



My name is Carolyn and I volunteer at Pollok and Castlemilk libraries.

I am a 62 year old woman. I retired from full time work just over 1 year ago to help care for my mother. I had been working for the DWP for over 27 years and although I worked on a computer every day, we used a benefit programme, which I was very familiar with and could navigate easily so I had no problem doing my day to day work.

But I hated computers because I didn't understand how they worked and felt completely out of my depth when asked to work on Word, Excel, and PowerPoint and even had problems with emails. I was a bit of a joke to the youngsters in the section as I didn't really understand the terminology of computers, usually looking a bit blank when asked to update systems. My young colleagues were very kind, always helping me out. I am not stupid, but one of the problems was I was a bit of a dinosaur and didn't really want to learn about computers. My husband is good with them so I would always rely on him to do anything I needed at home.

During the summer when I was passing the library, I spotted a banner on the railings "Digital Matters", are you nervous about using a computer or the internet?"

THAT'S ME!... I thought and maybe I should do something about it. So I phoned the number and spoke to one of the Digital Learning team who asked some questions about my experience with computers to assess what stage of learning I needed to start with.

My goals were general- learning how to navigate easily around the computer, use email and attachments and learn some of the terminology. I enjoy photography and normally asked my husband to download my photographs onto the computer but I wanted to become more independent and gain more self-confidence.

I registered with the library and have now completed 30 Learn My Way online courses as well as level 1 of the Glasgow Code Learning programme with support at Langside and Gorbals libraries and doing some work at home myself.

I have enjoyed the courses, and have now volunteered to support the next class of students for the Glasgow Code Learning programme. This will help reinforce my knowledge, boost my confidence and it is nice to meet different people again and learn a bit about them.

With the help and advice of the Digital Learning Team I have now also started the European Computer Driving License (ECDL) course at Glasgow Kelvin College, which I would never have envisioned six months ago.

In my quest to give something back I came across the library service and could not believe just how much more Macmillan is, not just a wonderful team of nurses but a network of people, information, organisations all there with the primary purpose of improving the lives of cancer patients and their families and I have the privilege to be one of the volunteers that maybe, just be able to point someone in a direction that could have a positive impact in a difficult stage of their life.

The Macmillan name is held in such high esteem and I always think that my green lanyard is like a green light, a clear path for people to express their concerns, often, over a wee cup of tea, I get to just be there, a listening ear, sometimes I never hear from the person again and hope that the unburdening in a confidential setting soothed them in some way, others wave or pop in to give a follow up, either way, being trusted is a great honour.

The unexpected thing about being a Macmillan Cancer Information and Support Volunteer is laughter. I never fail to be amazed by the resilience of people in the face of adversity, some of the stories and the way they are told, either about their experience or remembering loved ones – there is so much more laughter than I expected.

When you become part of the Macmillan team, you are looked after, you are offered emotional support and back up and training opportunities with fun social activities a wee cherry on top of the volunteering cake.

What started as a simple give something back has been taken to a new level. I give a little bit of my time and in return, the gifts I receive in terms of feeling rewarded could never be quantified. Thank you Macmillan @ Glasgow Libraries.