

# Is one of your New Year's resolutions to do more volunteering?



Dot Dot Dot is a social enterprise that places people who do great volunteering in otherwise empty buildings. We exist to deliver flexible, reliable, low-cost security and to provide inexpensive housing to people who give their time to good causes.

We believe passionately in the importance of volunteering. Without volunteers, many charities doing crucial work simply couldn't function. We are humbled by the efforts our guardians make to help those who need it, we know they learn new skills and gain fresh insights from doing so, and we are proud to support them to do more.

During 2014, our guardians have given more than **18,000 hours of voluntary work**, helping nearly 100 organisations. We want to share some of the causes and charities they contribute to, so we've highlighted a different idea for making a difference for every month of the year. We hope this provides a bit of inspiration for everyone thinking of getting involved in a new project for the new year!

But what about us? Well – one of our New Year's resolutions is enable over 25,000 hours of volunteering next year by housing more great guardians in properties across the country.

We'll be filling properties in Hillingdon (HA4), Thamesmead (SE2) and Ealing (W7) early in 2015 – so please get in touch if you, or someone you know, might be interested in being a Dot Dot Dot property guardian, especially in these areas.

[hello@dotdotdotproperty.com](mailto:hello@dotdotdotproperty.com)

**Dot Dot Dot**  
Property Guardians



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## Young People



The Hackney Pirates develop the literacy, confidence and perseverance of young people in Hackney. Young Pirates come to the Ship of Adventures after school – a weird and wonderful out-of-school learning environment complete with secret passageways, an underwater cave and a ship's cat.

A number of our guardians provide one-to-one literacy support to the young pirates. [hackneypirates.org](http://hackneypirates.org)

You might also like:

Kids Company - [kidsco.org.uk/volunteer](http://kidsco.org.uk/volunteer)

Ministry of Stories - [ministryofstories.org/volunteer](http://ministryofstories.org/volunteer)

## 2

### Better communities

Last year guardian Katie spent over 100 hours volunteering for **Counterpoint Arts** – a charity that works to promote the inclusion and cultural integration of migrants.

[counterpointarts.org.uk](http://counterpointarts.org.uk)

Other **community focussed organisations** our guardians have worked with include:

**19 Princelet Street**, Europe's first museum of immigration and diversity.

[19princeletstreet.org.uk](http://19princeletstreet.org.uk)

**The New Londoners**, a digital magazine aiming to bring down some of the barriers between migrants and refugees and host communities. [thenewlondoners.co.uk](http://thenewlondoners.co.uk)

## 3

### Food

**FoodCycle** is a UK charity which uses food that would otherwise be wasted to create delicious, healthy and inexpensive meals for those who need them. Guardians Andrew and Clare say “we love it because you get to meet lots of people, both diners and other great volunteers”.

[foodcycle.org.uk](http://foodcycle.org.uk)

You might have **a taste** for:

Founded in 1985 as a soup kitchen, **The People's Kitchen** now offers a range of services all with food and friendship at their heart during the evenings and weekends.

[peopleskitchen.co.uk/get-involved](http://peopleskitchen.co.uk/get-involved)

### Guardian Case Study

The Prime Minister named guardian H el ene-Marie one of the country's outstanding volunteers by awarding her a **Points of Light** prize in 2014.

H el ene volunteers with **19 Princelet Street** and she also helps at **The Arbour**, a community centre in Tower Hamlets, as a Social Inclusion Mentor.

She helped set up a new initiative called **LondonSOUP** a community dinner and micro-funding project which aims to bring Londoners together to share a meal and raise funds for small, community-led projects in and for the city.



## 4

### Health and fitness

**GoodGym** helps you get fit by doing good, connecting you with physical tasks that benefit your community and keep you fit. Guardian Becky regularly runs with GoodGym saying “Through volunteering I have found out about the vast networks of community projects that are making real noticeable changes to the lives of individuals.” [goodgym.org](http://goodgym.org)

More ideas for **doing good and getting fit**:

Dot Dot Dot Guardian Grace has been running regular exercise classes for the local community. Grace says “thanks to Dot Dot I have been able to offer Zumba and 80s aerobics fitness classes in the local community – I would never be able to do this if I was paying the price of normal London rent.”



Creating an **edible community garden**. Our guardians jointly devised an ‘Edible Estate’ in the area where they were living – building relationships (and gardens) within the community.

