

Charlie Miller, aged 23, has been a volunteer Health Walk Leader at the Botanic Gardens for a year. 'In 2021 I had just changed jobs and had more free time. I have always loved volunteering with children but wanted to get involved with the older generations, so the health walks seemed like the perfect way to do so! The walk is so close to me I really had no excuse.

I'm always guaranteed to smile when I'm out with my walking group. No matter how I'm feeling, when I arrive at the Botanic Gardens and am greeted by familiar, friendly faces it's a sure way to cheer me up. Every week I look forward to getting to chat and catch up with how everyone is doing. It's a fantastic social opportunity not just for the walkers but walk leaders too. Now that I'm back at college again having the walk is a great way to get out of the house into the fresh air and moving.

I just love getting to chat with the walkers, I have found all their stories to be so inspiring. Their energy, enthusiasm and joy is such a pleasure to experience. The walkers are a huge source of motivation to me and are living evidence that age is just a number.

The walkers benefit too. They gain so much confidence, not just within the group but in themselves also. It's so wonderful to hear stories from walkers about how they are making healthy lifestyle changes or are feeling better as a result of the health walks.'



What advice would you give to others looking to volunteer with the Health Walks?

'Absolutely go for it! You won't regret it.'

How would you use to sum up your experience so far?

"There's no other way I'd rather spend my spare time between studying."

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