

Giving Thanks to our Unsung Heros

Gratitude is the single most important ingredient to living a successful and fulfilled life.

Jack Canfield

At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us.

Albert Schweitzer

Research shows that expressing gratitude enriches our own life and the other persons. The people in this collection have been included for their outstanding personal and professional qualities. Their consistently exceptional responses make a continued, powerful impact, within the Department of Social Work and Social Care, and within the scholarly community of the university.

Who can you thank for the many acts of kindness that have contributed to your success?

If there is someone you would like to nominate, please get in touch with Farrukh Akhtar at [**F.Akhtar@sgul.kingston.ac.uk**](mailto:F.Akhtar@sgul.kingston.ac.uk)

Giving Thanks to Unsung Heros

We all have a cast of ‘*unsung heros*’ in our lives; people who have made a substantial, yet often unrecognised contribution, without which our success would be diminished.

Research shows that expressing gratitude enriches our own life and the other persons. The people in this collection have been included for their outstanding personal and professional qualities. Their consistently exceptional responses make a continued, powerful impact, within the department of Social Work and Social Care, and within the scholarly community of the university.



*If I have seen further,
it is by standing on the
shoulders of giants*
Isaac Newton

For every person shown here, there are many other ‘unsung heros’. Who do you have to thank for the many acts of kindness, large and small, that have contributed to your success?

If there is someone you would like to nominate, please get in touch with Farrukh Akhtar at F.Akhtar@sgul.kingston.ac.uk

Giving Thanks to Unsung Heros

We all have a cast of '*unsung heros*' in our lives; people who have made a substantial, often unrecognised contribution, without which our success would be diminished.

Research shows that expressing gratitude enriches our own life and the other persons. The people in this collection have been included for their outstanding personal and professional qualities. Their consistently exceptional responses make a continued, powerful impact, within the department of Social Work and Social Care, and within the scholarly community of the university.

*If I have seen further,
it is by standing on the
shoulders of giants*
Isaac Newton

THANK YOU

For every person shown here, there are many others. Who do you have to thank for the many acts of kindness that have contributed to your success? To nominate, please get in touch with Farrukh Akhtar at F.Akhtar@sgul.kingston.ac.uk

Thanking student reps & mentors

Tami Thompson

BA in Working with Children & Young People



Tami was runner up in the Kingston University Course Representatives Finals.

'The course was really good,' Tami says. 'It's just what I wanted to do – a broad based degree to leave my options open.' She particularly enjoyed six months abroad – in Holland – working with children in primary schools.

'I thought being a course rep would be a lot of work – but it wasn't. It was great to be the voice for students. They'd speak with me, but also phone, WhatsApp or email me. I'd attend meetings and pass on their comments, plus I'd get to know what was going on in the department, meet other students and lecturers.

My advice to students is get involved in as many opportunities as you can. I loved the university SPARKS [personal development] programme and would highly recommend it.'

Students from the course visit the Foundling museum



Kingston University London



© Farrukh Akhtar 2016

Kingston University London

Zura Dica

BA in Social Work



I am passionate about my achievements as a student rep. When my cohort nominated me, I was extremely humbled. I represented my group at various meetings throughout the three years at uni. I became the voice of the class. The university takes us seriously. So much change came about as a result of our representation.

For example:

- We asked for extra Academic English Classes in year 1 which we received
- We discussed issues around placements which were considered and changes implemented
- We achieved positive change in structuring the lessons to suit those with children, and the allocation of appropriate lecture rooms and many other things.



Zura with staff and students at the annual Social Work Conference 2016

Although there is a lot of responsibility with this role, I always got back more than I put into it. I gained many skills, such as advocacy, enhanced communication, presentation and even interviewing skills which I have used on placement.

I would definitely recommend this position to all the students and hope to inspire others to take on this role.

Good luck to you all!

© Farrukh Akhtar 2016

Re-balancing Power: Representing the voice of Service Users & Carers in the Department of Social Work

Kerryn Holborn is just one of a team of service users and carers that consistently support the Department of Social Work in a variety of roles.



Involvement ranges from

- selection and recruitment of students & academic staff,
- direct
- facilitating student discussions
- assessing students
- participating in reviewing and re-designing the curriculum
- quality assurance and module evaluation
- training of new service users

Kerryn has been involved as a service user and carer in the Department of Social Work since 2002. She brings with her, the experience of having a son with severe physical disabilities, some learning difficulties and how this has impacted on her family.



She came into contact with Social Services 24 years ago when her first son was born. The involvement with Social Services was varied but the family could not have got to where they are now without their help. They were given the tools to enable their son to develop to his full potential. Kerryn is proud that her son is now a PhD student with a rewarding and fulfilling life ahead.

Kerryn says:

'By sharing our experience we enhance student learning and produce practitioners who are more informed and sensitive to the needs and views of service users and carers. This helps them to deliver a better service. We have developed three new service user roles. I am enjoying my role as a mentor for our new service users.'



