

LEADING LIGHTS

Name: Kate Cliffe

Job title: Nightstop Co-ordinator,

Organisation: Stratford Council for Voluntary Service

A brief outline of the organisation: The YHP works with 16-25 year olds who are homeless or in housing need. We have an advice service, supported accommodation scheme, Nightstop scheme and a counselling service. It should be noted that a young person does not have to have a housing issue to access the counselling service.



Why do you do this work?

Nightstop provides safe emergency accommodation for young people in the homes of approved volunteers. I enjoy my job immensely; I am in the privileged position of being able to work with a number of extraordinary volunteers who are able to create a safe, warm and welcoming environment that enables vulnerable young people to have a good nights sleep whilst we are working with them towards a more permanent solution. It can be hard work, but it is incredibly rewarding!

If there was one thing you could change for the Sector, what would it be?

Stability I suppose. It's the age-old problem of funding..

What has been your proudest moment?

I am proud of my volunteers every single time a young person returns to the project with a smile conveying their thanks saying what a nice time they had. I am also proud of the young people for trusting us; Nightstop can be a very intimidating and scary thought.

(On a non-work related prouddness – I was very proud of myself when I overheard some Spanish people talking about me and I realised that my Spanish was good enough for me to understand and put them straight! That gave them a shock!)

What was your greatest disappointment?

Hmm, I'm not sure. Life is full of little disappointments, especially if you have a tendency to build up expectation like I do, but I'm quite pragmatic when I want to be so we mustn't dwell on things hey?

What was the most useful mistake you've ever made and how was it useful?

Oh so many.. I hope I never stop making mistakes, or else I would stop learning wouldn't I?! I went skiing for the first time last year and got a bit over confident with my new found talent and decided to cut 'off-piste' through some woodland.. I was going very fast had no idea what was ahead and found myself faced with a huge drop. I landed on my head (ouch) and if I go skiing again I will try to contain my excitement and .. check out the route ahead.

What would your motto be?

Sorry I can't choose one –“An eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth, the whole world goes blind and hungry”. Treat everybody with the same respect as you would want to receive, “We are all in the gutter but some of us are looking at the stars”, Be strong and love with your whole heart... Perhaps I should add 'make decisions' to that list!

What is your favourite colour?

It depending on what mood I'm in – watch out for red and black days.

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