Inspiring young YMCA volunteer shortlisted for national award

Wednesday 23 August, 2017

YMCA Humber is asking local people to vote for one of its inspiring young volunteers ahead of a prestigious national youth awards ceremony hosted this autumn by business woman, Sky presenter and BBC's The Apprentice winner, Michelle Dewberry.

The local youth charity, which has operated in North East Lincolnshire for the past 135 years has nominated volunteer, Shane Watkins as Young Volunteer of the Year in Youth Matters Awards 2017.

Youth Matters is YMCA's national awards programme that has been an integral part of the charity's calendar since 2009.

Shane is up against other young volunteers from across the country within his/her award category. Other award categories are YMCA of the Year, Young Achiever of the Year, Young Worker of the Year and Young Leader of the Year.

Shane has been entered for the award because of his inspirational volunteering on the charity's orchard project in Grimsby.

Voting starts online at midnight on Monday 14 August and runs until midnight on Friday 25 August. Votes cast by the public will be combined with judges' choices and the three finalists will be announced on 29 August. All the finalists will attend the ceremony at the exclusive venue 8 Northumberland Avenue, in central London, where the winner will be announced.

Shane said: "I am honoured to have been shortlisted for such an award – it really means a lot.

"Volunteering for YMCA has really helped me with my confidence and if people could vote and get me through to the final then it would be amazing."

Andrew Hornsby is YMCA Humber's Accommodation Manager and also leads on the orchard project, she said:

"Shane moved into YMCA accommodation in November 2016 with a history of anger-related issues.

"Today, through his continued volunteer efforts, he has grown into a confident young man and integral part of the YMCA Humber community.

"Shane began volunteering in the kitchen making a buffet for Christmas Day.

"He quickly became a regular kitchen volunteer, committing to early mornings and evenings preparing meals.

"Shane has also played an ongoing role in the Orchard Project, enjoying the physical aspect of maintaining the trees.

"Shane's interest in public service increased after he took part in a body confidence workshop for the Be Real campaign.

"He was then asked to attend Westminster as part of an APPG where he presented evidence to a Select Committee talking about his own story and experiences.

"His experience at Westminster really engaged Shane's interest in politics with the election and he got involved in finding out more about politics locally, including campaigning within the accommodation project and speaking with Look North about the importance of young people registering to vote.

"Most recently, Shane is looking to expand his volunteering beyond YMCA through coaching sports activities with Positive Activities."

Youth Matters celebrates the outstanding skills and achievements of young people from across the

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country. It also recognises the vital work that YMCAs deliver every day to help transform the lives of young people and give them a brighter future.

The Young Volunteer of the Year Award recognises a dedicated young volunteer (aged under 30-years-old) who has shown outstanding commitment to YMCA and contributed energy, skills and time.

Vote in YMCA Youth Matters at www.ymca.org.uk/awards. Follow YMCA Humber on Twitter and join the conversation using #YMA17.

For more information on Youth Matters, visit www.ymca.org.uk/awards. For more information on YMCA Humber, visit www.ymca-humber.com

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