

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

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“ Black History Month is an opportunity to shine a light on those past and present leading the way! ”



Tell us something that might surprise us about you?

I can't bend my left finger at the joint!

What advice would you give your younger self?

Just keep going. You may feel like you are on the wrong track, but you are where you are to put you on the road to where you are going!

What does Black History Month mean to you?

Black History Month is an opportunity to shine a light on those past and present leading the way! Having a mixed-race son who is 3, even in 2022 I worry about how he will be treated. I anticipate conversations that are about why people may treat him differently and why he is not afforded the same opportunities as others. To celebrate BHM and the diversity of the community we live in we will reflect on traumas and celebrate success through children's books, music, culture, and arts. Outside of BHM we actively try and involve him in diverse communities including his nursery and upcoming schooling to help him understand that we are all different but all human.

Career journey

I knew I wanted to support people I just did not know how. I undertook volunteering opportunities to develop my skills and prepare me for employment. I had a keen interest in supporting young people and I decided that with the experience I had I could seek employment. I looked at residential childcare homes and my passion continued to grow in supporting young people.

In January 2017 I started at St Vincent's as a Foyer Support Worker. I loved working with young people and was enthusiastic about my role at the Manchester Foyer. The successes that were had, the challenges it presented and the opportunities that were created. This was the start of the best 5 years of my working life. My passion to support young people continued to flourish and I was supported by a phenomenal team. I enjoyed supporting amazing young people - identifying their support needs, goals, and helping to achieve these whilst living at the foyer.

After having my son, I began to look for a role which was flexible so that I could spend more time with him. Just as I had started to look a role came up within MSV for a Skills and Employment Officer. I could see that my skills were transferrable to this role and went for it.

I got the job and now it was time for a new challenge! I was excited about what was about to unfold and what Positive Futures was about to become. I have done so much since I started in November last year and feel that I have come out of my shell. I have done things including strategic planning, planning events, co-ordinating the site, building partnerships, and a lot of networking – all something I struggled with before undertaking the HDN and building my confidence.

I applied for Housing Diversity Network to become a mentee to help build my confidence and assertiveness. I had a great Mentor who acted as a great soundboard for what was on my mind, validating my thoughts and giving me the capability to believe in myself. At the end of the course, we were offered the opportunity to present at the HDN Conference in Birmingham. For many, this would be easy, but I knew if I did not throw myself into the deep end...would I ever? After HDN I went on to engage in other opportunities including talking on a local radio station and delivering at job fairs.

I am still coming into my own in this role and enjoying this new opportunity. I hope to be able to complete studies in the field of skills and employment to support my role and better support our tenants and the local community. Seeing the diversity of MSV is really empowering.

It gives me ambition. It gives me hope. It gives me pride!

Special thanks to Natalie for sharing and please keep an eye out for more staff spotlights throughout October.