Meet RNLI lifesaver Sam

Sam is a volunteer shop manager at the RNLI Montrose Shop – built into one of the oldest lifeboat stations in the UK, helping to save lives at sea since 1800.

Q. Why is volunteering with the RNLI important to you?
A. I feel like I’m giving something back. The lifeboats are close to me and my family anyway, as my brother-in-law is a fisherman. I know that if he ever needed it, it’d be the RNLI that would run to the rescue. Money raised at the shop helps crew members. Because our shop is built into the lifeboat station, you get to hear the shouts and see the equipment and training – the effort and time the volunteers give to saving lives at sea. So being able to do my part to help them means a lot to me.

‘Lifeboats are such a big part of our town, and being able to be part of this just gives me a feeling of great achievement.’
Q. What’s the best thing about being part of the RNLI shop volunteer crew?
A. The best thing about volunteering really is the people and the friendships you build with everybody who you work with. You know that they’re always going to be there, regardless of the issue. I think that’s because we’re all here for the same reason. We all have that bond and that brings us closer together as a community and as a team.

‘All that money in the end goes towards the crew members and goes towards saving everyone’s lives at sea.’

Q. Are there any bad bits?
A. The toughest part is getting volunteers. It would be better if we had more. But I don’t think people understand that you do only have to give maybe a couple of hours and it is completely flexible. I think the more people know it, the more volunteers will get involved as they are missing out on great friendships and brilliant memories that you get within the RNLI.

Q. How much time do you give?
A. Usually, it’s about 2 hours a week. It can vary though, depending on the month.

Q. How do you fit volunteering around your family life and other commitments?
A. I do find it easy to fit around my other commitments. As a manager, you don’t have to volunteer within the shop, but you have the option to. So on the days that I’m not doing my management role, I will come in and I’ll do a couple of hours physically in the shop. But a lot of my time is spent in the evenings on the laptop ordering stock and organising the volunteers’ rotas; I work with them so that they can volunteer as much or as little as they want.
**Q. What would you say to someone who says they don’t have time to volunteer?**

**A.** They may think they don’t have time, but even if you have 2 hours spare, it’s better than nothing. Two hours isn’t very much and you don’t have to do 2 hours every single week. Nobody is ever made to feel bad about not covering a shift. There’s no pressure, we all rally round together. But our shop can be open for an extra 2 hours that month, because you’re able to give us that time.

**Q. What have you gained practically from volunteering?**

**A.** Merchandising! I don’t get to do it at my paid job and I love it. Also learning retail in a voluntary and charitable sense is another string to my bow. With everything that has been going on with Covid-19, I’ve learned a lot of paperwork that has to be put into place just to make everybody safe, which is a new skill set in itself. We need to make the volunteers and the customers feel safe at the same time.

**Q. Why did you join the RNLI shop volunteer crew?**

**A.** I originally signed up because of somebody that I knew, and then it just continued on from there. I had a little part to begin with and my role within the RNLI has continually grown. I started off as a fundraiser and now I am the shop manager.

‘I love everything I get to do within the shop. The gifts that I get to order, the merchandising and the volunteers I get to work with.’

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**Will you join our lifesaving shop volunteer crew? Visit RNLI.org/sam to find out more.**