

Volunteer case study: Sally Fergus

Time is one of the most precious commodities in our lives. So given the theme of this year's National Volunteer Week is "make time", why not dedicate some of your valuable time to helping others?

If you make up part of the 60% of people who say they "don't have time" to volunteer, it's important you read on.

Kiwi volunteer Sally Fergus worked full time and volunteered at the same time in so many roles it boggles the mind.

Sally started volunteering thanks to her time in Toastmasters, an international not-for-profit educational organisation which taught her how to run meetings, organise people and administrate. The list of organisations that have benefitted from her skills includes: Surf Lifesaving New Zealand, [Multiple Sclerosis NZ](#), The Salvation Army, Plunket, [Victim Support](#) and the [Red Cross](#). She even stepped in to make a Police Ball fundraiser more successful and was asked to chair a Hutt City Council ward committee at one point.

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To ensure that belief is sustained, and realised, you need to find ways to make time, says Sally. You can make more time by:

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- Stepping back
- Listing everything you do during a typical week
- Prioritising by putting it all in order according to importance
- Looking for distractions you can cut out, delegate or outsource
- Creating a realistic schedule for your day, week, or month and sticking to it

The research also revealed that 12% of Kiwis "don't know how to get involved" in volunteering, and 10% believe they "don't have anything to offer".

But these concerns are easy to solve, says Sally. Ask the charities what you can do for them. Sometimes you just need to be the smiling face in the street collecting money.

Whatever your situation there's a volunteer opportunity to suit everyone on [SEEK Volunteer](#). There may be causes you've never thought of that could really value from your time or skills. Or try one-off events. Sally once got to see Tiger Woods play golf thanks to volunteering.

The top three motivations for volunteering in New Zealand are: "I want to make a difference" (56%), "Personal connection to the cause" (50%) and "Passionate to the cause" (48%).

Sally was so passionate about volunteering that her skills followed her around the country as she moved from the Hutt Valley to New Plymouth and back again. Her favourite charities are the Waikanae Estuary Care Group, and anything to do with neurological disorders, due to her own diagnosis with epilepsy.

Volunteering can really benefit your career by helping you build skills or transition to a new industry. What's more, employers are impressed by people who give to others.

The survey found that just over one in three Kiwis (37%) stated that "gaining valuable skills and experience" was a motivator for volunteering.

Career-based motivations are stronger for the 18 to 24 year old age group with 55% (versus 37% for the population as a whole) volunteering for this reason. Also 33% (versus 15% total) of the younger group said they would volunteer if they knew it would help their career.

And finally, giving back makes you feel good, says Sally. "I am satisfied knowing I have helped someone else."

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