



## **The EC Roberts Centre**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
PRESS RELEASE

### **HUGELY BENEFICIAL VOLUNTEER PROGRAMME AT LOCAL CHARITY**

For over 20 years a wide variety of people have been volunteering at inner-city Portsmouth Charity The Roberts Centre. Those who have volunteered report many benefits including gaining confidence and making friends.

The Roberts Centre plays a crucial role in Portsmouth and the surrounding area in helping families and children in difficult circumstances, by addressing their situation of homelessness or dealing with tenancy, anti-social behaviour issues and relationship breakdown. The Roberts Centre provides a number of services, including the Family Intervention Project, Family Tenancy Support, Supported Housing Service, Temporary Accommodation Service and the Holiday Playscheme; but the majority of volunteers at the Centre will be involved in the Nursery and Contact Centre.

Supported Contact runs sessions every Saturday. The Contact Centre provides a comfortable, warm and safe meeting place with a friendly atmosphere in which children can enjoy seeing one or both parents or other family members. Jade Cook, a Contact Centre volunteer since 2011, says she finds the volunteering experience 'very rewarding and enjoyable'. Frances Thompson who has been volunteering for 5 years, says 'it is a joy to watch the relationships between child and parent develop. It is a privilege to be involved'.

Volunteers receive an induction and ongoing training with the Centre's aim of giving all participants a positive volunteering experience. Volunteers at The Roberts Centre come from a wide range of backgrounds - from University students to those wishing to gain experience to help get back into paid employment, to those who have retired who still desire to use skills gained in other professions and backgrounds to benefit the service users at the Centre. In fact our volunteers age from 18 to 80 years old!

As well as Nursery and Contact Centre volunteers, there are bank volunteers who carry out a range of one-off tasks throughout the year. One bank volunteers states 'I've known about the centre for several years. Last Autumn I found myself unemployed but looking for work. The Centre offered me the chance to do small projects – including sorting out harvest festival donations and packing Christmas hampers. Even though I wasn't in direct contact with clients, I had a sense that the

little I could offer was going to help people. It was really satisfying to be able to help out, and the staff made me feel very welcome as part of the team. It was a great experience!

Susan Mwembe\* says 'having lived in care for 2 years I understand the importance of family and positive childhood memories in shaping a person. As a full time student I am unable to donate financially but I contribute my time by assisting the Centre in administrative tasks which is helping me gain valuable experience in the work place as well as putting something back into the local community'.

Volunteers, from all backgrounds, are currently needed in our Ofsted registered Nursery (Monday to Friday) and the Contact Centre (Saturdays). The Roberts Centre values their volunteers highly and the recruitment of volunteers is a key focus so if you have the time to put something back into the community please get in touch. If you would like more information about volunteering at The Roberts Centre, please contact: Caroline Stone (HR Manager): The Roberts Centre, 84 Crasswell Street, Portsmouth, PO1 1HT, 02392 296919 or email [HumanResources@robertscentre.org.uk](mailto:HumanResources@robertscentre.org.uk) / [www.robertscentre.org.uk](http://www.robertscentre.org.uk)

\*name changed to protect identity.

### **About The EC Roberts Centre:**

The EC Roberts Centre is a unique child focused Charity in Portsmouth with a range of services offering support and assistance to families in addressing their situation of homelessness or dealing with the issues of relationship breakdown.

Services offered include the Roberts Day Nursery and Child Contact Centre Services.

The EC Roberts Centre is a registered charity no: 1066611.

<http://www.robertscentre.org.uk/>

### **Contacts:**

Carole Damper, Chief Executive Tel: 023 9229 6919

Annarose Hearsom Tel: 023 92 29 6919.

Email [annarose.hearsom@robertscentre.org.uk](mailto:annarose.hearsom@robertscentre.org.uk)