Sheffield Hallam student wins Student Volunteer of the Year Award

Tuesday 23 February, 2016

Yesterday at London's City Hall, Liam Rodgers was announced as the Student Volunteer of the Year Award winner. The Celebration Event, which marked the start of Student Volunteering Week 2016, brought together student volunteers and key figures from the charity, government and business sectors.

The ceremony was opened by Veronica Wadley, Senior Advisor to the Mayor of London for Team London, Volunteering, Charities and Sponsorship. Rob Wilson, Minister for Civil Society, and Joy Carter, Vice Chancellor of the University of Winchester, also spoke in support of student social action.

Liam, a Creative Writing student at Sheffield Hallam University, is the leader and founder of Upscribe, a project that helps homeless people to express themselves through creative writing and increase their confidence and ability to work with others. Liam also led on the creation and publication of a book created by people who participated in the project.

Volunteering has given Liam a sense of direction and helped him to develop valuable skills. A recent report by the Behavioural Insights Team and the Cabinet Office found “compelling and robust evidence that young people who take part in social action initiatives, such as volunteering, develop some of the most critical skills for employment and adulthood in the process".

This year marks the 15th anniversary of Student Volunteering Week, organised by Student Hubs and the National Union of Students (NUS), with more than 10,000 students expected to take part in over 500 events at over 100 colleges and universities across the UK. SVW has grown from a small campaign to a truly national one.

Liam, the Student Volunteer of the Year 2016, said:
“Volunteering is a great experience and really satisfying. I set up my project, Upscribe, to give back to homeless people and develop my employability skills at the same time.

“I am very happy to have won the Student Volunteer of the Year Award. I plan to split the £1000 prize between the homeless charity I first volunteered with, a refugee group I support and the Back to School Bank, founded by Kathleen, another shortlisted nominee.”

Richard Brooks, NUS Vice President (Union Development), said:
“I'm delighted that Liam can be recognised for his outstanding work with homeless people.

“Hundreds of thousands of people were homeless in the United Kingdom last year so action from students like Liam is making a real and valuable difference towards improving the lives of some of the most vulnerable in our society.”

Sara Fernandez, Chief Executive of Student Hubs, said:
“We are glad to be recognising Liam's outstanding contribution to his community and dedication to his project. Volunteering can have a double impact on the volunteer and the beneficiary and Liam has clearly demonstrated how he has benefited a community and achieved employment as a result of his project.
“Liam's commitment to social action reflects the hard work of student volunteers throughout the UK, which we are celebrating during Student Volunteering Week.”

Media:









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Student Hubs

T. 01865264151
E. graham.read@studenthubs.org
W. https://www.studenthubs.org

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