



# Wicklow Volunteer Centre

Ionad d'Obair Dheonach Cill Mhantáin

## National Volunteering Week

18th–24th May

From Every Corner, For Every Cause



National  
Volunteering  
Week

#NVWIRELAND



**Wicklow  
Volunteer Centre**

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National Volunteering Week is a weeklong celebration of volunteering! Each year across Ireland, National Volunteering Week includes a range of events, stories and videos that showcase all that is great about volunteering.

**The theme for National Volunteering Week 2026 is  
'From Every Corner, For Every Cause.'**

Keep an eye on our social media feed this week for stories from volunteers in Wicklow.

Whether you're a volunteer or an organisation, there are lots of ways you can **get involved** and celebrate during National Volunteering Week.

#VolunteerWicklow #NVWIRELAND #NVW2026



INTERNATIONAL  
VOLUNTEER  
YEAR 2026



## **Volunteering gave Beatrice a sense of fulfilment & an opportunity to give back ....**

I was involved in teaching English to non-nationals up to quite recently. I taught with Failte Isteach, both in Kilcoole, Wicklow and Greystones. There I met many interesting people from all walks of life and from many countries, and this experience enriched my own life immensely.

I also felt a huge sense of fulfilment helping and guiding people who had just arrived in this country and who had lots of difficulties adjusting to life in a strange country, with a different culture and language to their own. Many came from difficult situations in their own countries, from a political or financial aspect.

The other volunteering role, which I am involved with at present, is helping out with people with dementia, at Musical Memories, weekly in Greystones. I sing in a choral society in Bray and have been singing (solo) for the group, and this has given enormous pleasure to those present. I sing a lot of the older songs with which those present are familiar, and this brings them back to a sweeter time in their own lives. My late husband had Alzheimers disease, and I am giving back to this group who were very helpful to me in the past.

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**Today, we hear from Brian White, who tells us about his many years spent as a volunteer...**

I began as a volunteer with the Bray Camera Club in 1970. This was followed by a Cub Scout leader for 5th Wicklow until 1985.

From 1977, I have been an active member of the Bray Cualann Historical Society and have served in the roles of secretary, treasurer and chairperson.

In the early 2000's, I managed my son's football team for 3 years.

In 2025, I was presented with a lifetime achievement award by the Bray Chamber of Commerce.

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### **Liz would absolutely encourage others to volunteer ...**

For the past eight years, volunteering has been a very important part of my life. Through fundraising, raising awareness, and welcoming clients, I've had the chance to connect with many people in the local Bray community. Over the years, people often stop me in the street to talk about Purple House Cancer Support, offer donations, or thank me for helping raise awareness, which has been incredibly rewarding.

Volunteering has made me more aware of others' kindness and generosity and given me a real sense of purpose. I've built strong friendships with both the team and clients here, and it has brought me much closer to the Bray community. Local businesses have also been hugely generous and supportive of Purple House Cancer Support, which shows how much the community cares.

I would absolutely encourage others to volunteer, as it's an experience that not only helps others but also enriches your own life.

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**Niamh tells us how volunteering has given her a sense of purpose, a sense of pride & makes her smile!**

I started volunteering in July 2025 with a local youth group, as I wanted to give back to my community and find something to fill the summer evenings in a productive way. Knowing that I was providing a service and a space for young people to hang out, be themselves and relax was a wonderful feeling, as I remembered how difficult it was being a young person, with nowhere to go, nothing to do, and just being generally bored.

My circumstances changed, but through the Wicklow Volunteer team, I was able to find another volunteer role that suited my needs. As of now, I volunteer with the "Cards of Care" for Nursing Homes in Louth. It's a wonderful initiative where you can write cards for those who are residing in nursing homes, mainly for their birthday. It's a fantastic way to give my time, whilst also fitting it into a busy schedule. I also took part in the Christmas Tree of Care, where I was assigned someone for whom I was able to buy a small gift.

It had given me a sense of purpose, a sense of pride and makes me smile that one small gesture can make a person's day or allow them a space to be themselves.

I urge anyone to volunteer. There are so many roles that suit different skill types, abilities, timeframes, etc. You never know what you'll find unless you start looking!

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### **Pat has encouraged friends & family to volunteer & still meets up with past students ...**

I have been volunteering now for over 4 years with Failte Isteach, and I have been teaching conversational English 3 times per week since day one. I have taught groups of all abilities, from beginners (who have no English) to advanced students.

Initially, I got involved to help Ukrainians, as being Irish, I have lots of empathy for them, but over the past number of years, I have had lots of different nationalities in my various groups - French, German, Italian, Turkish, Spanish, Afghan, Africans, Georgians, Syrians and obviously Ukrainians.

Timing is everything in life, and volunteering with Failte Isteach coincided with my early retirement.

I do a lot of other volunteering, but volunteering with Failte Isteach is certainly very different to anything else I have ever done in the past. I have found it to be very rewarding, and I get lots of enjoyment out of it.

It's great to be able to help people who need help and appreciate your efforts. I have met some amazing people, volunteers and students, and have learned a lot from other people's cultures and experiences.