Paul Flinders: Unsung Hero

Paul is responsible for all the IT stuff on campus, so he's pretty busy, but always remembers my name. His mellow voice and slow gait belie a speedy efficiency. I see him in my colleague, Wilson's office. I have a long list of technical problems that need solving and Paul is *the* man.



I chat with Wilson while Paul does the techie stuff. Our raucous laughter attracts the attention of another colleague, Maria. 'You guys sound like you're having fun...' She sees Paul and suddenly we no longer exist. 'Oh, Paul, I wonder if I could have a word?'

'Oi!' Wilson and I shout in unison.

'OK' she laughs, 'I'll join the queue!' Good IT advice is hard to find. Paul doesn't seem perturbed by the trail of enquirers.

Finally I get my two minutes. I quickly go through the list. This is another thing I admire about him. I say it once and he gets it. He reels off solutions as I scrabble about for pen & paper.



I finish scribbling, look up to thank him, but he's already disappeared, with a fresh stream of people right behind.

So, I'll say it anyway:

'Thanks Paul, for all the solutions you provide, with effortless good will and friendly generosity. You are truly an unsung hero.'

© Farrukh Akhtar (2015) F.Akhtar@sgul.kingston.ac.uk

Kingston
University
London

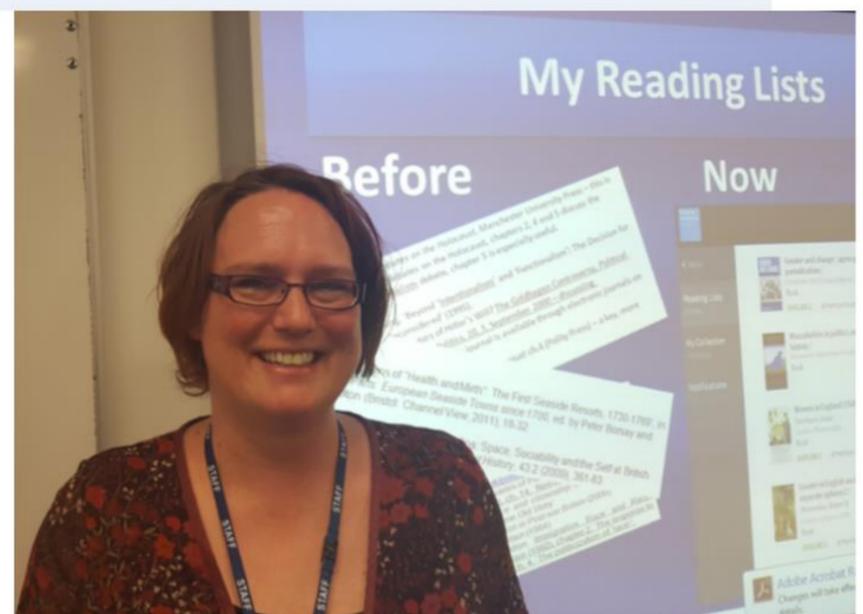
Kingston
University
London

Because...Knowledge is Power...

Maren Schroeder's love of books led her to her current role as a Senior Information Advisor, in the Learning Resource Centre at the University. She has been working with the Department of Social Work for just over a year but has quickly made herself indispensable.

She is valued by students and staff alike, for her approachability and infinite patience. Her flexibility has enabled the impossible to manifest, whether this be a bespoke session to help us understand something, finding a resolution to a tricky or impenetrable technical conundrum, or simply teaching us data searching techniques (*again*).

Maren has the gift of explaining technical things in a warm, accessible way. Quite often, after a friendly chat with her, I leave understanding something that I have struggled with for years. Thanks Maren!



Knowledge is power. Information is liberating. Education is the premise of progress, in every society, in every family.

Kofi Annan

© Farrukh Akhtar 2016

‘...Because today’s students become tomorrow’s workforce’

Paul Lawrence is one of a team of ‘employer partners’ that the Department of Social Work collaborates with, to ensure that students’ experience at university and on placement offers them the best possible preparation for professional life.



‘I was good at owning my CPD but lacked direction... I work hard to ensure others don’t make the same mistakes...’

Pathway into social work.

1983	Youth worker
1985	Residential social worker – children in care
1995	Paul worked as a qualified social worker for a number of years, in a range of different posts.
2007	Multi-agency trainer for Merton Local Safeguarding Children’s Board
2011	Current post: ‘Workforce and Practice Development Manager’ for Children’s Social Care in LB Merton

I appreciate the integrity with which Paul works with us. In the maelstrom of working life, he makes time to attend meetings at the university. He is not afraid to let us know if something is not working or what we’re doing well. His forthright approach engenders a strong collaborative partnership. As he aptly put it, *‘I do it because today’s students become tomorrow’s workforce.’*

Paul is actively involved in driving change with the Department for Education and Skills for Care regionally & nationally

