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**Volunteers Week 2020: Hundreds of organisations join forces to say ‘thank you’ to their fantastic volunteers**

Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA) is part of a collaborative action of organisations championing a united response for Volunteers’ Week 1-7 June. This week, charities across the UK are coming together to say a massive *thank you* to all volunteers.

Volunteers have played a vital role throughout this year, especially helping the nation through the current pandemic. They will go on to play a role in helping us to get back to the things that we love as we ease out of lockdown. By joining forces in Volunteers Week 2020, we are aiming to increase visibility of the vital efforts that all volunteers have made this year.

Throughout the week organisations across the UK will be showcasing the amazing contribution volunteers have made. Although all RDA groups around the UK are closed during lockdown, volunteers are continuing to contribute a huge amount to their communities – keeping in touch with their clients, families and school groups, and looking after the horses.

At xxxxxx RDA, volunteers have been working hard to ensure the group is ready for clients when the time is right to open again.

(*Insert quote from volunteer or group representative, explaining what volunteers have been doing and the impact it has*).

Head of Communications & Insight at RDA UK, Caroline Ward said: “RDA groups play a vital role in communities all over the UK, and that hasn’t stopped during lockdown. We know that the support our volunteers have been giving to their clients and their families is making a huge difference, and of course, the care of our horses must continue. Volunteers Week is a time to recognise that support. But we will also be taking time to recognise and think about those volunteers who are self-isolating, and facing their own challenges during this difficult time.”

Volunteer recognition will continue throughout the week, with particular focus on different themes each day:

* Monday - Listening & Support
* Tuesday - Health & Well-being
* Wednesday - Fundraising to support service delivery
* Thursday - COVID-19 response and informal community civic action
* Friday - Nature & the Outdoors
* Saturday - Arts & Culture
* Sunday - Sport & Leisure

**Ends.**

Notes for the Editor:

**About RDA**

Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA) is dedicated to improving the lives of people with disabilities through horse riding and carriage driving. Through a network of around 500 volunteer groups throughout the UK, RDA provides opportunities for therapy, achievement and enjoyment, improving health, wellbeing and self-confidence, and benefiting mobility and co-ordination.

* RDA brings together 500 volunteer groups throughout the UK
* More than 25,000 adults and children enjoy the benefits of riding or carriage driving
* Each year more than 18,000 dedicated volunteers give a total of more than 3.5 million hours of their time

RDA is reliant on voluntary help, donations and legacies to deliver its services. Please donate now at www.rda.org.uk

RDA is a charity registered in England and Wales (No: 244108) and Scotland (No: SC039473).

**About Volunteers Week 2020**

* Volunteers Week is a yearly national week taking place 1-7 June. It is a chance to celebrate and say thank you for the contribution millions of volunteers make across the UK.
* Volunteer Scotland, WCVA and Volunteer Now in NI coordinate Volunteers Week in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.
* In England, there is a strong movement of over 80 organisations, led by a group of volunteers, who are getting behind a collaborative effort to champion the importance of Volunteers Week in England.
* We believe in the current time it is even more important to recognise, reach out to and connect together volunteers to share their good news stories.
* It is a strange time for volunteering. There is a mixture of those who feel isolated as they can’t do their usual roles due to the crisis, as well as volunteers who are doing many more hours in frontline roles. There are millions of people who have volunteered to help out, whether informally in their community or as part of organised initiatives, such as the NHS volunteer responders. We also want to thank and remember those volunteers who have lost their lives due to COVID-19.
* Volunteers will also be essential as we come out of the pandemic and people start to re-engage back into their lives, potentially with very different priorities.
* For these reasons, RDA will be coming together with others, to recognise this collective moment in the time. We want to thank and connect volunteers, who are so crucial both now and for our ability to respond as we gradually recover.
* Volunteers Week 2020 will include organisations and individuals joining in thanking volunteers by using the Wave of Appreciation, begun in Volunteers Week Australia in May.
* The #WaveForVolunteers social media campaign will encouraging as many as possible to take a photo of themselves saying thank you to volunteers
* Volunteers Week 2020 connects closely with the #NeverMoreNeeded campaign launched to help the public understand the importance of charities to the national effort to manage the coronavirus pandemic. The #NeverMoreNeeded campaign has been set up to make sure charities’ voices are heard and raise awareness of the work they are doing to help the country come through the crisis and recover. The campaign is phase two of the #EveryDayCounts campaign, which called on the government to provide an emergency financial support package for charities
* For more details on the volunteer-led collective effort for Volunteers Week in England, contact Tiger de Souza on *07920 246638 or tiger.desouza@nationaltrust.org.uk*