A lot of my earlier students have managed to learn sufficient English to get employment in Ireland, so they have moved on with their lives, which is positive.

As a result of volunteering with Failte Isteach, I have made lots of new friends, and I have managed to enlist a few other volunteers along the way! I have also managed to get siblings to volunteer in other parts of the country.

I still keep in contact with some of my earlier students, and we meet up now and then for a coffee and a catch-up.

### **Liz would absolutely encourage others to volunteer ...**

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**From Every Corner, For Every Cause**



### **Gillian's family loves to volunteer with her when they can ....**

When I first joined Bray Coast Care, I was still working alternate Saturdays so I could only turn up very occasionally. Since my retirement, nearly 12 years ago, I have had time to be a more regular helper on the project.

The Saturday clean-up covers the Bray side of Bray Head, including the area of the old Cove baths. An area is assigned to each person or group, along with a litter picker and a large rubbish bag.

It is a very good way to become more familiar with the different areas of the Head, which is a lovely hill with great views of the sea and the town. It makes for a pleasant walk with a purpose, and there is great satisfaction in cleaning up such an attractive and important area.

The volunteers are a diverse and interesting group. It has been fun meeting and working with a variety of local people, both long-term residents and many newcomers to the town. The joint efforts of the excellent organisers and the helpers working together as a team create a very effective community project.

My family join me when they can, though their lives are very busy. It is good for the children to help out on such a useful project, and they enjoy the feeling of a job well done.

Altogether, it is a very worthwhile effort which is much appreciated by other hill walkers, keeping the lovely area clean for everybody's

enjoyment, as well as safer for the wildlife of the Head. There is great satisfaction in feeling that such an important area is being well cared for by the local community of volunteers.

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### **Marie's friend joined the volunteering team after hearing about her experience ...**

Spending the last ten years volunteering in the Purple House charity shop has been an incredibly enjoyable experience for me.

From serving customers to sorting and putting out fresh clothes, I've always enjoyed being part of the busy, welcoming atmosphere. One of the most important parts of the role has simply been being there to listen, offering a friendly face and a listening ear to people who need it.

Volunteering has given me a real sense of purpose, and even after moving further away, I still love coming into Bray two days a week because of the people and friendships I've built over the years. Through both my volunteering and my family's connection as service users, I've developed a much deeper understanding of the community and the support Purple House provides.

I would absolutely encourage others to volunteer. In fact, one of my friends has already joined the team in the shop after hearing about my experience.

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**Volunteering is a great way to meet people, today we hear from Rachel ....**

I moved to Ireland in the summer and was looking for ways to meet new people and get involved in the community.

I saw the Irish Girl Guides Ladybird Leader volunteering opportunity online and applied. I've now been volunteering there every Monday for about 3 months. It's been so lovely to have a weekly group to meet up with. The other volunteers were so welcoming and kind, and I look forward to organising craft activities for the girls.

It brings me a lot of joy to be part of the group, and I am amazed by how easy it was to get involved. Monday provides a real pocket of joy, and I am so glad for it!

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### **Caterina suggests we 'Tell a Friend & Bring a Friend'....**

We arrived in Ireland in December 2023 and were accommodated in a hotel in Wicklow Town. In February 2024, Wicklow Volunteer Centre staff members visited us at the hotel and told us about volunteering opportunities in Co Wicklow. We find two areas of interest for us: Tidy Towns and Community Volunteering at local events.

My friend Svitlana and I decided to try volunteering at large events, and we quickly became passionate about it. It was very interesting to learn about Irish culture and traditions through different community events.

One day, I became ill and could not attend an event, so I asked a woman from our room to replace me so that I would not let the Community Volunteers team down. My roommate came back delighted, told her friend about the experience, and that is how we became four active volunteers from our hotel.

Later, while meeting people in Dublin or during English language classes in Wicklow Town, we shared our positive experiences of volunteering, and many of our friends became interested in getting involved as well. We always explained that it is not necessary to speak perfect English; people are very supportive and always ready to help and explain things. Wicklow

Volunteer Centre even provides information materials in Ukrainian, and the website allows you to choose the language in which you would like to read information about events.

Today, there are four active Ukrainian volunteers from our hotel, then another three volunteers from Rathdrum joined us, and one from Wicklow Town, making eight of us in total!

I believe that volunteering opens the door not only to Irish culture and traditions but also to meeting new friends.

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***Thank you to the amazing  
volunteers who shared their  
stories with us during  
National Volunteering Week  
2026***





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### And that's a wrap - what an incredible week it's been!

We've shared so many inspiring stories from volunteers this week, offering just a glimpse of the amazing impact happening across Wicklow right now. We came together to celebrate with conservation & gardening volunteers in the stunning surroundings of Russborough House, creating truly special moments.

We also had the pleasure of recognising our fantastic volunteer Board of Management, thanking them for their unwavering dedication & support over a well-earned lunch. And across the county, it was inspiring to see groups & organisations embrace the spirit of **'From Every Corner, For Every Cause'**, showcasing the energy, passion, & communities that make Wicklow special.

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