part of a group of volunteers, who spent the afternoon at the Danubius Hotel, with a group of senior citizens to provide advice and guidance on how they can make the most out of their mobile phones.

She even helped one of the elderly ladies send a text message to her daughter, who could not believe that the message was from her mum! Her mum was so proud that she could now text and keep in touch with her daughter easily.

Recently, Lenna was part of a group of volunteers who helped clean and spruce up some boats near Westminster Pier for a Children's Charity. The volunteers had done such a great job, that they were all taken on a speed boat ride down the River Thames, as a way of saying *thank you* to them for doing such a fabulous job.

Lenna believes that the flexibility and variety of the Social Action Programme have allowed her to fit in some volunteering around her lifestyle. During her volunteering experience, she enjoyed being able to utilise her skills and knowledge in marketing and operations for a good cause as well as connect with the Westminster community.

When asked if she would recommend volunteering, Lenna says:

“Definitely, Volunteering is fun and everyone should try it as there are hidden gems. We should get more institutions involved as this would provide a few hours away from mobile phones and computers which are a hard concept, but necessary to refresh the mind of employees, who may not necessarily be able to get away from the screen otherwise. As an individual, not only did I enjoy myself, but it was inspiring for me to know that I had contributed (no matter how big or small the matter was) and was a part of a community that helped to make that difference. I would definitely take this chance to encourage more people to volunteer. It is enjoyable, fun and it really does make a difference to the cause!”