



Kerry has been a member of SPC for the past seven years and has been riding at the Academy with occasional breaks due to injury. She had taken part in a few volunteering activities as means of giving back to society and the latest on her list is a charity in Cambodia.

She shares "My first volunteering activity was many years ago in London. I signed up with the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry, an organisation supported by The British Army. As volunteers we helped out at the call centre during a crisis. Family members and friends of people injured or caught in a fire or road traffic accident would call in requesting for help to trace their missing loved ones.

We took details of missing people and passed them to the emergency services to be matched with the injured in hospitals. This was all very different from the session at SPC."

She first got to know about the Outreach Programme in mid-November 2018 through the Riding Office and it sparked an interest in her. Since she had a free week ahead, she decided to sign up.

As a volunteer with our equine assisted therapy programme, she found the structure and activities ideal for the attendees with a range of different abilities.

She liked how the programme was structured to be gradual, starting with understanding the fundamentals and progressively working up to being

Introducing the Volunteers of SPC's Outreach Programme

Our editorial team had a chat with Kerry Cracknell and Neha Wasan who have been volunteering for many of the Club's Outreach Programme's initiatives. They shared with us their passion for giving back to the community, their experiences with the programme and their mottos in life.

comfortable mounting and riding on a horse.

She was especially surprised to see polo ponies Esperanza and Tapadita playing their part. They were extremely patient, gentle and were adored by the trainees. Polo ponies are supposedly calmer, friendlier and less likely to get spooked.

Before coming on board as a volunteer, Kerry had various thoughts running in her mind, as this was the first time she was having close contact with people having intellectual disabilities and was a little nervous about whether she would be a suitable person for such a role.

However, by the end of the first session, things were very different. Kerry mentioned that she loved interacting with each one of them, as they were all lovely and easy to talk to. Each batch of trainees had different personalities and expectations of the programme. Seeing the smiles on the trainees' faces was all worthwhile for the effort put in each session. She knew that she had made the right decision in bringing some sunshine into someone's life.

The session on practicing their polo strokes by using a foot mallet at the covered arena was an activity close to her heart. Trainees were so positive, listened to instructions attentively and were willing to participate in the activity. Through these sessions, she had learnt to be more grateful and mindful, especially when interacting with the less privileged.

She hopes to see more members come forth to participate in the Outreach Programme. As the saying goes "The More The Merrier"; with an increase

in the number of volunteers, more activities can be planned during the sessions. She hopes to bring along her daughter, Isabel, aged 12, for future sessions and has spread the awareness to family and friends too.

"One should also be prepared to come for the sessions without any expectation or fear as no special credentials are needed. Do it wholeheartedly with a smile and most of all, you do it for them. Just 2 hours of your time could be a change to your life," she says.

Kerry has always loved working with children and hopes to have a beneficiary from a children's home for upcoming sessions. It can be hosting them for lunch, or having a meet and greet with our friendly horses. It will make a difference in every way possible.

Her motto in life is to understand what she can control and not to worry about what she can't control.





Neha, a freelance yoga instructor, joined SPC as a member two years ago to pursue her interest in riding. To bring her riding skills to the next level, she was determined to spend more time interacting with horses and chanced upon details of our Outreach Programme through our Facebook Page. She came onboard as a volunteer in January this year with the Equine Assisted Therapy Programme with Touch Centre for Independent Living (Ubi).

Neha Wasan is not new to volunteering. Her first volunteering stint was a 6-month programme with the Rainbow School, assisting autistic children to swim. Prior to joining SPC's Outreach team, she was volunteering with Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA). Neha said that volunteering is enriching, rewarding and has always been able to give her a sense of fulfillment and satisfaction. She has her 73-year old mother to thank for her involvement in giving back to the community.

"As a child, I watched my mother, a senior counsellor, volunteer at various organisations and I contributed by helping out at old aged homes and blind associations alongside her. Since young

she has inculcated a set of values in me towards helping the less-fortunate. After a while I realised that my passion lies in horses and tried to look for equine type volunteering programmes."

Her favourite sections of the programme were learning to lead and groom a horse, the stables quiz and the horse-riding session. The riding session was a true revelation for her as she witnessed several participants, who were initially nervous around horses in the first few sessions, eventually becoming courageous enough to mount and ride a horse in the last session.

She added on to say that it was an extremely rewarding sight when participants broke out in huge smiles while attempting to fill up all the questions in the quiz. She also took note that all of them participated in all the activities like the feeding sessions, stable tour enthusiastically. "I do have a few personal favourites in the group, that I wished I could spend more time guiding and talking to," she exclaimed. Neha recalled some memorable moments during the session, "There was an instance where a heavier-built trainee sat on my arm while attempting to mount a horse, and he just did not know how to raise his lower part of the

body. Another was of a trainee who was hard of hearing, but she would hold on to my hands during the session, while trying to express her emotions through sign language."

She mentioned that SPC's Equine Therapy Programme is a fantastic programme as the modules are compact with fun elements bundled in while still maximising its reach to beneficiaries. External mentorship events that she had attended prior, usually came with too much responsibility, were lengthy, too structured or strict, taking the fun element out of the equation.

These sessions helped Neha to grow emotionally, mentally and physically. It was also a blessing for her to be able to give back to the society, stay grounded and to be more appreciative of life around her. She urged more members to come forth and experience this lifechanging programme. She also added that every volunteer in this programme was very cooperative and everyone worked as a team to ensure the trainees were able to enjoy the session to the fullest.

Neha will be introducing her two daughters, aged 17 and 14, as volunteers for the upcoming sessions.

She goes by this motto - "The Best Effort is Effortless Effort." Effortless effort is when one is relentless at trying new things he or she is passionate about and therefore, makes an effort to go all out for it.

