

connect

SPECIALIST CARE SERVICES PROVIDED IN YOUR HOME BY HELPING HANDS

www.helpinghands.co.uk

Holidays and breaks to boost wellbeing

Short breaks or longer holidays can be vital to the wellbeing of service users along with the respite they offer some personal carers and family members.

Our carers recently enabled Michael Borland to enjoy his first holiday since being in the care of Helping Hands.

Michael has profound learning disabilities, autism and Pica syndrome which requires a team of 10 carers to provide 24/7 support.

Even faced with the most challenging of people we support, our carers do their best to ensure they have as active and fulfilling a life as possible.

Senior carers Paul and Lee Smith recently took Michael on a three-week holiday to

Heckley Cottage, Alnwick in Northumberland. This was organised to coincide with work being done on his home in Cambois, near Blyth. Also helping during the break were support workers Ian Elliot and Paul Stocks (pictured).

During his holiday he visited Amble Links swimming baths, went on walks, sat in the garden enjoying the views and relaxing.

Our seniors and the rest of the team – who we think do an amazing job – are already planning the next holiday for Michael.

Easter weekend trip



Carers helped one of our elderly service users enjoy an Easter weekend trip to Scarborough for the first time since her childhood.

Carol Thorne, 69, suffers with epilepsy and lives alone, receiving home support from Helping Hands.

Her brother, Mason and CSO, Terry Craggs arranged the trip to Scarborough, as Carol wished to go back and relive her youth. Joined by care coordinator, Tracy Thornton, Carol had a lovely time staying at The Grand Hotel and enjoyed a tram ride to the seafront for fish and chips.

Carol said: "It reminded me of when I was a child and brought back happy memories."

Epic sponsored cycle ride



Congratulations to our very own Stephen Tyley, 73, who recently completed a two-week sponsored cycle ride from Land's End to John O'Groats, on the tip of Scotland.

Fifty years ago, this month, at the age of 23, Stephen completed a charity walk from John O'Groats to Land's End. That's 1,000 miles, much of it on main roads, which were much quieter in those days.

To celebrate this anniversary, and a lifetime of good health, he decided to cycle between the same two points in the opposite direction, this time using quiet country lanes as far as possible. The ride started in Cornwall on Sunday, June 2 – and was completed by the 15th. He's faced storms and lots of difficult weather conditions.

Stephen raised £850 for the Royal National Lifeboat Institution because he has family members involved as volunteers with the Lifeboats and Life Brigade at Cullercoats and Tynemouth.

Coastal walk for charity



Staff at Helping Hands have been busy helping with events for our chosen charity, Walk of Life.

The charity is managed by former Helping Hands manager, Sylvia McBrien and works at grassroot levels to support vulnerable and elderly people.

The most recent event was a sponsored Coastal Walk that took place early June, starting at Blyth's Coastline Car Park, onto the park near Fountain Head Bank and returning to Blyth. The event raised more than £220.

The walk has been held for the last five years and everyone had a great time singing as they went along, finishing with a well-deserved bag of chips.

Sylvia said: "These events have allowed usually socially isolated people to enjoy themselves. It really makes me feel like I'm doing something worthwhile, and I know the rest of the team feel the same way."

Walk of Life's other recent event was the Sound of the 60s singalong and coffee morning in May. Service users dressed up in 60s-style clothing with flowers in their hair and tie-dye wigs. The singalong and coffee morning raised £70 for the charity.

A special thanks goes to our staff members Kelly Sharpe, Sonya Pye and Christopher Albasom for getting involved with the events.

- Future events include: fishing trip to Fontburn (July 9); and a table top sale and coffee morning (Aug 21).

Blackpool farm trip



Bob Young enjoyed an annual trip to his favourite place – horse welfare centre Penny Far, Blackpool – thanks to the assistance of Helping Hands staff.

This year carers Jocelyn Lee and David Hall took Bob – who is wheelchair dependent after suffering a stroke - to the farm to see his adopted horse, Dalton.

Bob said: "I am really happy to be able to go to my favourite place once a year in Blackpool. I feel I wouldn't be able to do this if it wasn't for the great care from my Helping Hands staff."

To close the day, Jocelyn and David took Bob for some fish and chips before the journey home.

Home spruce-up



Homecare staff went the extra mile recently and undertook some painting and decorating in the home of service user Lesley Allen.

Support workers Marilyn Foreman and Linda Rochester gave up their free time to paper and paint her living room and kitchen with other support workers helping at her Cramlington home.

Lesley, 49, has seen her health decline in recent years due to Huntington's disease. Her mother and sister also had the disease. She is no longer able to go out socially and enjoy herself.

As Lesley spends much of her time in her living room, sleeping there as well, it was decided to give it a complete makeover.

Developing skills to help others



Long-time service user, Kirsty Trimming has completed her Diploma in Health social care Level 2 qualification at Ashington College with vital help from Helping Hands carers.

Our carers provide Kirsty with necessary support with daily living skills that have helped her to complete her qualification. She uses her own experiences with autism to help others and volunteers as an ambassador for Autism Northumberland, in Cramlington.

Birthday celebration

Care support officer Hilary Graham, who works out of our Specialist Care Services office in Cramlington, recently celebrated her 70th birthday.

Hilary has been working with Helping Hands for an incredible 18 years. Staff at Helping Hands arranged a surprise meal at The Hasting's Arms to mark the occasion.