## 5

### Social Isolation

One of our longest standing guardians set up **Furry Tales** - a project aimed at ending isolation improving the well-being of older people – via small animals. Care homes can be lonely places so what Furry Tales does is bring small animals like guinea pigs and bantam chickens into care homes so that the residents can touch and interact with them. [furry-tales.org.uk](http://furry-tales.org.uk)

Other places **combatting loneliness**:

Intergenerational charity MagicMe runs regular **Cocktails in Carehomes** evenings. [volunteering@magicme.co.uk](mailto:volunteering@magicme.co.uk)

Our Guardian Matt is one of the founding team behind **SpeakSet**, offering simple remote consultations that connect older people to their family, carers and doctors. [speakset.com](http://speakset.com)

## 6

### Being green

**The Canal and River Trust** cares for 2000 miles of waterways in England and Wales. This year guardians gave over well over 150 hours' time fishing out rubbish, collecting litter and replanting waterside habitats. [canalrivertrust.org.uk/volunteering](http://canalrivertrust.org.uk/volunteering)

Our **green-fingered** guardians have also worked with:

**The Conservation Volunteers** - who have been reclaiming green places since 1959. [tcv.org.uk](http://tcv.org.uk)

Many of our guardians have got involved with **local city farms**, dealing with everything from general maintenance of the farms, planning events through to donkey walking. [farmgarden.org.uk](http://farmgarden.org.uk)



## 7

### Homelessness

Our guardians have worked with many different organisations working to combat homelessness. **Whitechapel Mission** was helped by Chris and Michelle, who spent over 100 hours between them advising homeless people on housing options.

Guardians also worked with **Acton Homeless Concern Centre** preparing and serving anything up to 160 meals each four hour shift.

Guardians also worked with **Thames Reach Outreach** who run the London Street Rescue service.

## 8

### History

Guardian Anne volunteered with **Ancestry**, a history resource, on their World Archive Project, translating old documents to create a better understanding of the Holocaust. [community.ancestry.co.uk/awap](http://community.ancestry.co.uk/awap)

Felicity has created an oral history of the **Balfour Tower** where she lives as a guardian – interviewing residents and staff, as well as holding an event where the history and future of the tower were discussed.



## Guardian Case Study

Tom, a landscape architect, volunteers at **Architecture for Humanity**, a non-profit organisation that provides architecture, planning and project management services to engage communities.

Tom's been helping make a video to promote the charity, and recently worked on 'Bounceway', a sustainable transport project to tackle commuting issues in a creative way.



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## Better buildings

**Architecture for Humanity** is a volunteer non-profit organisation set up to promote architecture and design to seek solutions to global social and humanitarian crisis. [architectureforhumanity.org](http://architectureforhumanity.org)

Also **improving our use of space:**

The **Vacant Lot** programme transforms neglected and unused spaces on inner city housing estates into environments that now provide neighbourhoods with the most basic of requirements: outside space, a place to grow food and a place to socialise.

[what-if.info](http://what-if.info)

# 10

## Social Action

**Envision** engages young people in social action that develops themselves whilst benefiting others. Guardian Renee mentored a group of young people to set up 'movie munch', a regular evening where they could learn to cook healthy food and watch a movie. [envision.org.uk](http://envision.org.uk)

Guardians Emma and Jess set up **Inter-Voice** through the UpRising Leadership programme, training young community interpreters in east London. [twitter.com/inter\\_voice](https://twitter.com/inter_voice)

# 12

## Arts

Jonas and Alex work with **Body and Soul**, a charity for young people and families living with and affected by HIV, delivering music workshops with young people to create their own pieces of music or spoken word. [bodyandsoulcharity.org](http://bodyandsoulcharity.org)

A number of our guardians sing with the all-woman choir **Electric Belles**. [electricbelles.tumblr.com](http://electricbelles.tumblr.com)

# 11

## Wellbeing

**Body Gossip** campaigns through education and the arts to empower everybody, and to encourage everyone to be the best version of themselves – with a self-esteem programme that has reached over 30,000 UK teenagers. Dot Dot Dot guardians were instrumental in getting their new Canvas Cafe space off the ground. [bodygossip.org](http://bodygossip.org)

Many of our guardians volunteer with their local branches of **Mind** and **The Samaritans** – providing telephone and administrative support.

**Want more?** Every Friday we publish a new list of volunteering opportunities. Take a look at our website or [sign up to our mailing list](#) to stay up to date on what we, our guardians and everyone we work with is up to.

Placing people who do great volunteering to live in empty properties – helping landlords and strengthening communities.